

BEING IN CHRIST

**An Inductive study
of the Ephesian epistle**

BY

O. William Cooper

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The more I write, the more I become sensitive to the part others play in my work. The people in the churches where I served as pastor challenged me to sharpen and clarify my understanding of Scripture by their requests for information and understanding of textual issues.

My professors showed me a precision of knowledge and understanding that became a model for me in my own study. God brought all these people into my life. I am a far better person and servant because of the way God used them.

In the preparation of this volume, friends and associates played a vital part. Rev. Mary Neil and my wife, Ruth, helped me treat my mother tongue in a kindlier fashion. Time after time, Dr. Peter Stone has bailed me out when my computer was having a "bad hair day." The members of the Board of Logos Ministries, Inc. have been a source of great encouragement to me as we plan the studies that will be produced next.

The efforts of all these people have had a great impact on my life and it shows in my life and in the work I attempt to do. May the blessing of God enrich their lives as they work, often unnoticed, as His servants and my friends and helpers.

O. William Cooper

Ebenezer House,
Livermore, Colorado
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IN MEMORIUM

In September, 1949, I met the head of the music department of Nyack College, Nyack, New York. This man made a great impression on my life. He was a humble man. To be around him, you would never guess that here was a man of distinction. I sang in the college choir and knew that he was masterful as a choir conductor. I later learned, from others, that he had played second chair violin under Toscaninni.

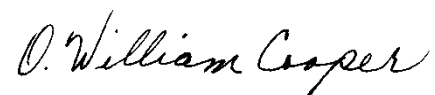
He was a tender-hearted man. He was deeply concerned when a music student was sick for only a few days. I watched him weep profusely when he learned of a tragedy in a married student's family. While driving his car, he had an accident and injured a young man. He was never able to bring himself to drive again.

He was a principled man. He called me to his office one day. We exchanged pleasantries and then he said, "Bill, are you called to preach?" I said, "Yes." He replied, "Thank you, that is all I wanted to know." I was visibly puzzled. Did he call me all the way to his office to ask me this? He then explained. "I need a person to teach voice, but you are called to preach and therefore I cannot offer you the job."

He was a great servant. Nyack, New York, was the home of many radio, television and Broadway personalities. The town, however, had very few churches. He and four other people decided to start a new congregation. He provided the music. He later started a choir in the church. I came there some 15 years later and sang in his church choir as well. As far as I know, he, as a volunteer, directed the music in that church until he died.

He was a spiritual giant. Before each practice, he would pray with the choir. It was a time of spiritual refreshment to hear him pray. Each year, our choir presented the Messiah just before we returned home for Christmas break. I remember one practice very well. We were practicing the Hallelujah Chorus. It was clear, he knew the music and how it should be sung. He stopped us in the middle of the piece. He said to us, "Choir, you are not feeling this music. Think of what it will be like when we all stand before His throne and sing His praises for eternity." We sang again. I never had heard such joy in music before in my life. Before we reached the words, "and He shall reign forever and ever..." some 60 musicians dissolved in tears. He never preached a sermon, but watching him, I saw the sermon of his life each day. It gives me great pleasure to humbly dedicate this work to Dr. Lee Olson, with whom I hope one day, by the grace of God, to sing bass in the heavenly choir.

With deep gratitude,



O. William Cooper

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INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Read the six chapters of Ephesians in one sitting. On the following table, record a summary of seven words or less for each of the six chapters.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

2. Study the summaries you have recorded. What division of the book can you detect from your observations?
3. As you read through the epistle, you will notice a number of words and phrases are used repeatedly. The repetition of these is Paul's way of placing emphasis at this point. Read the epistle again and record the location of the following phrases:

Phrase	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Christ						
In the Lord Jesus						
In the Lord						
In Him (Christ)						
Through Him (Christ)						
Before Him (Christ)						
In whom (Christ)						
In God						
In the Spirit						

4. Study this table carefully. What observations can you make from your study?

THE INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

The name "Ephesus" was not casually chosen. The word simply means "desirable." In their minds, this was an appropriate description. It was located on a plain between two mountain ranges. It was the cosmopolitan center of the world of that day. It had all of the social and cultural trappings one could find in Rome. It contained one of the seven wonders of the world. It was, perhaps, the richest city in the world of that day. The notoriety of the city was known world-wide. Paul came to Ephesus, the first time, on his second missionary journey.

And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. Acts 18:19



Could Paul have visited the city of Ephesus as a child? As you can see on the map which follows, by our standards it isn't that far from his boyhood home in Tarsus – 900 miles by water, 600 miles by land. By their standards, however, it was a great distance. Paul's life before he became a Christian suggests a very strict upbringing. This being the case, it seems doubtful that he visited the city with such an evil reputation.

On his third missionary journey, Paul spent about three years in Ephe-

sus.

And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:8-10

During that time, Paul taught the disciples and new converts each day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. The news of this growing, well taught church spread quickly throughout the whole province of Asia.

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Many scholars believe that the Apostle John and Mary the mother of Jesus live in the city. In Revelation 2:1-7, John wrote about the Ephesian church. He said that the church had flourished, but false teachers had come and the congregation had lost their first love.

The city of Ephesus is strategically located. It rests in a valley between two mountain ranges. Ephesus was located at the mouth of the Coyster River which was a great natural seaport. This is located on the western coast of Asia minor.



THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN EPHESUS

One needs to be aware of the Ephesian economy because it bears heavily on the position of the church at the time Paul wrote this epistle. Being the most favorable, natural seaport in the region, it is not surprising that it was the most important trade center west of Tarsus. With a population of at least 300,000 people, Ephesus was the largest city in the province.



The city was situated at the cross roads of two ancient overland trade routes. On the following map, you can see that one route went west through Hieropolis, Laodicea, Phrygia and beyond. The other route went North to Smyrna, Pergamum and Troaz.

Ephesus was probably the wealthiest city of the world of that day. This grew out of the fact that the priests of the temple of Diana (Artemis to them) provided the prestigious banking service for the great nations of the world. The temple was the Swiss banking system of the first century. The fact that the temple and the priests were also a strong, world class political force also helped to place this temple among the financial elite of that day.

The Lydians, under Croesus, conquered the city in 560 B. C. This was a daring venture to say the least. He burned the temple against the will of the most powerful people in the world of that day. Alexander volunteered to rebuild the temple at his own expense. This created a delicate situation for the temple leaders. It would be nice to have this massive structure built without cost. It would be like rebuilding New York City today. The down side was that this would place these leaders in a patronage position to Alexander.

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They solved the situation graciously. They kindly refused Alexander's offer saying it would not be appropriate for one god to build a temple to another.

THE CULTURAL SITUATION IN EPHEBUS.

Ephesus was the largest city in the Roman province of Asia. Rome had a plan as they developed chief cities in each province of the realm. The culture and lifestyle of Rome were vastly different from those of their conquered territories. They wanted these nations to become as Roman as possible. Rather than just tell them about Roman ways, Rome built replicas of Rome all over their empire. The Decapolis in Israel is a good case in point. Just about everything you can find in Rome, you can also find in these special cities. Ephesus was one of these special cities. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ephesus had a theater that would seat 25,000 people quite comfortably. This theater had excellent acoustics. The baths were an important part of the Roman experience of culture and business. These baths were as beautiful and ornate as any to be found in Rome. It is not surprising that the fountains of Hadrian were to be found in this city. Impressive buildings were a vital part of the mystic of Rome. One would expect some very impressive structures in this city as well. Ephesus was a carbon copy of Rome, complete with all of its vices. Like the city now called Amman, Jordan, the main street of the city was bordered by a three foot wall on each side. In this wall, at about 75 foot intervals, there were niches where Roman idols were placed. Indeed, where streets intersected, there were altars built to each of their most prominent deities. Just passing along this street was viewed as an act of worship. You may remember that Paul spoke of this situation when in Athens. In Acts, Luke quoted the words of Paul:

"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you." Acts 17:23

Just walking through the streets of this city would make an observant Jew unclean.

THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN EPHEBUS

The temple of Diana, or as they called her "Artemis," was one of the seven wonders of the world. This gives you an idea of the respected position and financial acumen they enjoyed. The worshippers of Diana believed she was the twin sister of Apollo and daughter of Zeus. Thus, they treated her with mutual respect and deference.

The temple of Diana was a thing of beauty, a masterpiece of design and artistic skill. The temple contained an image of Artemis that they believed came directly from Zeus. This statue may well have been carved from a fallen meteorite. The temple was built just one mile outside the city. This place of worship was 420 feet long by 240 feet wide and 60 feet high. It was supported by 117 or 127 columns, depending on which report you accept. Each of these columns was the gift of a prince. Like the Vatican, it was a religious structure, but had become a political force as well. This temple was under construction for 220 years.

Coins have been found that were minted at the time of the apostle Paul. On the face of these coins the words were embossed "Diana of Ephesus." In 560 B. C. Croesus dedicated the city to Artemis.

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Artemis, or Diana, was the goddess of fertility. She was, in the Greco-Roman culture, what Ashteroth was in the Egyptian and other middle eastern cultures. Because of the association with fertility, the worship of Artemis centered around sexual orgies. People were afraid not to participate in these orgies lest they have no children, their fields would not produce and their animals would have no young.

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

The church in Ephesus was founded about 50 A. D. As indicated earlier, Priscilla and Acquilla came to the city of Ephesus with Paul. They helped in the founding of the congregation.

And Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. Acts 18:18

It is clear that Paul wrote the first Corinthian epistle while he was in Ephesus. He wrote:

But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; , because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. I Corinthians 16:8, 9

Paul not only helped found the Ephesian church, but was basically involved in the discipling of these new Christians. As Luke reported, this was done in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. We also know that some, who had been disciples of John the Baptist, made their way to Ephesus and were involved in the early stages of the founding of the church in this city. In Acts, Luke recorded the words of Paul

"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; Acts 20:29

Paul gave the same message in I Timothy

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 1 Timothy 1:3

We know that in the city, men were making huge fortunes through servants who were involved with the occult. The silversmiths were also amassing great fortunes through the sale of silver crafted sculptures of the goddess Diana. This eventually led to Paul's imprisonment. All of this points clearly to the fact that idol worship and the black arts were deeply entrenched in the culture. Because Paul and the fledgling church were immersed in countering this movement, they experienced strong opposition from both civil and religious leaders.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE

The Ephesian epistle, like several others was written from prison, probably from Rome. This epistle is a lot like the letter to the Colossians in its form. These letters were delivered by Tychicus. The recipients were basically Gentile converts. In our Bible, the title of this epistle is "Ephesians." The earliest Greek manuscripts, however, are different. The words "en Epheso" or "in Ephesus" are missing. Later manuscripts and our Greek texts have these words added, but they were not found on the original texts. What does this mean? We are not saying the epistle was not written to the Ephesian church. It means that these words do not appear in the oldest manuscripts. The content of the book matches

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the Ephesian situation better than any other. We know that these epistles were read by the recipient church and then passed along to other churches in the area. There is no doubt that this epistle was written to the church in Ephesus.

In most any epistle, one can discover the direction of the author's thinking and purpose by studying the exhortations and commands contained in the book. This study will also give you an understanding of the structure of the epistle. The following table will give such information for the Ephesian epistle.

The table below indicates that the book is divided into two parts – chapters 1 – 3 and chapters 4 – 6.

Ch 1	Ch 2	Ch 3	Ch 4	Ch 5	Ch 6
0	2	1	25	32	29
3			86		

As we continue the study, we will observe that in chapters 1 – 3, Paul dealt with the theological issues as they confront this church. In chapters 4 – 6, Paul used 86 commands to give them direction in solving the dilemma being faced by the congregation.

If you look carefully at the content of the 89 exhortations, it will give you an insight into the nature of the problems Paul sought to address in the Ephesian church.

ISSUES	NUMBER OF EXHORTATIONS
Need for spiritual growth	40
Relationship between believers	29
Strategy for evangelism	9
Attitude of believers	5
Personal history of believers	4

As you study this list, it is clear that Paul focused most of his attention on two areas:

- a. The need for spiritual growth
- b. The relationship between believers

Though other issues are addressed, these certainly are the center of Paul's concern in Ephesus.

As you read through the epistle, you begin to notice that Paul repeated certain words and phrases. Invariably this was their way to emphasize the words and phrases being discussed. That is very obvious in the Ephesian epistle. Observe how Paul used this tool of emphasis in Ephesians.

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Phrase	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Christ	1:1; 1:3; 1:10; 1:12; 1:20	2:6; 2:7; 2:10; 2:13	3:6; 3:11; 3:21	4:32		
In The Lord Jesus	1:15					
In The Lord						6:1; 6:10
In Him (Christ)	1:4; 1:7; 1:9; 1:13			4:15; 4:21		
Through Him (Christ)		2:18				
Before Him	1:4					
In Whom (Christ)		2:21; 2:22				
In God				4:24		
In The Spirit						6:18

As you can see on this table, there are 28 specific references to an intimate relationship with God in this epistle. A variety of phrases are used, but the direction is almost always the same.

On this table, 26 of these references deal with an intimate relationship with Christ. Only one deals with "God" and the other one deals with a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Observe also that 21 of these 28 references appear in chapters 1 – 3. The other seven references appear in chapters 4 – 6. We need to identify what this suggests. You will remember that 86 of the 89 exhortations appear in chapters 4 – 6. We have just pointed out that 21 of the 28 references to the intimate relationship with God appear in chapters 1 – 3. The implication is simple, yet profound. Paul focused our attention on the need for an intimate relationship with God in chapters 1-3 and then used 86 exhortations in chapters 4-6 to suggest a way to achieve that relationship with God. As we study the epistle, we will watch to see if this proves to be the case.

As we move through the study of this epistle, we observe that Paul used a number of other statements that point in the direction of such an intimate relationship with God. They are as follows:

1. "We are members of His body" – Ephesians 5:30
2. "Filled with the Holy Spirit" – Ephesians 4:18
3. "A dwelling of God" – Ephesians 2:22
4. "The church which is His body" – Ephesians 1:22, 23
5. "Predestined us to adoption as sons" – Ephesians 1:5
6. "We are fellow heirs" – Ephesians 3:6

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7. "(We are) fellow members of the body" – Ephesians 3:6
8. "(We are) partakers of the promise" – Ephesians 3:6
9. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts" – Ephesians 3:17
10. "The body of Christ" – Ephesians 4:12

At this point, we can only say that whatever the issue, Paul felt that our intimate relationship with God was absolutely essential to the solution of the dilemma they faced. We will deal with this in much greater detail as we proceed with the study.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1
PAUL REJOICED IN THE FATHER AND THE SON
EPHESIANS 1:1 – 23

1. There are three paragraphs in Ephesians chapter one. On the following table, write a brief summary, of seven words or less, for each paragraph.

2. In each of his epistles, Paul identified himself in a specific way. On the following table, record how he identified himself in each epistle.

Romans	
I Corinthians	
II Corinthians	
Galatians	
Ephesians	
Philippians	
Colossians	
I Thessalonians	
II Thessalonians	
I Timothy	
II Timothy	
Titus	
Philemon	

3. Now, study the above information. What have you discovered that might help you grasp what Paul is dealing with in the Ephesian epistle?
4. Read 1:1, 2 again. How did Paul describe Ephesian believers?
5. In verse two, Paul gave the Ephesian Christians a greeting that he commonly shared in his epistles.
- a. What is the greeting?
 - b. What does it mean?
6. In 1:3-14, Paul addressed a blessing to God.
- a. In verse 3, Paul ascribed praise to God and gives his reason for it.
 1. What was his praise for God?
 2. What was the basis for his praise?
 - b. In 1:4, Paul identified what God had done and His purposes for doing this.
 1. What had God done?
 2. What purposes does Paul identify?
 - c. In 1:5, Paul identified something God did.

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1. What did God do?
 2. What was the purpose of His action?
 - d. In 1:6, Paul used a brief form of praise.
 1. What was his praise?
 2. What does it tell us about God?
 - e. In 1:7, Paul identified the benefits we have “in Him.”
 1. What are these benefits?
 2. What is the basis of these benefits?
 - f. In 1:8, Paul said, “which He lavished upon us.”
 1. What is it that God “lavished upon us”?
 2. What does this tell us about God?
 - g. Read 1:9 very carefully.
 1. What is the relationship between “the mystery of His will” and “according to His kind intention”?
 2. What is added to the message by the inclusion of the words “which He purposed in Him”?
 - h. In 1:10, how would you explain what Paul meant when he said, “the summing up of all things in Christ”?
 - i. In 1:11, Paul used the words “inheritance” and “predestined”.
 1. What does the word “predestined” mean?
 2. What is the relationship between the “inheritance” and “predestined”?
 3. What impact does “according to His purpose” have upon the predestined inheritance?
 - j. In 1:12, Paul spoke of their “hope in Christ.”
 1. Describe what Paul meant by these three words.
 2. In this verse, what did Paul say was the purpose of this “hope”?
 - k. In 1:13, Paul spoke of being “sealed in Him.”
 1. What does this mean?
 2. What does “with the Holy Spirit” have to do with “being sealed”?
 - l. In 1:14, Paul spoke of a “pledge.”
 1. What is a “pledge”?
 2. What is the purpose, Paul mentioned, for our “pledge”?
4. In 1:15-23, Paul gives praise for the Ephesian believers. This entire paragraph is a single sentence.
 - a. What did Paul say about the Ephesian Christians?
 - b. What did Paul pray for these Ephesian Christians?
 - c. What did Paul say about Jesus?
 5. In view of your study of this chapter, what changes will you make in your walk with Christ?

LESSON 1: EPHESIANS 1:1 – 23

PAUL REJOICED IN THE FATHER AND THE SON

Introduction

There are three paragraphs in the first chapter of Ephesians. A summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

1:1, 2	The Salutation – Paul an Apostle: Ephesians – Saints
1:3-14	The Glory of God the Father
1:15-23	Paul Gives Praise for The Ephesians Through Christ

Ephesians 1:1, 2 – The Salutation – Paul an Apostle: Ephesians – Saints

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:1

It is always important to observe the way Paul identifies himself. Look at the different epistles:

Romans	Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle
I Corinthians	Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God
II Corinthians	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God
Galatians	Paul, an apostle sent not from men, nor by man, but by Christ Jesus and God the Father
Ephesians	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God
Philippians	Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus
Colossians	Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God
I Thessalonians	Paul, Silas and Timothy
II Thessalonians	Paul, Silas and Timothy
I Timothy	Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our savior and Christ Jesus our hope
II Timothy	Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God
Titus	Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect
Philemon	Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

Invariably, the way Paul identifies himself is specifically tied to the content of the book he was writing. This is particularly obvious when you look at the book of Philemon where Paul identified himself as a prisoner. In that book he was writing about Onesimus who was in legal difficulties with Philemon his owner. As you can see on the above table, in several epistles the apostleship of Paul was under severe question.

In this epistle, Paul was dealing with some who had serious questions about whether or not he was really an apostle and whether he had any authority over them. Paul started out with the claim that his apostleship was by the will of God. It did not matter whether or not

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people acknowledged his apostleship or not. There were a couple of reasons that some had difficulty accepting the apostleship of Paul:

1. Prior to his conversion, Paul had been a strong enemy of the church and of Christ and caused many Christians to be persecuted and some even martyred..
2. One of the criteria for apostleship was that the person must have been with Christ. Paul had not been with Jesus in the same way as the 12 had been. He had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus. There is some reason to believe that Paul had been with Jesus in Jerusalem. He had been a student of the great teacher Gamaliel at the time Jesus was carrying out His ministry.

Paul made two claims for these Ephesian Christians:

1. He referred to them as "saints." The word for "saints" is "hagios." This word is usually translated "holy." The basic meaning of the word is "to be separated." This dates back to the Old Testament sacrifice. The animal was "holy." In this sense it was not sinless, but set apart for the use and service of God. It is from this that we get our word "sanctified." The New Testament calls upon believers to sanctify themselves, to cleanse themselves from all defilement, to live in a holy manner of life. Paul affirmed that these believers were, in fact, living holy lives before a holy God.
2. Paul claimed that these Christians were "faithful in Christ Jesus." The word for "faithful" is "pistos" (πίστος). It is to do that which is worthy of a person who is faithful. It is one whose actions express an expectation that God will do as He has said He will do. It is one whose life is obedient to the commands and expressed will of God as described in the Scripture.

Think about this for a minute. How many congregations do you know that could be described in thus manner?

Observe that this is the first time he spoke of them as being "in Christ Jesus." As we observed in the introduction, this is one of the major emphases in the epistle. The idea of being "in Christ" appear in this epistle in several forms:

1. "In Christ" – 1:3; 1:12 1:13; 1:20
2. "In Christ Jesus" – 1:1; 2:6; 2:7; 2:10; 2:13; 3:6; 3:11; 3:21
3. "With Christ" – 2:6;
4. "In Jesus" – 4:21
5. "In the beloved" – 1:6
6. "In Him" – 1:7; 1:13; 4:21
7. "Into Him" – 4:15;

In each instance, Paul was describing a specific kind of relationship between the believer and the Lord rather than a specific location. It suggests that we are a part of His body the church. It is "in Christ" that we are a part of God's family. It also suggests a harmony between the believer and the Lord. The believer is a vital part of all that the Lord is doing in the world.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:2

It is common for Paul to wish grace and peace to his readers. This, however, is more than a kindly greeting. Paul spoke carefully.

PAUL REJOICED IN THE FATHER AND THE SON

- a. **"Grace"** is "charis" (χάρις) It is a word with a broad definition, but in every case, it is an expression of goodness. It is to receive the favor of God. It describes a kindly act. It is that which occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard. It is the divine desire that we would be released from our guilt in relation to His law.
- b. **"Peace"** is "eirene" (εἰρήνη) This is more than just the absence of battle or destruction. It describes harmonious relations between people and between people and God. It deals with friendliness and freedom from being molested and abused. Peace is the rest and contentment that grows out of harmonious relationships with God.

Paul has told us several things about these qualities:

1. These are not qualities that human beings can originate. They come from the Father and the Son.
2. The way this is worded, it stresses the deity of both the Father and the Son.
3. It identifies the nature of "grace" and "peace." They are spiritual because they come from God the Father and the Son.
4. These qualities are rare if not unknown in the world.

Look carefully at the way Paul spoke of the Father and the Son.

- a. "God the Father" – The symbol of "father" identifies several responsibilities and privileges. He was required to provide for the needs of his family. He was required to provide training for his children, especially in spiritual matters. The word "father" identifies one's source, the origin. Father is the one that describes one's character and personality. "Father" identifies source, origin – this is the one that describes the child's character and personality. Wrapped up in this person is the offspring's hope of inheritance.

Father represents the child's responsibility to obey; one to whom the child is responsible. He is the one to whom the child is responsible to keep him/herself under the care and direction. It is the one to whom the progeny owes obedience.

- b. "The Lord Jesus Christ" – The symbol of "Lord" identifies one who owns another. The Greek word for "Lord" is "kurios" (κύριος), the possession of power and authority. It is what a slave calls the master. Paul often referred to Jesus as "Lord." Following the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christians called no one "Lord" except the Father and the Son.

Paul identified the Son of God as Jesus." The name "Jesus" means "savior." The stress in this name is that He is the one who saves from sin. This name does not deny His deity. It rather stresses the ministry that the Son of God has among the human population.

Paul identified the Son of God as "Christ." The name "Christ" means "the anointed one." It is the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew word "Meshiah." The anointed one refers to the one set apart for the service of God. Kings were anointed to serve God. In this instance, the anointed was to be the savior of the world.

Ephesians 1:3-14 – The Glory of God The Father

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Ephesians 1:3

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The word translated "blessed" is "eulogeo" (εὐλογέω) and is a compound word. It is composed as follows:

- a. "Eu" means well
- b. "Logos" means word.

Together these words mean to celebrate with praise. Grammatically, one would translate the word as "has blessed" or "having blessed." The emphasis is on the fact that this has already occurred. Paul offers intense praise to God. You have probably observed that Paul begins each of his epistles with praise to God. Paul's intense praise, in this instance, deals with "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

The word "spiritual" is "pneumatikos" (πνευματικός). You never see this word prior to Pentecost. It is used only of God and deals with that which is invisible and all-powerful. According to Paul's praise, God has given these Ephesian Christians spiritual abundance. They have prospered lavishly in spiritual things. They had grown in their relationship with Christ in an amazing way.

Observe that Paul identifies this great spiritual blessing as being "In heavenly places." The people of Ephesus had a beautiful, but decadent place of worship and these believers had once been a vital part of that scene. Now, the blessing and ecstasy are no longer physical, but spiritual.

Paul's picture of the "heavenly places" has a dual significance. It points to the believers future destiny in heaven. It also focuses attention on the present relationship we experience as a part of God's family. The believer lives in the here and now on the earth. At the same time, because we are "in Christ," there is a spiritual relationship in which we find encouragement for the drudgery and discouragements of life; a relationship in which we find strength to overcome opposition just as Jesus did. Being "in Christ" is more a relationship than a location. It is an intense level of sharing His life and sharing our life with Him. It is imitating his life and character, as Paul wrote. It is what Peter spoke of as "participating in the divine nature."

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love Ephesians 1:4

It should be noted that verses three and four are part of a much larger sentence – 1:3 – 14. The words "Just as" indicate that there is a comparison between verses three and four. Paul compared "being blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places," in verse three, with "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world... to be holy and blameless" in verse four. Paul used this means to indicate that it was as much a blessing to be chosen to live a holy and blameless life as it is to be blessed with every spiritual blessing. Being chosen to live a holy and blameless life seems more like a requirement than a blessing. Paul's message is clear.

The word "chose" is eklego: (ἐκλέγω) and means to select in such a way as to bestow kindness and favor upon the one chosen. It is the selection of generosity. The fact that God chose us indicates that God took the initiative. We did not initiate this relationship. It is part of our relationship of being "in Him," of being "in Christ."

The addition of the words "in Him" is significant. We were not only chosen, we were chosen to share a special intimate relationship with Christ. We were chosen for this relationship "in Christ" before any part of creation existed. It was not a snap decision, but an

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eternal one. The use of the word "that" suggests a statement of purpose – that we should be holy and blameless..."

The question naturally arises, what does God's choice have to do with their being or becoming holy? Paul has spoken very carefully about his very strong conviction. He knew that apart from God's help, God's choosing, there was no hope of their being holy or blameless. They would only be holy if God made them holy. The other side of this is obvious. If we are not holy, then the purposes of God are not realized.

Paul carefully wrote, "to be holy." This word is a present infinitive. This is a way of saying that the action is ongoing. We might say the word this way, "to become and keep on becoming holy."

"Holy" does not so much indicate perfection as it does being separated, set apart for God. It is a growing commitment to increasingly make God the unique priority of our life and time. We can have a deep desire to become holy and keep on becoming holy. God's will requires us to do so. There must be a strong determination to cooperate with God in these miraculous changes in our lives.

God also purposes that we be blameless. The word for "blameless" is "ammomos" (ἄμωμος). It means "unblemished," "not disgraceful," "to be without spot." This word comes from the Old Testament sacrificial system. There was a list of requirements for a sacrificial animal. It had to be the first-born of its mother. It had to be free from any mark or spot on its coat. It could not be sickly in any way. It could not have any physical deformity of any kind. Only then could it be designated, "without blemish." This is God's purpose and design for our lives. We cannot make ourselves blameless. We can desire this transformation and cooperate with God as day by day He makes us increasingly unblemished in His sight. It takes this joint effort where we long for this change and cooperate with God as He makes our lives as though we had always been flawless.

Observe that all of this takes place "in Him," in Jesus Christ. This phrase describes a very specific relationship with our Lord. This and other related phrases appear repeatedly in this epistle. When we have encountered them all, we will take time to focus carefully on the meaning Paul attaches to them. This is an additional emphasis on the fact that God is the one who works this miraculous transformation in us.

The idea of being "blameless" is a bit frightening to many believers. It speaks of perfection and we are keenly aware of the fact that only God is perfect. We must also remember that Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, that we must be "perfect as God is perfect." But the word here is different. It is "teleios" (τέλειος) and means "complete," "not flawless."

Look at verse four again. Observe that following the word "Him," there is a period followed by the words "in love." From this, it appears that the words "in love" are attached to verse five though a part of verse four. That is not the case. As indicated earlier, 1:3-14 form one long, but meaningful sentence. The words "in love" apply to verse four. The words "in love" identify that which motivated God to choose us to be holy and blameless.

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, Ephesians 1:5

Verse five has roused great controversy, though it was never a flash point in the early church. We need to look at what it means, what it says and what it does not say.

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Our text says "He predestinated us..." This however is not a new sentence, but a part of an existing one. The word "predestinated" is a good, biblical word. The Greek word is "prooridzo" (προορίζα χομπουνδω), a compound word. It is composed as follows:

- a. "Pro" means "before".
- b. "Horidzo" means "to mark out definitely," "to foreordain," "to set a boundary."

Paul specifically placed a strong emphasis upon the fact that this takes place in advance. Another emphasis is that these boundaries are set and were not intended to be changed. God never stopped wanting us to be His sons and daughters, members of His family.

Having said this, we all know that our Christian friends of a Calvinistic persuasion will interpret this one way and our friends of a more Wesleyan persuasion will view this another way. Still, God loves us both. The thing both groups have in common is that before creation, God decided that He wanted us to become members of His family. God "predestinated us to adoption as sons." The word for "adoption" is "huiiothesian" (ὑιοθεσίαν), a compound word. It is composed as follows:

- a. "Huios" means "son".
- b. "Thesis" means "placing".

In most instances, the use of compound words is a way of expressing strong emphasis. This word suggests the placing of a person as a son. The implication is that this person was not previously a natural son. In that culture, the quality of being a "son" had special significance. A son came under the protection and discipline of the father in a way that others would not. A son would be provided for in a way not extended to others. A son was the recipient of the father's teaching in a way others would not receive. A slave was part of the father's estate, but only a son could be an heir. A slave was considered personal property to a man. The slave could be kept or sold according to the needs or desires of the owner. A son, even an adopted son, was part of the father's design for the continuance of his family and estate after his demise. This is the way Paul understood our relationship to be with God the Father.

Paul continued by saying, "through Jesus Christ to Himself." Paul said that this adoption was accomplished through Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is an action of the Father. Jesus was the means the Father used to accomplish His will.

Paul gave us an insight into the way God did this. He said, "according to the kind intention of His will." The word translated "kind intention" is "eudokia" (εὐδοκία), which is a compound word. It is composed as follows:

- a. "Eu" means "well. or "good."
- b. "Dokeo" means "to think," "to seem good."

Here, again, the compound word was used to add very strong emphasis. One might translate this compound word as "the good, good pleasure." Some people see God as always looking for ways to discipline or punish us. Paul's picture, here, is one of God looking for ways to show us His kindness. The quality of God's character is evident in His intention to show kindness to those who are His children.

To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Ephesians 1:6

"To the praise of the glory of His grace" - This kind expression of God's character is intended to bring praise concerning the glory of God's grace. He has described God's grace as "glorious." It is more than loud, lavish praise. The word translated "glory" is

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"doxa" (δόξα) and comes from a root word that means "to think." It came to represent that which seems pleasant or good. It is to consider someone to have a good reputation. Thus, this word means "to hold in honor," "to bow in worship," "to stand in awe."

Paul spoke of "the glory of His grace." The grace of God, which is beyond the ability of any human being to comprehend, is so great that we worship, we stand in awe before it in His presence.

Paul continued, "He freely bestowed upon us in the beloved." This kindness is an expression of the glory of God's grace. It reflects how God habitually deals with us in spite of our wandering. Observe, Paul said, "He freely bestowed on us..." There is a lavishness in God's gift of kindness that reflects one of the central qualities of His nature. There is a boundlessness in God's grace that we can only imagine.

Paul spoke of Christ as "the beloved." This describes the way the Father thinks of the Son. There is an intense love relationship between them. It also describes how Paul views the Lord. This is a loving relationship that is available to every child of God.

Paul said of God's grace, "He freely bestows on us in the beloved." Paul was also saying that this grace is available to us in Christ. In saying this, Paul was also saying that it is uniquely available in Christ and no other way. There is a grace available to us in Jesus Christ of which the world knows absolutely nothing.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, Ephesians 1:7

Paul spoke carefully of the redemption process. Paul said, "In Him we have redemption through His blood." Simply put, redemption is tied to our relationship with Christ. Aside from Christ, there is no redemption and this is the emphasis of Paul's statement.

The words "in Him" describe a very special relationship we sustain with Christ. Paul states that "in Him" our relationship is such that we are released from our sin.

The idea of redemption has legal connotations in that culture. In a family, a younger brother could get into financial difficulties and when unable to pay his debt would be sentenced to prison. He would not be released until he paid the entire debt. The fact that he was in prison made it totally impossible for him to earn money to repay his debt. Barring outside intervention, he would spend his life in prison and his immediate family would face serious jeopardy. The older brother, the heir of the family, was required to "redeem" him, buy him back by paying the entire debt. This is the image the people of that day and culture would understand when Paul spoke of "we have redemption through His blood."

Paul then described this redemption by saying, "the forgiveness of our trespasses." The word translated "forgiveness" is "aphesis" (ἀφεσις) and means "pardon" or "remission." This word comes from the word "aphiemi" (ἀφίημι) which means to send forth, or "to forsake." This idea comes from the Old Testament sacrificial system. On the Day of Atonement, two animals were brought to the priest. The sins of the people were recited over the heads of the two animals. One was slain and used as the sacrifice. The second animal was led across the Kidron valley and up the mount of Olives and out into the wilderness to be abandoned there. It was a symbolic way to show that the sins of the people were separated from them and never to be remembered again. Our sins are separated from us never to return. It means the judge has dropped the charges. It means that though we once were guilty, the judge no longer holds these sins against us. Our record has been wiped clean. It is as though we never sinned, though we know exactly how we sinned

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Paul continued by speaking about, "according to the riches of His grace." This statement describes the character of the redemption that is ours. The riches one possesses identifies or determines the extent of the gift he or she is able to offer another individual. In this statement, Paul said that the riches of God's grace are limitless. Therefore, there can be no limits to the blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus.

Which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight Ephesians 1:8

You will observe that there is a period following the word "us" in our text. This is not true in the Greek text. As mentioned earlier, this sentence covers the material in 1:3-14. This very brief verse describes the manner in which God provides His blessing upon us. The word translated "lavished" is "perisseuo" (περισσεύω) and means "to exceed a certain number." It describes something that far exceeds what one might anticipate. In the Gospels, it is the word that was used to describe the abundant leftovers when the 5,000 had been fed. Paul used this word to describe the riches of God's grace. These lavish riches are far more than one might expect. It also stresses the fact that this is something that Christ has accomplished. It is not the result of our strenuous efforts.

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him Ephesians 1:9

Though the words "in all wisdom and insight" appear at the end of verse eight, they are really part of the content of verse nine. Observe how Paul continued, "in all wisdom and insight he made known to us the mystery of His will..." The word translated "wisdom" is "sophia" (σοφία). It is used to describe "cleverness," "practical wisdom," "education," "ethical conduct," "piety." One can sense Paul's struggle to describe the wisdom of God in terms which make sense to our finite minds. In great wisdom, God revealed to us "the mystery of His will." The word for "made known" is "gnorizo" (γνωρίζω). This does not mean to know everything about a certain subject. It is, rather, a gradual discovery. Bit by bit, God reveals to our struggling minds the mystery of His will. Left to ourselves, we could never grasp anything of God's will. In His limitless wisdom, God unfolds before our minds His will, which is shrouded in mystery.

The form of the word "made known" is an aorist active participle. In simple terms, this description identifies action which is ongoing and the emphasis is on the continuing nature of this action. In this instance, the translation might be, "He is continually revealing to us the mystery of His will." This description of the meaning of the word is in agreement with the ongoing nature of the word "made known."

Paul also spoke of "insight." The word is "phronesis" (φρόνησις) and means "prudence" or "insight." The question arises, what is the significance of Paul's use of both the words "wisdom" and "insight"? Simply put, "wisdom" reveals the content of God's mysterious will while "insight" suggests the purpose and significance of what is revealed.

Paul used the word "mystery" when speaking of God's will. The Greek word is strikingly similar – "mysterion" (μυστήριον). We think of mystery as something most difficult to comprehend. The Greek word does not deal with this difficulty so much as it does with the fact that this is something the initiated would grasp while others would be totally at a loss to grasp it. It is not a divine intent to keep people from knowing, but rather the unregenerate have no basis for grasping this mystery.

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Here again, Paul used the words, "according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him." Again, this statement exposes to our understanding the purpose and character of what God has done and is doing. God's desire for His people to gain some level of understanding of His will is an expression of His "kind intention," his motivation in dealing with his children. The kindness of God toward His adopted children moves Him to share His will for our understanding. This increases our ability to participate more fully in what our Father is doing in His world.

Observe that all of this is "which He purposed in Him." All of God's purposes are channeled through Christ and the intimate relationship we share with Christ and the Father. One of the reasons Christ was incarnated was that the Father wanted His adopted children to know, at least to the extent of our grasp, what He is like and what His purposes and desires for us really are.

With a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.
Ephesians 1:10

This verse may seem a bit out of place. It is not. The Greek text should help us at this point. Paul wrote, "With a view to an administration..." The Greek text is a bit different. It reads, "Which He purposed in Himself..." The word translated "purposed" is "pro-tithemai" (προτίθεμαι). This is a compound word and is composed this way:

- a. "Pro" means "above" or "before."
- b. "Tithemi" means "to place" or "to purpose."

It means to decide, to lay plans in advance. This word might well be translated "He Himself planned and kept on purposing." It is a stewardship, a plan that was in accord with the times. If one has centuries to accomplish his plans, then he will work in deliberate pains taking steps to achieve his goal. If, on the other hand, he might run out of time at any moment, his plan of action is much more streamlined and the goals more basic. Paul's mention of the fullness of time points to the latter plan of attack.

The words translated "the fullness of time" are most interesting.

- a. The word translated "fullness" is "pleroma" (πλήρομα) and means "full measure," "full development," "filled to the top."
- b. The word for "time" is "kairos" (καιρός) and speaks of a special time. There are two different words for time in Greek:
 1. Chronos – this is time as registered on the clock.
 2. Kairos – this is the fullness of time such as when Jesus came. It is not a set time, but when all things are in readiness, a very special time.

The latter designation is the one used in this instance. The way the word "kairos" is used here suggests a point in time when everything is set for God's will to be accomplished.. Because of that there is also a sense of immediacy involved. Observe that the word "time" is in the plural. Paul was not talking about a single point on the calendar or clock, but a series of situations that made it timely for God's plan to be accomplished.

Paul continued, "The summing up of all things in Christ." The word translated "summing up" is "anakephalaion" (ἀνακεφαλαίωμα) which is a compound word made up as follows:

- a. "Ana" means "severally," or in compound situations, as here, it may mean "repetition."

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b. "Kephalaioo" means "main point."

This is an idea rather than a single word. It means a repeating of the main point or summing up as written in the text.

Paul spoke of summing up all things "in the Christ." Everything will find its culmination, its main point in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Having made a broad statement – "summing up all things in Christ" – Paul described this situation in more careful detail. He said, "Things in the heavens." This tells us that the situation in the heavens is a part of God's will for His people. It also tells us that Christ is the one who administers the heavenly realm on behalf of the Father.

Paul also said, "and things upon the earth." To speak of things "in the heavens and things on the earth" is an all encompassing picture. It is a way of saying that all things everywhere will come together "in Christ." This is also the message of the first chapter of the book of Hebrews.

Also we have obtained an inheritance, having predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, Ephesians 1:11

The use of the word "also" indicates a continuation of the previous thought. This previous thought, verses nine and ten, deal with God's revelation of His will in Christ Jesus. In the same way that God purposed to bring all things together in Christ, He also provided an inheritance for us. You will remember that in verse five, Paul mentioned the fact that God predestined us to adoption as sons. Part of the consequence of adoption as sons is that we will be included in the inheritance which our Father has prepared for us.

The statement in the Greek text is a bit more direct. The word translated "obtained" is "ekkleroo" (ἐκκληρώω) which is a compound word and is composed as follows:

- a. "Ek" means "from."
- b. "Kleroo" literally means "to break." It means the division of the heritage or inheritance.

It is a picture of the dividing up of the family fortune upon the death of the father. Paul was saying that as adopted sons, we were remembered in the will and received an inheritance.

Observe that for the second time in this paragraph, Paul speaks of this as being predestined. This is something that God decided and enacted prior to the time that these people became believers in Christ. Indeed, it took place before there was a creation. This certainly is not an afterthought. This decision and action were a vital part of God's purpose from the foundation of the world.

Paul then gave a brief description of who God is. He is the one who "works all things after the counsel of His will." There are no casual events in the divine plan. Everything, for everyone, everywhere, is a part of His plan for all mankind prior to creation.

To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:12

The use of the words "to the end that" suggests a statement of purpose. All that God has done for and through our lives is for the purpose of enabling us to exist for the praise of His glory. This verse begins with the words, "to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ." It might be more understandable to say, "we who previously hoped in Christ."

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Neither Paul nor the Ephesians were the first to hope in Christ. They had, however, placed their hope in Christ prior to the writing of this letter.

We exist for the praise of the glory of God. That is the purpose of God for our lives. It follows, then, that if we fail to live for the glory of God, then our purpose is unfulfilled. In view of all that God has done for us, that is tragic at best.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13

Paul continued to talk about what is involved in being "in Christ." Paul carefully described their relationship with Christ:

- a. They had heard the message of the Gospel.
- b. They believed the message of the Gospel.
- c. They were sealed in Him (Christ) with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Again, Paul described a uniquely Christian experience. The word for "sealed" comes from the legal system. The terms of an agreement were written on a document and then a seal was affixed to it. This "seal" guaranteed the genuineness of the document and lends credence to its contents. Such a seal was also used to protect possessions and guarantee the dependability of an agreement. This is precisely what Paul identified here. The seal of the Holy Spirit upon their lives and relationship "in Christ" assures these Gentile Christians that they too are a vital part of this divine family.

Observe that Paul spoke of the Spirit as "the Holy Spirit of promise." In this passage, Paul dealt with the relationship of being "in Christ." The reference to the "Holy Spirit of promise" is a way of identifying the dependability of Christ. Before His crucifixion, Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit would lead them into all truth. To speak of the Spirit as "the Holy Spirit of promise" is to identify the fact that Jesus indeed kept His word in that instance and can be trusted to keep His word concerning eternal life.

Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:14

In this verse, Paul described the significance of the Holy Spirit of promise. In the King James Version, the word "pledge" is translated "earnest." This is an ancient idea that was introduced into the Greek language from the Phoenician. In ancient mideastern times, the pledge was a small leather pouch filled with some of the dirt from the field pledged for sale. The Greek word for this "pledge" is "arrabon" (ἀρραβών). It identified an option to buy, a financial deposit offered by the purchaser to guarantee his interest in a given purchase. If the potential purchaser faulted on the purchase, this earnest money would be forfeited. In our culture, "earnest money" is given when land is being sold. This is the purchasers way of saying that he pledge4s to buy the land. Incidentally, in modern Greece, the engagement ring is called "arrabona." The presence and active participation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is God's pledge that our future inheritance in heaven is secure. The Holy Spirit is God's pledge, His engagement ring, if you will, pledging that He will indeed take us unto Himself.

The next phrase is interesting. The text reads, "with a view to the redemption of God's own possession." The Greek text is more direct. One might translate it, "unto or until the

redemption of the purchased possession." We are the possession God redeemed. The redemption of which Paul spoke is only brought to completion when we receive our inheritance in His eternal presence. Indeed, the whole of the Christian life is an event, salvation followed by a process that culminates in our being received into eternal life.

The last phrase of the sentence is descriptive. It describes the purpose and direction of this redemption. God wants to share His eternal presence with us in His heavenly abode, but our redemption should also result in bringing praise to the glory of God. That is one of the purposes involved in our redemption.

Ephesians 1:15-23 – Paul Gives Praise for The Ephesians Through Christ

As we begin the study of this paragraph, we should keep in mind that the entire paragraph, in the Greek text, is a single sentence. We will need to keep this in mind as we research the verses of the sentence.

For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, Do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; Ephesians 1:15, 16

It is not surprising that Paul gave thanks for the faith of these Ephesian Christians. They had come out of a morally debauched lifestyle that was normal in that city. God had changed their lives and it was obvious to everyone who observed the way they lived. These verses give a clear understanding of the great love that Paul had for these transformed people. Paul is specific about his thanksgiving.

He gave thanks for their faith in Christ. When Paul first met these believers they had faith, but it was not in Christ. They believed in the idolatrous and adulterous worship of Diana. That has changed. They have placed their faith in Christ and trust Him in a culture that does not take such faith kindly. This is a wonderful thing.

Paul also gave thanks for "your love for all the saints." He spoke quite delicately here. In their former way of life, they were deeply involved in the adulterous worship of Diana, but there was no love involved. In this statement, Paul has identified the great change that took place in their lives. Now they have unlimited love for all the saints. It is love that makes no demands and does not require a response. It is to love just because they love. Here, again, Paul refers to the believers as "saints." He did not mean that they never made mistakes. He did mean that God had enabled them to live a holy life

Paul apparently mentions the Ephesian Christians in his prayers on a regular basis. This, of course, is important for every believer. We need to be praying for each other regularly. This gives us an insight into the place these Christians held in the life of Paul.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. Ephesians 1:17

In the next few verses, Paul clarified the content of his prayer on their behalf. He prayed that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (Christ)."

Observe the way Paul identified God. He spoke of two things.

- a. **"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ."** In the mind of Jesus, the Father was God. He deserved our Lord's praise and worship. You see evidence of this in the pray-

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ers of Jesus, especially in what we refer to as "the Lord's prayer." Jesus saw the Father as the source of the power He needed to perform the ministry to which He had been sent by the Father.

- b. **"The Father of glory."** The Greek text would literally be translated, "the Father of **the** glory." The idea of "Father" points to a number of responsibilities. It identifies source. Jesus said, "I live by the Father..." John 6:57. The idea of "Father" also carries the idea of provider, guide, the one who by His love instills a personal sense of worth in His beloved.

The word translated "glory" is "doxa" (δόξα). This literally identifies "something good," "something of excellent reputation." Biblical authors used the term to speak of our heavenly future. "Glory" was also used to describe the mystery, the awe, the wonder of God that is far beyond our ability to grasp. Paul has used the word in both senses here. He spoke of God as the one who has prepared our future bliss; the one who is so great our minds are totally helpless to grasp and understand all that He is in His greatness.

These people desperately needed wisdom to deal with the people still involved in their former way of life. When Paul spoke of a "spirit of wisdom" he did not speak of a body of information. He rather spoke of an attitude, an atmosphere, a discernment. It is a wise way of dealing with what they would see and understand about people and situations.

Paul also spoke of a "spirit of revelation." The word translated "revelation" is "apokalupsis".(ἀποκάλυψις). It is a compound word and literally means "to remove the lid," "to uncover," "to disclose." Again, Paul spoke of a "spirit of revelation." There are many things that are not immediately discernible to the untrained eye. This is especially true in the spiritual realm. Paul was praying that these Christians would have an attitude, an ability to discern the spiritual situations in which they found themselves. This would enable them to make wise decisions concerning people and the life of the church.

Paul qualified his prayer by saying "in the knowledge of Him." Paul knew that this gift of wisdom and revelation would not come as a package. The word translated "knowledge" is "epiginosko"(ἐπιγινώσκω). It means "to become fully acquainted with something or someone." This knowledge is "in Him," in Christ. The more we know Jesus the more spiritual knowledge and revelation we have.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, Ephesians 1:18

Paul spoke very carefully in this verse. He was convinced that it is most difficult to comprehend the hope of God's calling upon our lives. He began by praying, "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." The heart does not have eyes. Paul has used a figure of speech. Paul often spoke of discernment being in the heart, not the mind. The word translated "enlightened" is "photizo" (φωτίζω) which means "to illuminate" or "shed light upon some person or issue." The form of this word would suggest the word be translated "may be being enlightened." It describes an ongoing process rather than a single action. Paul described the ability to perceive at a much deeper level than before.

The use of the words "so that" suggest a coming statement of purpose. The purpose of this enlightenment was two-fold:

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- a. "That you may know what is the hope of His calling." The word translated "know" is "eido"(εἶδω) and means "to know," "to gaze with wide-eyed observation."

The word translated "hope" is "elpis" (ἐλπίς) and means "confident expectation." Note that Paul did not say, "the hope of your calling," he said, "the hope of His calling." When we think of hope, we tend to think about heaven. We have a hope of heaven, but that is not Paul's thought here. The word for "calling" is "klesis" (κλήσις) and speaks of "a calling," "a vocation," "the task to which a life is committed." We, as believers, have a confident expectation of the ministry of Christ through the lives of those who believe. We are absolutely certain that Christ has called us to be His servants and that He will work through us to do what we could never do by ourselves for the kingdom of God.

- b. "(That you may know) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Again, the word for "riches" is "ploutos" (πλοῦτος) and identifies "wealth," "having sufficient," "abundance," "great possessions." Interestingly, Paul was not talking about physical wealth. He spoke, rather, of a wealth or abundance of the glory. In verse 17, Paul spoke of "the Father of the glory..." In this instance he spoke of the "riches of the glory of His inheritance." He identified an abundance that inspires awe. This abundance has to do with the "glory," "the excellence," "the wonder that God has reserved for the saints," those holy ones He has redeemed from their evil past.

To be sure, God's inheritance is "in the saints." Everything God is and has, He has invested in His children. Just as all of a father's belongings are invested in his sons upon his death, so all that is our Father's is invested in us as His adopted children.

And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might Ephesians 1:19

The use of the word "and" suggests that this is a continuance of the information in the previous verse. There is frustration in the words of Paul. He wanted these believers to know, "eido" (εἶδω), to understand and become aware of, the surpassing greatness of God's power toward us. The idea of surpassing greatness does not seem too clear. The word translated "surpassing" is "huperballo" (ὑπερβάλλω) and is a compound word and is composed as follows:

- a. "Huper" means to place above, to be superior
- b. "Ballo" means to send or throw.

This word was used to describe something that excelled beyond all others.

Again, the word translated "greatness" is "megathos" (μέγας) and means "large," "greatness." By adding the word "surpassing" to the word "greatness," Paul has added strong emphasis to an already strong image that is beyond our comprehension. Paul was saying that there are powers in this world, but the power of God surpasses all other powers. This power is made available and effective in our lives because we believe in Him.

Observe that following the word "believe" there is a period in our text. As we indicated earlier that is not true in the Greek text. There is rather another comma. This is part of the same sentence that makes up the entirety of this paragraph.

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Paul continued, "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might." The word "these" refers to the explanations Paul has given in the previous two verses.

Paul is struggling for words. He dealt with superlatives that were frustrating because they did not adequately express what he had in mind to convey, but could find no more adequate words. He groped for words that would express just how great God's power really was and how available it was for the believer. He knew that when he had done his best to express this, still it did not express the depth he wanted to convey.

Observe that Paul made it clear that this "knowing" was directed toward those who believe. It was not directed toward general knowledge. Observe that Paul spoke of "these" (plural). It is important for us to determine just what "these" refers to in the text. Paul listed three things that were involved:

- a. Know what is the hope of His calling. Verse 18
- b. Know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. verse 19
- c. Know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to those who believe. verse 19

Paul then qualified his statement by saying, "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might." This last statement qualifies everything Paul said in the long sentence. All of these things are in keeping with the omnipotence of God and the way He uses His limitless power. This is a marvelous thought.

Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:20

Paul further qualified his statement by indicating that all of these things are brought about through Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus is the vehicle through whom God does all that He wills to do in His domain.

Paul indicates two specific acts of the Father that serve as verification of all He does and all He has promised:

- a. **"When He raised Him from the dead"** – the resurrection is the evidence of the great power of the Father to do that which He would do in the world. This is the ultimate visual evidence of the omnipotence of God
- b. **"And seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places"** – This is a word picture taken from their regal system. The person who sat at the king's right hand was the second most powerful person in the realm. From that position of privilege, this person was the one through whom requests would come to the king. He would intercede before the king on behalf of person who had needs.

The fact that this takes place in the heavenly places is an indication that this place of power is greater than all others.

Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:21

In this verse, Paul identified five levels of power that existed in that day:

- a. **All rule** – the word for "rule" is "arche" (ἀρχὴ) and identifies "a magistrate" or "principality."
- b. **All authority** – The word translated "authority" is "exousia" (ἐξουσία) and means "jurisdiction," or "authority." It is a potentate who is above officials.
- c. **All power** – This word is "dunamis" (δύναμις) that means "power not necessarily associated with an office."

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- d. **All dominion** – The word translated "dominion" is "kuriotes" (κυριότης). This is a form of power that controls the government.
- e. **Every name that is named** – this is a cultural designation. In that culture they thought that there was power in a name. When Paul spoke of every name that is named, he was talking about the power that these people associated with a person's name. This is part of what Jesus meant when He talked about praying in His name.

Having mentioned these five outstanding levels of power, Paul indicated that Jesus was far above all of them. He continued by indicating that this surpassing power of Jesus was not only true in that day, but that it would continue throughout the ages to come. This was always going to be true.

And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, Ephesians 1:22

The use of the word "and" indicates that the author is going to continue the line of thought from the previous verse. Paul used two expressions in this verse to identify the power vested in Jesus Christ.

- a. **"He put all things in subjection under His feet."** – You may remember that this is a passage that is quoted in the first chapter of Hebrews as the author attempted to describe just how powerful Jesus was and how much superior He was to the angels.

This is a picture of Christ having power over all things and beings in creation. You may remember that when a conquering general met the defeated army, two spears were stuck into the ground and a third spear was lashed between them about 18 inches above the ground. To symbolize their subservience to the conqueror, the conquered general, his officers and men were forced to crawl under the spear, in the presence of the conquering general. Paul's image here is a vivid one. It is a way of saying that all evil forces are defeated in Jesus Christ and that He, in fact, rules over them.

- b. **"He gave him as head over all things to the church"** – In a totally different realm, Paul attempted to describe the greatness of Christ. He pointed out that Jesus was the head over the church. It is a way of saying that He is the final authority in the church. Having said this, the inference is that Christ is the head over all things. That is exactly the impression that Paul wanted to convey.

Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:23

Paul was still attempting to describe the indescribable greatness of Christ. He chose to use the image of the human body as an example. He identified the church as the body of Christ. In the human body, the head, the mind, controls most everything that happens in that body, both voluntarily and involuntarily. The parallel is obvious. Paul used this parallelism to point out that Christ is the head, the mind that controls everything that takes place in the body, the church. The church exists to promote His cause and to do His bidding. The rest of the body is available to do as the head commands. The body is, in fact, His servant. It exists to do His bidding, to promote His purposes.

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Observe that Paul said, "of Him who fills all in all." This is a carefully worded statement. It is not just that Jesus is the greatest power. It is that He is the only power in the church.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

THEIR REDEMPTION AND ADOPTION IN CHRIST

EPHESIANS 2:1 – 22

There are only two paragraphs in the second chapter of Ephesians. On the following table, write a brief summary of seven words or less for each paragraph.

2:1-10	
2:11-22	

2. In 2:1-10, Paul dealt, in depth, with the spiritual journey of these Ephesian Christians.
1. 2:1 is a part of a sentence that encompasses 2:1-7. In this verse, Paul spoke of their former life in terms of "trespasses" and "sins."
 1. Define "trespasses."
 2. Define "sins."
 3. What is the difference between them?
 - b. In 2:2, Paul used three phrases to describe the powers that were at work in their former way of life.
 1. Identify the three phrases.
 2. Describe the power Paul identified in each phrase.
 - c. In 2:3, Paul, again, used three statements to describe their former way of life.
 1. Identify the three statements.
 2. Describe what Paul meant by each statement.
 3. What is the significance of Paul's use of the word "we" instead of "you"?
 - d. In 2:4, Paul mentioned two characteristics of God.
 1. What are these characteristics?
 2. Why is it important to mention these in relationship with these Christians and their former way of life?
 - e. In 2:5, Paul drew a contrast.
 1. What two things are being contrasted?
 2. Describe the two things being contrasted.
 - f. In 2:6, Paul identified two more things God did while we were sinners.
 1. What did God do?
 2. What is the significance of these two things?
 3. Look at the tenses of the verbs Paul used. What does this tell us?
 4. Paul spoke carefully when he said, "seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." What did he mean by this?
 - g. In 2:7, Paul identified the divine purpose for the things he described in 2:5, 6.
 1. What purpose did he describe?
 2. What did he mean by this?
 - h. In 2:8, 9, Paul gave a reason an explanation concerning the previous sentence, 2:1-7.
 1. What reason did Paul offer?

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2. In verse 9, Paul restates his statement in 2:8, but from the opposite side of the coin.
 - a. What was the original statement in 2:8?
 - b. What is added by the negative restatement in 2:9?
- i. In 2:10, Paul gave an explanation for the reason stated in 2:8, 9.
 1. What does 2:10 add to our understanding of 2:8, 9?
 2. Why was the statement in 2:10 necessary when the basic idea had already been stated?
3. In 2:11-22, Paul changed the focus of his picture of the spiritual journey of these Ephesian Christians.
 - a. In 2:11, Paul reminded them of the way Jews described them.
 1. What did Paul mean when he called them "Gentiles in the flesh"?
 2. There is a contrast in this verse.
 - a. Identify the two contrasted groups.
 - b. What is the significance of contrasting these two groups?
 - b. In 2:12, Paul reminded them, again, of their former relationship with Christ.
 1. Describe the five ways Paul pictured this relationship.
 2. What does Paul gain by describing, again, these relationships?
 - c. In 2:13, Paul contrasted this information with that which was presented in 2:11, 12.
 1. What contrast does Paul make?
 2. What has Paul added to our understanding by this contrast?
 3. What is added to Paul's message by the careful inclusion of the words "in Christ"?
 - d. In 2:14-16, Paul gave an explanation of his statements in 2:11-13. In 2:14-16, Paul described the divine strategy to bring peace to the Jews and Gentiles.
 1. What was this plan?
 2. How did Paul describe the way it works?
 - e. In 2:17, Paul indicated that Jesus came to preach "peace" both to Jews and Gentiles. Why was this important to Paul's argument?
 - f. In 2:18, Paul suggested the importance of his statement in 2:17.
 1. Explain what Paul said in 2:18.
 2. How does this impact his statement in 2:17?
 3. What did Paul add to his message by including the words "in one Spirit"?
 - g. In 2:19, Paul described the results, the consequences of the things he taught in the previous sentence.
 1. In this verse Paul used four designations. What are they? What do they mean?
 2. In these four designations, there is a contrast.
 - a. What is being contrasted?
 - b. What does each of the contrasted elements mean?
 - c. What is the significance of this contrast?
 - h. Ephesians 2:20 is a continuation of 2:19.
 1. What does it add to the message of 2:19?
 2. What is the significance of Paul's reference to Jesus as "the cornerstone"?
 - i. In 2:21, 22, Paul goes a step further concerning his statement in 2:18, 19.

1. Paul began both verses with the words "in whom." About whom was he speaking?
 2. What does Paul say about this person?
 3. What do these verses say about the Jewish and Gentile believers?
 4. What inferences can one make about the negative side of this statement?
4. Review your study of the second chapter. As you review your work, write down what you discover concerning your own relationship with Christ and with other believers of many backgrounds.

LESSON 2: EPHESIANS 2:1 - 22

THEIR REDEMPTION AND ADOPTION IN CHRIST

Introduction

There are only two paragraphs in the second chapter of Ephesians. A summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

2:1-10	From Spiritual Death to Resurrection Life
2:11-22	Christ Changed Aliens to God's Temple

Ephesians 2:1-10 – From Spiritual Death To Resurrection Life

It is important to remember that there are only three sentences in this paragraph. The sentences are as follows:

- Ephesians 2:1-7
- Ephesians 2:8, 9
- Ephesians 2:10

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1

Beginning the chapter with the word "and" suggests that this is vitally attached to the previous chapter. Paul described their former spiritual condition in the words, "you were dead in trespasses and sins." "Dead" is a description of their former spiritual condition. The source of this death was their slavery to sin. Observe that Paul spoke of both "trespasses" and "sins."

- a. "**Trespasses**" – the word is "paraptoma" (παράπτωμα) It describes a "blunder," "a false step," "to fall away," "a deviation from uprightness and truth." It is the opposite of a righteous act. This action is sinful.
- b. "**Sins**" – The word is "harmartia" (ἁμαρτία). It means "to miss the mark," "to be morally oblique." This word describes sin as the principle or source of action. It is the motive, the principle that motivates sinful actions.

One must now ask why Paul used two different words to identify two closely related ideas. Though the two concepts are similar, they describe two totally different things. A "trespass" identifies an action that is the opposite of righteousness. "Sins," on the other hand, identify a motive that is behind the trespass. Paul was saying that they were involved in both.

In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Ephesians 2:2

This is a continuation of the previous verse. It is a way to describe their former life as a total immersion in sinful motives and actions. In this verse, Paul used three descriptions to identify the power structure of their former way of life.

- a. **According to the course of this world** – The word "course" can be misleading. The word is "aion" (αἰών) and is literally translated "age." It is a description of

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the way things happen in the "world" as opposed to the way things happen in the church. Paul said that their spiritual demise was totally involved in the way a sinful society functions. They were a vital part of a society of spiritual death.

- b. **According to the prince of the power of the air** – "Prince of the power of the air" is a name, in the New Testament, that is used to identify Satan. Paul was candidly saying that their former way of life was under the control of Satan. He was saying that their former lifestyle was governed by principles and morals of Satan.
- c. **"Of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."** – his spirit is at work controlling the lives of those who disobey God. The illogical things evil men do are the product of the work of the evil spirit, not the positive human mind. Notice that Paul spoke of them as "the sons of disobedience." They are part of Satan's family just as we are part of God's family. They reflect family characteristics just as the saints reflect the character of God. What we have here is two families, two kingdoms locked in a life or death combat.

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:3

In this verse, Paul attempts to describe something of the inner workings of their former lives. Notice that he said "we" not "you." This suggests that Paul included himself in this picture, not just the Ephesian Christians. For that matter, it is true of all who believe in Christ. Paul made three statements about this former life:

- a. **Lived in the lusts of our flesh** – It is not surprising that he began here. This is Ephesus, the home of the adulterous worship of Diana. Their former lives and worship were characterized by this lustful way of living. Paul was saying that the basic motive for life was fleshly desires. Self-satisfaction was their ruling motive and these believers were once just exactly what the other Ephesians are now.
- b. **Indulging the desires of the mind** – The Greek text reads just slightly differently. It reads, "Doing the things willed by the flesh." Either way, the will is the source of our disobedience. Paul contrasted the flesh, in terms of will and action, with the Spirit. The desire of the flesh is the source of evil. He did not say that the flesh was evil, but it can lead us there. Paul identified these Ephesian Christians as formerly children of wrath, sinners, Satan's children who were bound for punishment. Paul ended the statement by saying that they had been no different from any other person in Ephesus. Paul did, however, include himself when he said this. He said, "we too all formerly lived." He was not just limiting this to those who happened to live in the evil city of Ephesus.
- c. **By nature children of wrath** – When Paul added the words "by nature," he suggested that this was not just an outgrowth of a sinful act. It was more. He suggested that this condition was an outgrowth of their sinful nature prompting them to participate in sinful actions. The root of their problem was a sinful nature.

Observe that Paul spoke of them as "children of wrath." In this statement, Paul described the eventual consequences of their former despicable way of life. Their way of life would, of necessity, bring upon them the wrath of a holy God.

There is also the hint of a contrast here. In this chapter, Paul described both their former, wrathful way of life and their present, holy lifestyle.

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*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
Ephesians 2:4*

This verse is a part of the sentence 2:1-7. We will need to keep this in mind as we study. The subject is "God." You will notice, however, that this part of the sentence begins with the word "but." This suggests that a strong contrast is in progress. The material in the previous verse is being contrasted with the material in this verse. Paul shifted the focus away from their sin and toward a picture of what God is like. Paul mentioned two things about the nature of God in this verse:

- a. **God is "rich in mercy"** – This was a stark contrast with the idols these Ephesian Christians had formerly served. The idols these people had served were known to be merciless at best, frightening at least. Every sacrifice they made was in fear of what would happen to them if they did not make that sacrifice. Paul focused on the mercy of God that looked for ways to benefit and bless His people, those who worshipped Him.
- b. **God is a God of love** – There is a very subtle contrast in the focus upon the love of God. The worship of Diana as the goddess of fertility was essentially an experience of lust. Paul, on the other hand was talking about Jehovah as a God of real love. It would not be hard for these Ephesian Christians to see the stark difference between the lust of their former lives and the love of God for redeemed sinners. This is God's love. It speaks of origin and source. At root, God is love. This is a love that is initiated in God; not a response to our love and affection.

*Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ
by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:5*

The word "even" is a translation of the word "kai" (καί) which is usually translated "and", but on occasion might be translated "even." The effect of this is to add emphasis to Paul's statement.

The verse begins with a surprise. It is shocking that God "made us alive" even when we were dead in our transgressions. Paul has been describing God's gracious acts of mercy. In this verse, Paul stressed the surprising fact that God expressed His great love for us "while we were dead in our transgressions." He did not wait until we changed our ways or repented of our evil past. He risked everything. He sacrificed Himself to offer us redemption that we could still refuse. This is one facet of the grace of God that we will never be able to comprehend.

Paul said, "(He) made us alive together with Christ." Paul was suggesting at least a couple of things:

1. Our former lifestyle was a way of death.
2. To be "alive together with Christ" is to share His resurrection life. From the way this is written, we understand Paul was not talking only of eternal life beyond the grave, but also in the here and now. What a joy!

The final statement in this verse is an exclamation, "By grace you have been saved." This is a way of giving strong emphasis to the statement. It is also a summary of what Paul has been saying. Here again, repetition is his way of adding strong emphasis to his message.

*And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in
Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6*

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The use of the word "and" suggests that this verse is strongly tied to the content of the previous verse and is of equal importance.

In this verse, Paul makes two statements about what God has done in the life of the believer. The statements are these:

- a. **Raised us up with Him** – Paul identified our resurrection with the resurrection of Jesus. We share a resurrection with Jesus. The timing of this statement is extremely important. Observe, that Paul did not say, "He will raise us." He said, "He raised us", past tense. Those of us who are redeemed now live a resurrection life. This does not exclude being raised to everlasting life beyond the grave, but we are raised. We are raised with Christ. We share His resurrection life. It makes our present life, different than it would otherwise be.
- b. **Seated us with Him in the heavenly places** – again, this does not say, "He will seat us with Him in heavenly places." This is clearly in the past tense. "He seated us with Him (Christ) in heavenly places. This is in the Aorist tense, which deals with the action not the time, but describes simple past action. Whatever this means, it is already accomplished. This is a scene from a royal court and the people would understand it immediately. The king would allow only his closest advisors and people he appointed to power to be seated with him at the throne. The person at his right hand was the most powerful and trusted person in the realm. This is the place that Jesus occupies in the heavenly throne. This verse indicates that we are - not will be – seated with Him (Christ) in the heavenly places. This could mean that it has been decided that we will someday be seated with Christ. It more probably means that we are already afforded that position.

That position, with Christ, is the place of greatest power in the realm. It is the person most trusted, most powerful, the one who has the greatest opportunity to intercede with the king. If you check the rest of the New Testament it is clear that we are encouraged to "ask largely that our joy may be full." We are invited to share with Jesus that position of privilege. We, in Christ, have the greatest power in the kingdom. We, in Christ, share the position of greatest opportunity to intercede before the Father, the king of the eternal kingdom, for the things that we need or that we know are in the best interest of His kingdom. Without the sacrifice of Jesus, we would not be allowed into the holy presence of the Father at all.

If you observe this verse again, it is clear that twice in the verse Paul speaks of being "with Him" and once he speaks of being "In Christ Jesus." Strategic emphasis is placed upon the fact that this is a part of the result of our relationship with God "in Christ.

In order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7

The words "in order that" suggests that a statement of purpose is forthcoming. Paul clearly identified the timing of what he describes here – "In the ages to come." This does not indicate that there is no evidence of this in the present. He is simply saying that the underlying purpose here has to do with eternity.

Paul's statement of purpose, here, begins with the words "He might show..." The word translated "show" is "endeiknumi" (ἐνδείκνυμι) and is a compound word:

- a. "En" means "in" and suggests instrumentality.

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b. "Deiknuo" means "to show."

The idea of showing something is clear enough without grammatical digging. The word "show," in this case, however, carries with it the idea of instrumentality. The things just previously discussed are intended to be instrumental in conveying certain information that this verse will clarify.

First, the form of this word suggests action that will begin and continue. In this instance, one might translate the words, "in order that in the ages to come He might begin to show and not stop showing..." The thing that God wants to go on showing is "the surpassing riches of His grace."

Again, Paul is groping for words because the idea is so far beyond human comprehension. The words "surpassing riches" need careful scrutiny. The word for surpassing is "huperballo" (ὑπερβάλλω) This compound word, used for strong emphasis, breaks down in this manner:

a. "Huper" means "over" or "abundant."

b. "Ballo" means "to throw." It describes the ability of a person to throw an object much farther than anyone could anticipate.

The word translated "riches" is "ploutos" (πλοῦτος) and means "abundance," "filled full beyond expectation."

The choice of these two words – "surpassing" and "riches" – give us an impression of the way Paul viewed the grace of God. It is beyond the ability to describe.

Paul continued by pointing out that this grace expresses something of the nature of God – His kindness. The word "kindness" is "chrestotes" (χρηστότης) and means "to be morally good and gracious," "to display excellence in gentleness of demeanor." God showed His kindness in bestowing upon us His grace. This is especially significant because we are totally undeserving. God planned the demonstration of His mercy and kindness to undeserving human beings long before there was a creation and carried out that mercy in the cross, long before it was to be revealed in heaven. As Paul has expressed it repeatedly in these verses, this is "in Christ Jesus."

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; Ephesians 2:8

The use of the word "for" suggests that a reason, an explanation is forthcoming. This is the second time in this paragraph that Paul has stated that we have been saved by grace through faith. In both the Old and New Testament serious repetition is a strong form of emphasis. It is so in this case as well.

Observe how carefully Paul spoke. He said, "BY grace you have been saved THROUGH faith." It is the grace of God that brings about this transformation of our lives. At the same time, it does not take place without faith being placed in Jesus Christ. This suggests that though faith was active in this saving process, it was not the empowerment. It was only the means whereby the miracle was brought to fruition.

Characteristically, Paul went on to give the necessary disclaimer. He said, "and that not of yourselves." It is not something for which we can take credit. It is not the result of our action, but of God's. Paul continued in order to explain what this gift really is, "it is the gift of God." It is a life changing experience that comes to us as a gift from God. We can take no credit for the change whatsoever. The repetition is not a word-for-word repeat. It is rather a repeated idea in different words.

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Not as a result of works, that no one should boast. Ephesians 2:9

This may sound like an afterthought. It is not. It is really a repetition of the statements of the previous verse for purposes of emphasis. In any such repetition there is usually an added piece of information added to the repeated idea. That is true in this instance as well. The repeated idea comes in the form of different words which are more specific. He said, "not as the result of works." Previously he wrote, "and that not of ourselves." This statement is broad. It is true, but quite general. In this verse, Paul gave a specific example of what he was trying to say. Having come out of a works-righteousness background, as many others had, he wanted it to be very clear that he was not pointing in this direction.

He continued with an explanation of the reason he had said this and then repeated it with emphasis. He said, "that no one should boast." It is easy for people to take credit for the changes in their lives. For one thing, boasting is contrary to a divine instruction. It is always inappropriate for the people of God to boast of themselves. Our boasting is only in God. Second, boasting would be false. There is honestly nothing about which we can boast. This is something that God has done and we must always keep that in perspective.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

The use of the word "for" suggests that a reason, an explanation is forthcoming. Here Paul repeats his thesis again, "We are His workmanship." For purposes of emphasis, Paul again stresses the fact that the miraculous change that took place in our lives is something for which we can claim no credit. This is something that God did. Paul wrote with great craft. The word translated "workmanship" is "poiema" (ποίημα) and means "that which is made." It is the picture of a craftsman busy at work creating something that is astounding. He created something astounding out of a nothing. We are living evidence of the tremendous power of God to take the wrecks of lives and transform them into trophies of His grace.

We are "created in Christ Jesus." The word for "create" is "ktizo" (κτίζω) which emphasizes the ownership more than it does the act of putting something together. This word was used to describe a person who founded a place or colony. He was the one who changed a nowhere into a spot on the map. This may seem strange. It isn't. The statement assumes that God is the one who performed that creative miracle and then states that because this is true, we belong to Him, He has a claim on our lives. The place of this transforming miracle was "in Christ Jesus." Without His participation, our lives would never have been changed.

Again, the use of the word "for" suggests an explanation is in progress. Paul said, "for good works." Having our lives changed is wonderful, but this is not the single purpose of our redemption. Our lives were transformed so that we would invest ourselves in such a way that "good works" would characterize the way we live. The opposite side of this is that if there fails to be any evidence of good works in our lives, then one of the purposes of our redemption has been frustrated. What qualifies as "good works"? The word for "good" is "agathos" (ἀγαθός) and speaks of "virtue," "the beautiful," "that which is beneficial." "Good works" are not necessarily the activities of the "do-gooders" of the world. It is the investment of the self in those things that are virtuous and are beneficial to the lives of others. This word, however, points more to the spiritual than to the humanitarian.

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Paul continued, "which God prepared beforehand." The word "which" refers to "good works." It is not that God prepared the good works. It is that which God prepared before the foundation of the world, that we should make a daily life of "good works." This was His master design for our lives.

The form of the word "walk" is interesting. It is aorist active subjunctive. It would look like this:

- a. Aorist tense – this is simple past action.
- b. Active voice – the subject initiates the action
- c. Subjunctive mood – this is the mood of possibility.

The possibility here is that though it was God's design for our lives it remains to be seen if we will be willing to participate on that level.

Ephesians 2:11-22 – Christ Changed Aliens Into God's Temple

Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—Ephesians 2:11

Verses 11 and 12 form a single sentence. The use of the word "therefore" suggests that we are coming to a conclusion based on the foregoing material. By the use of the word "remember," Paul points these Gentile Christians to focus on their former life. He will use this word again in this sentence. This verse contains several words that emphasize what Paul is trying to say. The use of the word "you" is a case in point. He went on to refer to them as, "Gentiles in the flesh." Paul was writing to people who were not Jews. The term "Gentile" in the Hebrew is "goy" (גוי) and means "nation." In terms of derision, it came to be thought of as heathen. In the Greek there are two words to identify people who are not Jews.

- a. "Hellen" (Ἕλληνας) – this word focuses on Greeks who were often thought of as barbarians by the Jews.
- b. "Ethnos" (ἔθνος) from which we get the English word "heathen." In this case it is a religious connotation that was derogatory to say the least. In many cases, the word would be said with a sneer. Paul's intent here is to point out that these people were in fact heathen but it was not a thing of derision for Paul, but a statement of fact that reminded them that they came from a background where God was not central in their lives, but the idols were.

The word "ethnos" was the word that Paul used in this context. When Paul added the words, "Gentiles in the flesh" he was making a distinction that the Jews would regularly make. He was pointing to the fact that these non-Jews were not circumcised.

Paul, then, proceeded to give another identification of the Gentile presence, "who are called the uncircumcision." Here again, the emphasis is that they are not circumcised. Circumcision was the way the Jews dealt with whether a person was a part of the covenant or not. The emphasis in this phrase is the fact that they were not part of the covenant more than they were asserting that these people were not Jews.

Paul continued by emphasizing this identification issue again. He said, "by the so-called circumcision." They were the people who thought of themselves as a part of the covenant due to the fact that they were indeed circumcised. There is a level of pride of station evidenced in these statements. They were quite happy to take a position that would

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elevate their position by excluding those who did not meet a standard set by people and not by God.

Paul made a serious contrast in this verse. He said, "which is performed in the flesh by human hands." This is a picture that refers to the act of circumcision. In these words, Paul made a contrast between those whose claim to the covenant had to do with their own actions as opposed to the picture in the previous verses where God was the one who made the difference in the lives of these people.

Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:12

This is the second time Paul instructed these Gentile Christians to "remember." In this half of the sentence, Paul stressed the consequences of the facts established in verse 11. He listed five consequences of their Gentile orientation:

- a. **"You were separated from Christ."** Having been Gentiles involved in idolatry, these Ephesian Christians had no personal relationship with Christ in terms of salvation before they accepted Christ under the ministry of Paul.
- b. **"Excluded from the commonwealth of Israel"** – This is another way of saying that they were not involved in the covenant. Israel was a nation, a commonwealth. God had an exclusive relationship with Israel. Being outside that nation, these Ephesians were outside the covenant. This was a dramatic way to stress the fact that these former pagans did not belong.
- c. **"Strangers to the covenants of promise"** – The word "strangers" was often translated "foreigners." It stresses a person who does not belong, one who has no privileges and no protection as others in the country had. These people were not citizens of the nation of Israel and they had no rights or privileges. They had no access to the covenants God had made with the people of Israel.
- d. **"Having no hope"** – God was the only one who could give them hope. They, however, did not have any part with His covenant people. They were doomed to hopelessness without God. Their idols certainly could offer them no hope such as God gave to Israel. Paul is stressing just how hopeless their situation was.
- e. **"Without God in the world"** – Every generation must discover that the world is a very unforgiving place. Every person needs someone who can be their strength when the tragedies of life move in on them. These Ephesian people had no one. Their heathen past offered them no hope, just a lot of fear. They lived in a dangerous world, but they were there without any hope or help. This, of course, is the plight of every person without God.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13

This verse is a sentence all by itself. The words "but now" indicate that a very strong contrast is unfolding. The contrast is between their former state without Christ and their present condition being "in Christ." Paul used synonyms to speak of being "without God" and being "in Christ." The synonyms are:

- a. "Without God" was spoken of as "far off." This describes being out of the family, an alien, with all the political ramifications that involves.

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- b. "In Christ" was spoken of as "brought near." This, on the other hand, describes what it is like to be in the family. It identifies the place one has under family care and responsibility.

This, of course, was accomplished by the blood of Christ. Because this is true, no personal accomplishment can be claimed in regard to the transformation of the life and the provision of benefits that are a part of being in God's family.

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, Ephesians 2:14

We must keep in mind that 2:14-16 form a single sentence. Again, the word "for" indicates that an explanation or reason is about to be given. Paul begins with an announcement. Christ is our peace. Peace is not produced by our own power or strategy. We have been restored to God by the sacrifice of Jesus. We did not have to meet conditions before God would accept us. We did not have to change our sinful ways in order to merit His provision for our place in the family. God simply made redemption and peace available to us. It was ours for the taking. This peace is not the absence of war, but a description of life in the presence of God.

Notice how Paul proceeded. Paul said, speaking of God, "He made both groups into one." The way this is written, Paul presented a double reference.

- a. He referred to the family and alien situation that he had emphasized just previously.
- b. In doing this, Paul also referred to the separation between Jew and Gentile.

Paul touched on a very delicate situation in this verse. The city of Ephesus was definitely a Gentile city. There were, however, a band of Jews in almost every city of commerce in that part of the world. The two groups hated each other with a passion. Paul was talking specifically when he said, "He broke down the barrier of the dividing wall." The separation between the two groups could hardly be overestimated. God destroyed this barrier by making the two groups into one group. God did not make all the Jews into Gentiles nor did He make all the Gentiles into Jews. Rather, He made both the Jews and Gentiles into God's family.

By abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, Ephesians 2:15

In this verse, Paul begins to describe how God made one new group of the two factions. He said, "By abolishing in His flesh the enmity." Jesus" took the enmity that existed and destroyed it in His dying on the cross for both groups. The word translated "enmity" is "echthra" (ἔχθρα) and identifies an enemy. It focuses on the hatred one reserves for an avowed enemy. It further involves exclusion, keeping someone outside. Jesus destroyed this ancient suspicion and mutual rejection in His crucifixion. Jesus did not abolish the law. He plainly said he did not come to destroy the law, but to fill it full.

Jesus did destroy the double exclusion created by the laws and ordinances. These were the rules that separated Jews from Gentiles. They were the rules that separated family from non-family. In Himself, Jesus did away with both camps. He replaced these hostile camps with one inclusive camp. When there is no enemy, there is the possibility for peace.

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And might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. Ephesians 2:16

The use of the word "and" suggests a continuation of the material from the previous verse. Jesus' approach to peace was different. We try to bring both feuding factions together to make compromises. Jesus removed the whole structure so that there would be no wall to raise; no issues to defend; no compromises to make. He made the two groups into one single group. He focused the attention of the new, inclusive group on God. He was able to do this through the cross. In the cross, Jesus did away with the hatred that existed between the two groups. This does not mean that there was not still some hatred between the two groups. There was and there still is. It means that the root of the problem was eliminated in making one group of the two. There are always some people who will hold on to former divisions, but their positions are groundless within the body of Christ.

And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; Ephesians 2:17

Again, 2:17, 18 form a single sentence. The use of the word "and" suggests that Paul is going to continue the thought presented in verse 16. Jesus came to preach peace to both groups. It was to end the hostilities for the Jews. It was also intended to end the hostilities for the Gentiles. This was the first time that both groups were dealt with on the same level. Previously, both groups took a higher view of themselves than of the other group. This was, essentially, a removing of the differences.

Observe that for a second time, Paul used the references to those who were "far off" and those who were "near." Obviously, those who were "far off" were the Gentiles. Those who were "near" were the Jews. Jesus preached exactly the same message to both groups. It was one more way to illustrate the fact that the two groups were on equal ground. In the sight of God, one was not more important than the other. Only then could He bring the two together.

For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:18

Again, the word "for" suggests a coming explanation. The word translated "through" "dia" (διὰ) suggests one's origin or source. This was a very important distinction to make. People who feel superior to others would want one way for them to get to the Father and a different way for all others. This would protect their advantage that they would feel was deserved because they were more important. The source of our help is "through Him." Paul was saying that both groups have access, the same access, in one Spirit to the Father.

The word translated "access" is "prosagoge" (προσαγωγή) and is a compound word:

- a. "Pros" means "toward."
- b. "Ago" means "to lead" or "drive toward."

This combined word was used to describe the freedom that some people had to enter the king's presence without an invitation. This was afforded to people the king was very fond of or people who held positions of great responsibility and authority.

This access, however, is through "one Spirit." Though the text does not say so specifically, it is generally agreed that the "Spirit" in question here is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the one who makes it possible for us to come into the Father's presence. This is one of the vital ministries of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is interesting that the

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Scriptures speak of Jesus interceding at the Father's right hand on our behalf. These scriptures also speak of the Spirit as interceding on our behalf before the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, Ephesians 2:19

Though our Bibles break it down differently, 2:19-22 form a single sentence. The words translated "so then" should really be translated "then therefore." This latter translation is much stronger. It indicates that a conclusion is about to be presented. Paul is going to present the conclusion of the argument that he has been presenting in the paragraph up to this point.

In this verse there is a very strong contrast. The contrast has to do with the identity of the Gentiles to whom Paul is writing. He begins the contrast by giving two ways to identify these Gentiles:

- a. **Strangers** – A stranger is a foreigner, a person who does not belong to the location in which they presently find themselves. This deals with one who represents a foreign nationality. In this case, Paul was talking about anyone who was not a Jew.
- b. **Aliens** – this points to one who is not a citizen. This is a person who has no political identity. He cannot vote, he cannot own property, this person has absolutely no civil rights to which he could appeal in the case that someone took advantage of him.

In the second part of this verse, Paul gives the other side of this contrast.

- a. **"Fellow citizens with the saints"** – These people have the same allegiance with every other believer, Jew or Gentile. They belong. They are not slaves nor are they "illegals." They have claim for protection under the law.
- b. **"Of God's household"** – This identifies them as God's family. These are the ones for whom God accepts responsibility. They are the ones for whom God provides. They are also the ones for whom God provides protection. They are inheritors in the family.

All four of the above designations deal with the same people. At one time, they were strangers and aliens. They have now become fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's family. This is because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, Ephesians 2:20

In this verse, Paul established the pedigree of the church. This church was founded upon the principles established by the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament. Paul spoke of Christ as "the chief cornerstone." In our culture we have cornerstones, to commemorate the building of the structure. That did not happen in the first century. The word that is translated "cornerstone" is really the "keystone." In an arch there is a stone in the very center at the top. This stone is placed in such a way that though the arch has no cement, this stone will keep all the others in place. That is what Jesus did and does in the church.

In whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; Ephesians 2:21

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The word "whom" refers to Christ. Paul is going to give some information about the position of Christ in the church. Paul used the imagery of a building to describe the relationship of Christ to the church. Christ is the one who holds the church together. Notice that Paul referred to the church as "a holy temple in the Lord." The temple was the place where the faithful went to pray. The temple was also the place where the visible presence of God was in residence.

Observe that Paul spoke of this building as "growing into a holy temple." The word "growing" is "auxano" (αὐξάνω) and means to enlarge or increase. There is no place in the church for stagnation. It must be constantly growing. The people in the church must be constantly becoming more and more like their Lord.

Paul has dwelt on the fact that there can be no wall dividing the Jews and Gentiles within the body of Christ. His statement is worded very carefully. He spoke of them being "fitted together." One will not stop being a Jew and the other will not stop being a Gentile in order to be a part of the church. Jew and Gentile will be "fitted together" like two ashlar stones in the temple wall. Paul's focus is on the temple of which they are to be a part. He does not focus on separate identities of the individual stones that make up the temple in which God will dwell. Though some would not understand, Paul spoke of the two being built up "into a holy temple." In Christ, both Jews and Gentiles can be and must be a part of a temple that is holy. Separatists on both sides would see this as an impossibility.

*In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
Ephesians 2:22*

As in verse 21, Paul begins this verse also with the words "in whom." This is another reference to Christ. Having made a generalized statement about the place of Christ in the church, Paul now personalized this idea for the people in Ephesus.

Paul said, "you also are being built together." The word translated "built" is "sunoikodomeo" (συνοικοδομέω) which is a compound word and is made up as follows:

- a. Sun means "union with" or "together with."
- b. Oikodomeo means a "house builder."

As different kinds of building material are pieced together to make a home, so we, though different, are being pieced together, built up together. In this process, we invest our identity into the new edifice and thus become a part of each others' life and purpose. Our new identity presses the old, unique identity into the background in order for the new, composite identity to take the place of all our past identities.

The form of this word is present passive indicative. Simply put, it has this significance:

- a. Present tense – this describes action that begins and does not stop. It is a lifestyle, not a single action.
- b. Passive voice – the subject is the recipient of the action.
- c. Indicative mood – this is just a simple declaration of the action.

This is most helpful. We are being built up together. It is not a single action, but something that begins and is never quite completed. We are the subject of this statement. The building together is something that God does in our lives, rather than something that we do for ourselves. God is fashioning us together as a master builder designs and builds a beautiful building. As the individual pieces of lumber invest their identity into the structure,

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and become part of the home, so each of us forfeits our individual identity in order that the temple God is building may take preeminence.

Paul taught that the structure into which our individuality is invested is a "place for God in the Spirit." The word for "dwelling" is "katoiketerion" (κατοικητήριον) and means "a permanent residence." God is prepared to dwell in us as we are built up together. The other side of this thought is that unless we are able to lose ourselves in this temple God is building of our lives, there is no hope that God will dwell there.

Paul concludes this portion of his letter by saying that this takes place "in the Spirit." It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to mold our lives together so that they may become an acceptable place for God to dwell.

Conclusion

As we review this chapter, there are several pieces of information that need to be stressed about our own relationship with Christ.

1. Like the Ephesians, we too were dead in trespasses and sins. verse 1
2. The powers of evil exerted great power and control over our lives. Verse 2
3. Like the Ephesians, our lives and choices focused primarily on our natural desires. Verse 3
4. In that condition, we were headed toward a life and future in which God's wrath would wreak havoc. Verse 3
5. In the midst of our sinful lifestyle, God loved us and kept on loving us. Verse 4
6. The grace of God offered us resurrection life with Christ while we were still rebelling against Him. Verse 6
7. God not only forgave our sin and rebellion, but also gifted us with power and authority in the heavens with Jesus. Verse. 6
8. In eternity, God wants to show us the surpassing riches of His grace in Christ. Verse 7
9. There is nothing we can do to achieve or earn forgiveness and eternal life. It is God's gift to us. Verse 8
10. We really have nothing to boast about. Verse 9
11. Our transformation is the craftsmanship of God. Verse 10
12. We were redeemed in order that we might make a lifestyle of doing good works. Verse 10
13. We, like others, were heathen, but God changed our lives. Verse 11
14. Though we were separated from Christ, and strangers to the covenant, still we have been "brought near" redeemed by the blood of Christ and accepted by God. Verses 12, 13
15. No matter what our past may have been, Christ broke down the walls that separate us from each other and from Him. Verse. 14
16. Because Jesus abolished the condemning ordinances, there are no divisions in the body of Christ, though divisions are rampant in every culture. Verse 15
17. Through His cross, Jesus reconciles all the factions that formerly existed in every culture, but cannot exist among God's people. Verse 16

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18. Though our world is broken and divided, Jesus brings a message of peace and compassion to all sides of the divided culture who receive His gift of grace. Verse 17
19. Through Christ, the Spirit offers, to all of us, unlimited access to the Father in prayer. Verse 18
20. Though we are all different and none of us is perfect, still we have a common relationship among God's people and are a part of His family. Verse 19
21. Jesus is the one who holds all the redeemed together. It is not the result of our goodness or extreme efforts. Verse 20
22. As a master builder, Jesus fits all of us together. Verse 20
23. Our purpose is to become, together, a "holy temple in the Lord." Verse 21
24. The preeminent consideration among the redeemed is that we are together a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. Verse 22

As I review these truths, I am most humbled and filled with awe. How can one stand erect and read these words? God, in Jesus Christ, did all of this for me while I was still rebelling against Him and pretending to run my own life.

Review what you have seen in this chapter. Is there a sense of awe that fills your heart? Is there something that causes you to hold your breath when you contemplate who God is and what He has done? That is what Paul was trying to convey to these believers in Ephesus.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 3

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL IS REVEALED TO PAUL

EPHESIANS 3:1-21

1. There are three paragraphs in Ephesians chapter three. Record a brief summary of seven words or less for each paragraph.

3:1-13	
3:14-19	
3:20, 21	

2. In 3:1-13, Paul dealt with the mystery of the Gospel.
- a. Make a comparison/contrast between the way Paul identified himself in these locations:

1:1	
3:1	

- b. In 3:2, Paul made an appeal in order to strengthen his message to the Ephesian Christians.
1. What was his appeal?
 2. What is the significance of the way he said it?
- c. In 3:3, Paul continued his appeal.
1. What did he add in this verse?
 2. What new piece of information is contained in this verse?
- d. In 3:4-7, Paul continued to talk about the good news to the Gentiles.
1. What did he say about this?
 2. What difference does this make?
- e. 3:8-10 is a single sentence. In this sentence, Paul talked about his ministry.
1. What did he say about his ministry?
 2. What difference does it make?
 3. In 3:9, Paul spoke of "administration of the mystery..."What did he mean by this?
 4. In 3:10, Paul indicated the purpose of 3:8, 9.
 - a. What is that purpose?
 - b. Why is this important?
- f. In 3:11, 12, Paul explained the purpose of God alluded to in previous verses.
1. What was his explanation?
 2. What results does Paul mention?
- g. In 3:13, Paul drew a conclusion.
1. What is his conclusion?
 2. How does this conclusion fit the content of 3:8-12?

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3. 3:14-19 is a single sentence. Paul explained his prayer for these people.
 - a. In 3:14-16, Paul stated his request of God. What was his request?
 - b. In 3:17-19, Paul explained the purposes of his prayer.
 1. What purposes does he cite?
 2. What is the importance of these purposes?
4. In 3:20, 21, Paul gave us another of his beautiful benedictions.
 - a. In these verses, Paul spoke of God. What does he say about God?
 - b. What is the significance of this?
5. Review chapter three. What did you discover that will change the way you serve God and follow the example of Jesus?

LESSON 3: EPHESIANS 3:1 – 21

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL IS REVEALED TO PAUL

Introduction

There are three paragraphs in the third chapter of the Ephesian epistle. A brief summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

3:1-13	The Mystery of the Gospel – Salvation to The Gentiles
3:14-19	Paul's Prayer for Their Enlightenment
3:20, 21	Benediction – Attributes Glory to Provident Christ

Ephesians 3:1-13 – The Mystery Of The Gospel – Salvation To The Gentiles

*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
Ephesians 3:1*

The words, "For this reason" is a great deal like using the word, "therefore." Paul used these words to indicate that a conclusion to the material in chapter two is about to be given.

This may seem like tricky writing. It is not. Rather, it is a carefully written statement. "I, Paul" may seem like a stiff way to write. Actually, this is a legal statement.

Paul spoke of himself as "the prisoner of Christ." There is no doubt that Paul was a resident in a Roman prison. He was under the control of Rome. On the other hand, the Romans did not and could not control his life. It was a way of stressing the fact that Christ controlled his life.

Paul wanted it to be clear that though he was a prisoner, it did not mean that he had committed any crime. He went on to explain. He claimed that he was "a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of the Gentiles."

If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; Ephesians 3:2

We should note that 3:1-3 form a single sentence. The use of the word "indeed" adds strong emphasis to the statement of this verse. When some people see the word "if" in this verse they immediately look for the last part of the conditional statement. Invariably they falter in this search. If you read verses one and two together, you will notice that the "if" relates back to the statement that Paul was a prisoner for the sake of the Gentiles.

Paul spoke of a "stewardship." The word translated "stewardship" is compounded for the sake of emphasis. It is made up as follows:

- a. "Oikos" means "house."
- b. "Nemo" means "to arrange."

This word often was used of a slave whose task it was to manage a household. It is one who was placed in charge of the operation. Paul used this image to describe the ministry God had given him. Paul's stewardship was of "God's grace." It was like saying that God had you in mind when He gave me this responsibility.

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That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief Ephesians 3:3

Paul gives us no hint about when this revelation took place. He simply says that he received it. Also, we do not know the means whereby he received this revelation. The word for revelation is "apokalupsis" from which we get our word apocalypse. It literally means "to remove the lid." It is "to peer into that which was hidden."

The "mystery" of which Paul speaks is "musterion." It is that which is known to the initiated. It is something outside the range of unassisted discovery, but can only be made known by divine revelation. It is made known only by God. It is made known only to those initiated, to those illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, Paul wrote, "As I wrote before in brief." Apparently, Paul had written a letter to them on a previous occasion. We do not have any knowledge of that letter or of its content.

And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, Ephesians 3:4

We should keep in mind that verses 4-7 are a single sentence. This particular verse suggests that the former letter dealt with the same topic concerning the mystery. According to this verse, the revelation came in the form of an insight. Paul spoke of "the mystery of Christ." This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; Ephesians 3:5

Paul wants it to be very clear that this mystery was never revealed or disclosed to previous generations. He claimed that it had been revealed, however, at this time to the apostles and prophets. Paul does not indicate who these prophets and apostles were. He clearly includes himself in that number. This revelation took place "in the Spirit." The Spirit was the agency through whom God revealed Himself to those who spoke on His behalf.

To be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, Ephesians 3:6

Paul often explained an issue by first giving a broad description of the facts and then going into careful detail. That is what he is doing in this sentence. In verse six, Paul is going to go into careful detail about what he has hinted at so far.

He indicated that this has to do with the Gentiles. In the verse, Paul gave three pieces of information about the position of the Gentile believers:

- a. **They are fellow heirs** – They are a part of God's family just as the Jews are. The word translated "fellow heirs" is "sugkleronomos" (συγκληρονόμος). It is a compound word formed from these words:
 1. "Sun" means "with."
 2. "Kleronomos" means "inheritor," "a portion," "assigned portion upon the death of the father." These people are "heirs with" "fellow heirs" with Jesus. This word does not make them the son who has control of the family, the one who gets a double portion, as Joseph did. It only makes them inheritors with Jesus saying nothing about who will be the one in charge. That, of course, will be Je-

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sus. It is the result of being adopted as children of God. That, of course, is a major emphasis in this passage. The stress is on the idea of being "fellow" heirs. We share this inheritance with the Lord and every other adopted child of God - Jew or Gentile.

- b. **They are fellow members of the body** – The word translated "fellow members" is "sussomos" (σύσσωμος). This, too, is a compound word and is composed as follows:

1. "Suuzeteo" means "joint," "together."
2. "Soma" means "body, "

Paul used this word to describe the fact that we are together parts of the body of Christ, the church. We are Jews and Gentiles, but this has absolutely no effect upon our participation in that body. We are mutual participants.

- c. **They are fellow partakers of the promise** – The word translated "fellow partakers" is "summetochos" (συμμέτοχος), a compound word formed in this manner:

1. "Sun" means "union" or "together."
2. "Metochē" means "to share," "to be a partner," "to be a participant."

In the Old Testament system, God engaged in a unique covenant arrangement with Israel and with no one else. Paul's message is that all people, Jews and Gentiles, who are "in Christ" are participants in the promise of God. That promise involves a personal relationship with God in which we have forgiveness of sins, the hope of heaven and a daily walk with our "Father." The Old Testament promise was that He would be their God and they would be His people. Paul has announced that this covenant has been expanded and one cannot distinguish between Jews and Gentiles in this relationship.

All of this was to take place "through the Gospel." Paul's reference here is not to the four books we call "the Gospels." It is rather the good news of redemption fulfilled in Jesus Christ and proclaimed through the church.

Of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. Ephesians 3:7

As indicated earlier, Ephesians 3:4-7 form a single sentence. This verse is a part of that sentence. Paul immediately identified himself with that Gospel. He was a minister of this good news. It seems Paul always had to defend his apostleship and here he is doing the same. He asserts that his apostleship is a gift of the grace of God given to him. This gift was according to "the working of His power." The working of God's power is miraculous. What happened to Paul was nothing short of astounding. God took the greatest enemy of the church and made him the advocate of that redeemed body. As you read the writings of Paul, he never ceases to be amazed that God would do such a thing, show such undeserved mercy as to use him as a servant.

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, Ephesians 3:8

Ephesians 3:8-12 form the next sentence of this text. In this verse, Paul gives us a glimpse of his image of himself. Paul spoke of himself as "the very least of all saints." This means that he saw himself as one of the saints. He also saw all the other saints as being more significant, more important than he was. This might be considered self-degrading. It was

not. Paul simply looked at what he had been and could see no other way to understand this situation. From a human point of view it would be impossible for anyone in the body to be less significant than the one who had been the enemy of the church and caused so many to be killed.

Now, God in His great grace, had chosen him to preach this wonderful good news. Perhaps an irony, Paul was chosen to take this message of good news to the Gentiles whom he had hated and despised more than almost anyone else among the Jews.

Paul spoke of the Gospel as "the unfathomable riches of Christ." It was a treasure to him. It was a gift beyond his ability to really describe, always greater than his ability to put into words. He was quick to identify this great gift with Christ, who was the agent through whom God made it available to all mankind.

And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; Ephesians 3:9

The use of the word "and" indicates that this is a continuation of the thought in the previous verse. The word translated "bring to light" is "photizo" (φωτίζω) and means "to shine upon," "to expose." In English, the word expose has a very negative connotation. That is not true in the Greek. It is possible for the word to have a negative connotation, depending upon the context, but it is equally possible for the word to have a very positive connotation. That is the case in this instance. One might think of it as shining a spotlight upon the subject.

The word "administration" is a difficult choice for the Greek word "koinonia" (κοινωνία). It means fellowship, to share in common. In this context, the word describes the shared effort to convey the message of the mystery that had been hidden for centuries. This was the common task of every person who is an adopted child of God.

The word "mystery" is "musterion" (μυστήριον). We saw this previously in this study. In that context, it was used to mean the fact that both Jew and Gentile are included in the plan of grace. In this context, Paul linked "fellowship" and "mystery" together to add intense emphasis to the statement. Paul was talking about a description of what is involved in the fellowship and the mystery. Paul mentioned that the fellowship of the mystery had been hidden in God for ages. The idea of hiding something often carries a negative connotation. That is not necessary and not true in this instance. Something can be hidden because it is in everyone's best interest. For example, something could be hidden because it was not the time for this information to be shared. That, of course, is exactly what Paul is pointing out in this case.

Paul added the words, "who created all things." This applies to God. It is a way of stressing just how powerful God is. It also stresses the great wisdom God has in creating such a marvelous creation. Paul emphasized the wisdom of God in all His creative power.

In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:10

The words "in order that" suggest that a statement of purpose is about to be shared. The purpose is for that which preceded the words "in order that" – the fellowship of the mystery. The purpose is "the manifold wisdom of God might be made known." The word translated "manifold" is "polupoikilos" (πολυποίκιλος) means "multifaceted," "mani-

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fold," "abundant." The wisdom of God has many different areas of expression and is extremely great in all of them.

Observe that Paul said, "that it might be made known." The form of this word is in the subjunctive mood. Simply put, this describes a possibility, but not a necessity. It just may be that this wisdom of God could be made known through the church. Paul spoke very carefully. This knowledge that begins and grows and grows is disseminated through the church. The church is the tool by which God provides knowledge about God and the Gospel to rulers and authorities. Among other things, Paul is saying that it is incumbent upon the church to share the good news of the Gospel with people in positions of authority and power.

One might ask the question, who are these personages of authority and power? This verse indicates that these rulers and authorities are "in heavenly places." In most instances, such a reference would suggest seriously that these are powers in heaven. These may be the good angels who see the glory of God reflected in the church. We do not know for sure. For one thing, this gives us a glimpse into the mission of the church from God's standpoint. The church is to mirror both to the world and to angelic beings what God is like.

This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, Ephesians 3:11

This verse gives us a few pieces of information. What Jesus did was not in conflict with what Paul has described in this chapter. God had, from eternity, planned that the church would be the reflection of His glory both to human officials and to angelic beings in high heavenly positions. God had an eternal purpose. This purpose was carried out in Christ Jesus

In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him Ephesians 3:12

The word "whom" refers to Jesus. In Jesus Christ, we have boldness to come to God. It is not that we suddenly gained confidence. It is the sacrifice and current ministry of Jesus that makes such confidence a reality.

In this verse, Paul identified two things that have happened because of faith in Christ:

- a. **"We have boldness"** – the word translated "boldness" is "parrhesia" (παρρησία). This is a compound word that could be literally translated "all speech." It is to have the courage to say everything that is on your heart. This is not a brashness of attitude. It is rather a choice made because our boldness comes through faith in God. We feel a deep freedom to come to God with our needs, through Christ, knowing that God is deeply interested in our needs and desires to answer our petitions.
- b. **We have "confident access"** – The word translated "confident" is "pepoithesis" (πεποιθήσις) and means trust or confidence, to be thoroughly persuaded. We have access to the Father. We only take advantage of this access, however, as we have the confidence that it is really available to us.

This boldness and confident access is only available through faith in Christ. This suggests that it is available through faith. The other side of this is that if there is no faith, then it is not available. Those without faith have no access to the Father.

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Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory. Ephesians 3:13

The word translated "therefore" is "dio" (διὸ) which is usually translated "through." The word "oun" (οὖν) is commonly translated "therefore." The sense of the verse, however, fits the use of "therefore" quite well."

The word "I ask," is interesting. There are two basic words for this in the Greek:

- a. "Erotao" describes a person making a request of another who is on the same level of importance or power.
- b. "Aiteo," on the other hand, describes a person making a request of another who is on a higher level of importance than himself. This is the word that Paul used. This gives us an idea of how Paul viewed himself and his ministry among these people.

The form of the word Paul used is a present middle indicative. This simply means that Paul made this request for himself and he is not making a simple request, but this is an ongoing request in his mind.

We have encountered the word for "lose heart" previously. It deals with a diminishing of courage. It is not that one has no courage, but that under ongoing pressure one is worn down and finds it difficult to demonstrate the kind of courage that one really feels within. One usually becomes weary over one's own tribulation. They were becoming weary because of the tribulation experienced by Paul because they knew that it was on their behalf. This is trouble brought about because of what one believes. The next phrase gives us an insight. They thought that they were the cause of his troubles. It bothered them as much as if it had been their own tribulation.

Paul has a serious concern. He is writing from prison. The Ephesian Christians know that he is suffering. He wants to make certain that his situation is not responsible for any faltering of faith on their part. He rather suggests a different way of looking at his sufferings. Think of them as being sufferings on your behalf. Think of these sufferings as your glory.

This phrase can be difficult for us to understand. Paul spoke of his trouble as their glory. This seems strange to us. If someone else suffers for you, that seems to be troubling, not glory. Paul's point is well taken. He was hinting that they were important enough to suffer for.

Ephesians 3:14-19 – Paul's Prayer For Their Enlightenment

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, Ephesians 3:14

The use of the words "for this reason" might be said another way. One could say, "that being the case." Based on this understanding, Paul said, "I bow my knees before the Father." The words "bow my knees" does not describe the position of prayer. Most Jews prayed standing up or flat on the floor. It was not so much the necessary posture of prayer as it was an expression of their understanding of their humble position before God.

The word "bow" is "kampto" (κάμπτω) and means "to bow in reverence." It signifies religious veneration. The form of this word is present indicative active. It describes an ongoing frame of mind. It is more a lifestyle than a single act. It depicts an ongoing frame of mind as well as body. Paul's worship is of the Father. He is the one who made all this possible and it is humbling for Paul to just think about it.

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From whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, Ephesians 3:15

The words of this verse are a parenthesis in the sentence. It gives descriptive information about the one identified as Father. It describes family responsibility and accountability. It describes the significance of family identity. It lifts up the idea that the Father is the one responsible for the existence of every family that ever existed. It emphasizes the fact that God is the source of us all.

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; Ephesians 3:16

The presence of the word "that" suggests a statement of purpose. The purpose of Paul's experience of prayer is that he desperately wants God to grant that these Ephesian Christians would be strengthened. The word translated "strengthened" is really much stronger than it sounds. The word is "krataioo" (κραταίω). It means "to make powerful," "to increase in vigor," "to wax strong." It may be appropriate to say, "to become mighty." Paul describes the source and means of this strengthening. It is to be "by power." It appears that Paul's intent is that this strengthening takes place by power being infused into the life of the believer. This is a spiritual change rather than a cultural one.

Paul continued by saying that this took place "through His Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the means, the agent through whom God brings this power to bear upon the life of the believer. The implication here is that if the Holy Spirit does not enable this great power, then we will be forever weak. Notice that Paul continued by saying, "in the inner man." Paul was not talking about external changes in their lives. Paul described something he wanted to see happen in the inner being of the Ephesian Christians. This is noteworthy. Most of the time we talk and think of external change. Paul was more concerned with change in what they ARE rather than what they do.

We bypassed a few words early in the verse. The words are, "according to the riches of His glory." This suggests that the grace of God is the measuring stick of all the wondrous things God does in the world and in the lives of His adopted children. Paul spoke of "the riches of His grace." Paul wants God to make this power available to them up to the limit of the riches of His glory. As we indicated earlier, all through the Ephesian epistle, Paul struggled with superlatives. He wanted to explore the depths of what God had and was doing in their lives, but could not find words that adequately express what he felt in his heart. This is one of the reasons that this epistle is full of compound words. Paul just did not know how to express his ideas in any other terms.

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, Ephesians 3:17

The words "so that" though they may be implied, do not appear in the Greek text. There are three wishes Paul expresses for these Ephesian Christians.

- a. **"Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith"** – This is a temple picture that Jews would understand very well. From the time of the building of the tabernacle, God took up residence in the Holy of Holies. Paul, here, is saying that he wants the hearts of the Gentile Christians to become the Holy of Holies, the place where God takes up residence. This is rich. The Holy of Holies was the place where the intercession for the forgiveness of sins was presented. It was the place where God re-

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sided and where the needs of the people were presented by their High Priest. This is the place where God and His people meet in fellowship and worship.

Paul continued by giving a brief condition he desired for these Ephesian Christians. He said, "that you being rooted and grounded in love." Love was the major ingredient in the lives that Paul wanted to see demonstrated in the lives of these Gentile believers. You may remember that in the introduction, we mentioned that the second most important set of instructions and exhortations in this epistle have to do with the need for spiritual growth.

May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, Ephesians 3:18

The second desire Paul had for these believers appears in this verse:

- b. **You may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.** If you read verses 17 and 18 again, you begin to see that being grounded in love is the basis upon which the believer is able to comprehend the scope of his life in Christ.

And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:19

The use of the word "and" indicates a continuation of the thought from the previous verse. That is exactly what happened in this verse. The third wish that Paul expressed on behalf of these Christians is this:

- c. **"To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge"** – This is another of the blessings for which Paul prayed. The word "know" is "ginosko" (γινώσκω). There are two basic words which are both translated "know." One means to know everything or to know completely. That word is "oida" (οἶδα). The other word is "ginosko" which is used in this verse. It identifies the beginning and gradual progression of knowledge day by day. There is no way that in a lifetime we will be able to completely know the love of Christ. We can, however, each day increase our awareness of the love of Christ at a level that is a bit greater than it was the day before. This process can continue and progress every day of our lives. That is exactly what Paul wishes for these Christians.

Paul knowingly added the words, "that surpasses knowledge." The word for "surpasses" is "hyperballo" (ὑπερβάλλω). You may remember that we have encountered this word previously in this study. It means "to throw beyond." Paul's intent was to describe the love of Christ as being surprisingly more than a person could possibly imagine.

The "knowledge" of which Paul spoke, is "ginosko" as well. The love of Christ is not something one studies and in this way can know. It is rather experienced in living life every day. This experience of love is so outstanding that it is beyond one's ability to fully comprehend. This is another instance where the apostle is groping for superlatives.

The word "that" is a translation of the word "hina" (ἵνα). This word suggests that a statement of purpose will now be given. The purpose of each of Paul's desires for these Christians is summed up in his statement, "you may be filled with all the fullness of God." The word "filled" is really "filled up." It is a translation of the word "pleeroo" (πληρόω) and means "to fill to the top." This term comes from the agora (the market place.) In that day, they had trouble with merchants giving short measure on occasion. They solved that

problem by establishing a standard to indicate when a measure was "full." They would place the empty measure in the grain and fill it until it ran over on all sides. Only then was it "full." This is what Paul used to describe what he meant he wanted for these people. All these desires were for the purpose of bringing these believers to the point where they were filled up with the total fullness of God. The word translated "knowledge" is again the word "pleeroo."

Ephesians 3:20, 21 – Benediction – Attributes Glory To Provident Christ

These two verses form the crescendo, the climax of Paul's message to this point in the book. We call this climax a benediction or doxology. Indeed, these words are used as the benediction at the close of services in a host of churches throughout the world. Repeatedly, Paul will include a benediction at a point such as this. This is one of the most beautiful. In these three chapters, Paul has talked about the wonderful things God, in Christ, has done for these believers. Having given such a beautiful picture of the grace of God, he can no longer refrain from offering praise to God. These two verses are his explosion of praise.

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, Ephesians 3:20

The word "now" suggests a change in direction in the book. Paul begins his witness with the words "to Him." This indicates that this is an ascription to Jesus. The idea is simple. God has showered them with indescribable blessings. Now, Paul wants to shower God with his gratitude and adoration. Here, again, you can sense that Paul is struggling to find words that adequately express the praise he wishes to offer to God. Paul's frustration is that the language is weak and cannot express what wells up within him.

The Greek text is more awkward, but more intense and expressive. One might translate it, "being able and being increasingly able beyond all things to do exceedingly..." The word translated "being able" is a participle. It describes action that in the present is continuing. Paul wants to say that Jesus Christ has the power, in an ongoing fashion, to do these things. It is more groping for words that are too elusive for him or for us to grasp. Still Paul wants to try to find these words. The great power of Christ is able to do far beyond what the human mind can only imagine. This is true, but it is true in an ongoing fashion. Each new, great thing that Jesus does is increasingly far beyond what our minds can even grasp, much less do. The things that Jesus can do we do not even know how to ask for them. Their greatness escapes the groping of our finite minds.

The only limits there are on the power of our Lord is "according to the power working in us." What marvelous use of the language! The Greek, again, is more cumbersome, but more expressive. The word translated "according to" is "kata" (κατά) and is usually translated "against." In some cases, it is used to express great intensity. This verse is an instance such as this. Jesus is able to do all the things Paul has described in these three chapters because of the boundless power that is in Him. Paul spoke of this power as "working." The word is "energeo" (ἐνεργέω) from which we get our word "energy." It means to be powerfully active. The form of this word is present middle participle. This is an interesting form. Both the present tense and the participle describe action that is ongoing. It begins and never stops. We can describe this in English, but one cannot adequately trans-

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late it. It would be like saying "working, keep on working and never stop working." Here again, repetition was used to give intense emphasis. It is not just that Jesus has this power. More pointedly, Jesus has this indescribable power and He puts it to work unendingly in our lives. In view of the way Paul described our lives in the early verse of this epistle, our mental capacities are stretched beyond their limit to comprehend such kindness on the part of our Lord.

To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:21

Having valiantly attempted to ascribe the proper praise to the Lord for His wonderful power and grace, Paul turns to his ascription of glory. Again, "Him" is a reference to God. As you can see, the groping for words continues. The word "be" does not appear in the Greek text. It simply says, "to Him glory..." The word translated "glory" is "doxa" (δοξα). We have encountered it previously in these three chapters. The word usually means "to form an opinion about." Eventually it came to be considered an estimate concerning the value of something. It was a good evaluation of whatever was under consideration. It is an honor that grows out of an awareness of greatness. When we contemplate, as best we can, just how great God really is, glory is the sense of honor and awe that wells up within us at such mind devastating thoughts. Paul indicates that this "glory" is experienced "in the church." No one else has the ability or the experience to offer such adoration and praise to God as the church has.

The word "and" ties the coming statement to the explosion of praise which immediately preceded it. The expression of "glory," which is in the church is also "in Christ Jesus." That intimate, personal relationship with Christ that is the common currency of believers is the essential ingredient if one would offer glory to God. The greatness of God's power is only discernible to those who are in Christ and share this intimate relationship with God. Only those "in Christ" have the ability to grasp something of the grace of God.

In a final exasperation over the weakness of language, Paul shouts, "to all generations forever and ever!" This is effective repetition. In good repetition, the author will repeat the idea without necessarily repeating the exact words. Paul did this masterfully in this instance. When he said, "to all generations," he expressed a desire that this glory might continue, in the church, as long as there were generations of people in the church. It is a reference to eternity that is focused through generations of people. "Forever and ever" is a different reference to eternity that is focused around time. Paul's intent is clear. He wants this "glory" to be offered to God in such a way that every last adopted child of God will be ushered into their eternal home before the ascription of glory is complete.

Paul closed the doxology and the section with the word "amen." The word really means "let it be so." It was the word the early church used when they wanted to agree with the prayer of one who had prayed out loud while they prayed with him in silence. It is also the word that was used to describe their oneness, their unity in prayer. It is as though Paul was saying, "I have said these words, but the whole church resounds in agreement. And so it does!"

You will remember that this is the close of the first section of the book. It is not at all surprising that Paul ended the section with the word "amen."

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 4
EXHORTATIONS TO UNITY
EPHESIANS 4:1 – 32

1. There are three paragraphs in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. On the following table, write a summary of seven words or less for each paragraph.

4:1-16	
4:17-24	
4:25-32	

2. In 4:1-16, Paul exhorted the Ephesian believers to become united in their Christian maturity.
- a. 4:1-6 form a single sentence. In verse one, Paul stated a principle. In verses two through six, he identified the specifics of that principle.
 1. What is the principle identified in verse one?
 2. What details does Paul spell out in verses two through six?
 3. Study the list you wrote in response to the previous question. What does it tell you about the Ephesian church?
 - b. 4:7 begins with the word "but," which indicates a contrast.
 1. What two statements are being contrasted?
 2. What is the significance of this contrast?
 - c. As happened so often, in 4:8 Paul quoted from the Old Testament.
 1. Where is this quote found?
 2. What does it add to Paul's argument?
 - d. 4:9, 10, are a parenthetical statement. What is the significance of these comments?
 - e. In 4:11, Paul described something of the makeup of the church.
 1. List the gifts with which God endowed the church?
 2. Why was it important to include this information here?
 - f. In 4:12, Paul suggests some reasons.
 1. What are the reasons?
 2. Why are they significant here?
 - g. In 4:13, Paul used several images to indicate the direction of the church.
 1. What images did he choose?
 2. What do these tell us about the Ephesian church?
 - h. In 4:14, Paul described the results of this spiritual growth. What did he say about it?
 - i. In 4:15, Paul gave some important information about spiritual growth.
 1. What did he tell us?
 2. What did he say about Jesus?
 - j. In 4:16, Paul used an image to describe the church.
 1. What is the image?
 2. What information does the use of this image offer?
 3. What purpose does Paul suggest?
3. In 4:17-24, Paul strongly urged these Ephesian Christians to live a holy life.

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- a. In 4:17-19, Paul made some descriptive statements about their former life.
 1. What did he say?
 2. How would you describe the picture he painted?
- b. In 4:20-24, Paul wrote a single sentence.
 1. In 4:20-24, Paul contrasted their former evil lifestyle with their present condition.
 - a. How did he contrast the two?
 - b. What was he trying to say?
 2. In 4:21, Paul made a "tongue-in-cheek" statement. What did he mean?
 3. In 4:22-24, Paul gave a series of instructions.
 - a. What instructions did he give?
 - b. What was he trying to say?
 4. Read 4:24 again. What did he mean when he said, "in the likeness of God"?
4. In 4:25-32, Paul gave a series of exhortations.
 - a. In 4:25, Paul gave two commands.
 1. What were the commands?
 2. What was his rationale for these commands?
 - b. In 4:26, 27, the apostle dealt with a specific problem.
 1. What was the problem?
 2. What were his instructions?
 - c. In 4:28, Paul addressed yet another problem.
 1. What was the problem?
 2. What were his instructions?
 3. What rationale did he give?
 - d. Paul addressed a different problem in 4:29.
 1. What is the problem?
 2. What instructions did he give?
 3. What did he hope they would achieve by this?
 - e. In 4:30, Paul spoke of "grieve the Holy Spirit of God"
 1. What did he mean?
 2. This was mentioned in relation to which problem or problems?
 3. What did Paul mean when he said, "by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"?
 - f. In 4:31, Paul mentioned five undesirable things.
 1. What are these undesirable things?
 2. What, if anything, do they have in common?
 3. What does this teach us?
 - f. In 4:32, Paul shifted his attention from the negative to the positive instructions.
 1. What positive instructions did he give?
 2. Read the verse again to discover the pattern by which they were to measure their compliance with his positive instructions.
5. Review this lengthy chapter again. What will you do to make this a reality in your life?

LESSON 4: EPHESIANS 4:1 – 32

EXHORTATIONS TO UNITY

Introduction

Chapter four represents the turning point in the book. Characteristic of Paul's writing, the first part of the epistle is theological and the past part is the practical application of these theological truths. That is true in this epistle as well. Chapters one through three form the theological section. Now we begin our study of chapter four, which is the beginning of the practical application. We can look forward to a host of exhortations in these final three chapters.

There are three paragraphs in the fourth chapter of the Ephesian epistle. A brief summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

4:1-16	Paul Exhorts The Ephesians To Unity in Maturity
4:17-24	Paul Exhorts the Ephesian Christians to Walk In Holiness
4:25-32	Paul Exhorts the Ephesian Christians to Practical Holiness

Ephesians 4:1-16 – Paul Exhorts The Ephesian Christians To Unity In Maturity

The chapter begins with the word "therefore." This is the strongest connective in the epistle. It says, in effect, the following conclusion is based upon everything that has been said in the epistle so far. This is exactly the same situation you find in Romans 12:1. Interestingly enough, Paul used the exact same word to convey that information as he has in Ephesians 4:1.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, Ephesians 4:1

This is the second time in this epistle that Paul has identified his situation. Notice how the two descriptions compare:

1:1	Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God
4:1	I,...the prisoner of the Lord

Paul spoke of himself as a "prisoner of the Lord." Now we know that Paul was probably in a Roman prison when he wrote these words. These words describe not so much Paul's legal situation as it does his view of his situation. Yes, he was in a Roman prison facility. He saw himself, however as Christ's prisoner. If God wanted Paul out of that prison then there would be nothing that the Roman authorities could do to keep him there.

Paul said, "I... entreat you..." The word translated "entreat" is "parakaleo" (παράκαλέω) It is from this word that we get the name for the Holy Spirit the "paraclete." It means "to call to one's side," "to seriously seek aid." Now, the form of this word is present active indicative. Simply speaking, this indicates that Paul intended to say to them that he wanted to entreat them and never stop entreating them. This was to be a way of life, not a single act. Paul wanted them to walk, to live in such a way as to be worthy of

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God's calling their lives into His family and His service. Throughout our study of chapters 4-6, we will need to be reminded that this is the result of the blessings that God has showered upon these Ephesian Christians who are now "in Christ." Unworthy as we are, God has made it possible for us to walk in a manner that is worthy of God's call upon our lives. It does not mean that we somehow become worthy by living a flawless life. We will not do so. It means that we will live and keep on living in such a way that God can count us as worthy of the calling He has placed upon us. It does not mean, however, that we are deserving.

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, Ephesians 4:2

In this verse, Paul will give some of the specific ideas that are included in the previous, general statement. He used three specific spiritual qualities that should be the background, the foundation upon which they demonstrate forbearance and love to one another

He said "with all humility." He does not want them to express just a little humility. He said "all humility." He wants them to become totally humble. The word translated "humility" is "tapeinophrosune" (ταπεινοφροσύνη) which is a compound word. The composition of the word is as follows:

- a. "Tapeinos" means "low."
- b. "Phren" means "mind."

The word literally means "low minded." It describes an attitude toward the self that is not self-deprecating, but is also not vain. The word has undergone several adjustments in meaning. Initially it was used to describe the stance of a slave. The major change came, as far as the church is concerned, when Jesus referred to Himself as humble. At that point, it took on an air of respectability. Ultimately, the command to be humble is an instruction to become like Jesus.

Paul also said "(with all) meekness." The word translated "meekness" is "Prautes" (πραύτης). This is a quality of gargantuan inner strength. The English word is usually thought of as a sign of weakness. That is not the biblical view. First, meekness is one of the outstanding qualities that you find in the life of Jesus. Therefore, to be meek, is to be like Jesus. In a church that was riddled with selfishness and disunity, Paul charged them to be meek -- seeking to lead others into greater benefit rather than to use them. It is a relationship with God that allows us to view what He allows to enter our lives as good, no matter how it appears, and to accept it as such. Paul wants these Ephesian Christians to have all meekness.

Paul also included "(with all) patience." The word translated "patience" is "makrothumeo" (μακροθυμέω) and the compound word literally means "long tempered," "long-passioned." This is only one of four words in the New Testament that is translated "patience." This word is commonly referred to as "long suffering." This is intense self-restraint in the face of severe opposition. Patience endures difficult circumstances, but does not surrender to them. This involves a very strong expression of hope.

Paul wanted these believers to show forbearance for one another. The word so translated is "anechomai" (ἀνέχομαι) which literally means "to hold yourself up," "to endure." This word includes the idea of allowing others to express themselves without deprecating or demeaning yourself. The whole issue of unity by nature must include these personal spiritual qualities that had not been prevalent in the lives of these Ephesian Christians

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All of this is to be done in love. The word for love is "agape" (ἀγάπη) which is love that has no boundaries or requirement. It has no need for a response. It is to love just because you love. It is the word almost always used to describe the love of God.

Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

The word translated "diligent" is "spoudazo. (σπουδάξω) and stands for zeal to do good things. It is a form of watchful earnestness. It expresses great care. It involves haste, to express importance, but not anxiety. The form of this word is interesting. It is a present participle. The present tense describes ongoing action. The participle describes action in progress. Paul used two forms, both of which stressed ongoing action. This, of course, is a way of placing emphasis on the idea of continuous action. It is like saying keep on keeping on.

The word for "preserve" is "tereo" (τηρέω) and means "to keep." It is to watch over or preserve as a lioness watches over her cubs. It, also, carries the connotation of sustaining or maintaining. It is to keep something from fading or disappearing. The form of this word is a present infinitive. This portrays continuing action now in progress. This is a preserving that is a lifestyle rather than a single action.

Paul spoke of "the unity of the Spirit." The word for Unity is "henotes" (ἑνότης) which is the Greek word for "one." It suggests a singularity of purpose. It does not mean everyone did and thought the same thing. It does mean that they had a common, binding purpose and goal. Jesus Christ was primary to every one of them. This is what Paul was urging them to reclaim. It was a serious problem that Paul wanted them to address. There was no bond of unity existing in the Ephesian church. The oneness of which Paul spoke was "of the Spirit." It was not something that they could work at and achieve. It is, rather, something the Spirit produces in our willing hearts. The problem was, at least at this point, that there was **no** willingness in their hearts. They were more interested in their divisions than in the oneness the Spirit could create in them.

Paul said that this unity of the Spirit existed "in the bond of peace." The word translated "bond" is a compound word. It is composed as follows:

- a. "Sun" means "with."
- b. "Desmos" means "to bind."

This is a bit like cement in that it holds one thing to another. It describes a type of relationship these believers desperately needed to share with each other. The word "peace" is "eirene" (εἰρήνη) and identifies harmonious relationships between people. It expresses itself in friendly relations. It corresponds with the Hebrew word "shalom" which identifies wholeness. It is much more than the absence of hostilities. Peace is the glue that holds oneness together. Without peace, oneness is a sham. The unity of which Paul spoke is produced by the Spirit and not by trying harder to get along. Peace and friendship bind fellow Christians together in this relationship through the Spirit.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; Ephesians 4:4

At this point, Paul will give a series of illustrations of unity that exist within the kingdom, but are contrasts to the relationships among the Ephesian Christians. Paul begins with this illustration:

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"There is one body." The "body" is a way of describing the church. There is just one church, not several divided by differing opinions. Paul was dealing with the fact that their thinking was just backwards to what it should be. They thought of many bodies and totally unrelated. God's design was that there would be one body with many contributing parts. Because they were trying to make something work that God never designed, it was doomed to failure. There can be only one body, no matter how we may differ in our thinking.

"(There is) one Spirit." The Ephesian church operated as though there were many Holy Spirits. They may not have thought of in this way, but it was God accommodating an errant church rather than the church serving God with all their heart. The church created an understanding of the Spirit to suit their situation. It could not possibly work or serve God.

"One hope of your calling." There are not different kinds of eternities for the body of Christ. There is not one set of rules for one part of the church and another set of rules for service governing another part of the church. Paul was dealing with people who had their own ideas and wanted God and the church to fit into their scheme.

Observe that Paul said, "Just as also you were called." Paul has made a comparison. He compared the "one body" and "one Spirit" to "one hope of your calling." If these Ephesian Christians had been asked, "Is there one Spirit?" they would have given a resounding "Yes!" If they were asked, "Is there one church?" Again, they would have firmly answered "Yes!" Anticipating this, Paul added, "and there is just one hope of your calling, not several."

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, Ephesians 4:5

Paul continued his illustrations of the oneness that exists in the body of Christ. He said,

"(There is) one Lord." There is a subtle attack on the part of Paul. It was as though these groups were so different that each would need a different Lord. The fact that there is one Lord suggests that there is not room for such divergent positions. There is no biblical precedent for exclusiveness in the body of Christ. We know that Paul was dealing with groups that each believed that God was on their side. He was reminding them that there was just one Jesus Christ for the whole church.

"(There is) one faith." – There are minor differences between Christian groups. There is not a separate base of beliefs for one group that is superior and the only true one in the church. There is just one faith and we are all equal participants.

"(There is) one baptism" – The redemption celebrated in baptism is not superior for one group over another. In all instances, they celebrate the redemption in Jesus Christ and it is cause for no one to be proud or to feel superior to another. We know that there were groups who had undue pride because they were baptized by one person and another group felt superior because they were baptized by another person. There is just baptism.

One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all Ephesians 4:6

"(There is) one God and Father of all" – God is not better or different for this group than for that one. It is difficult to imagine the extent they were not thinking and behaving like members of the family. There was a major division that existed within the Ephesian church. You may have noticed that there is an increased emotional tone as this list of illustrations continues.

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There is a slightly different agenda when Paul added the word "Father." It is a way of dealing with the fact that one group would say that their group belongs as a son would belong. On the other hand, your group does not belong as a son. Indeed, we know that some of them were dechristianizing each other. Paul emphasized that all sides of this dispute were part of God's family. This is a dispute between brothers and sisters who mutually disowned each other.

Paul added, "Who is over all and through all and in all." Paul was simply covering all the bases. When the emotions were so high, this was absolutely essential. This was Paul's way of showing inclusiveness in every possible way. He was saying that God is the final authority over all of us. God works through each of the groups you are dechristianizing. God is at work in all of you though you are busy excluding each other.

*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
Ephesians 4:7*

There is a bit of verbal slight of hand in progress here. These people are all believers. They know the Gospel. They are aware of the fact that the gift of Christ has no boundaries. Paul used this as a way to emphasize the fact that each person received the gift of Christ sufficient for his or her needs. There was no limitation. Notice that Paul said, "each one." This suggests that Paul has referred to what the Gospel writers spoke of as the "whosoever." The word translated "was given" is "edothē" (ἐδόθη). The form of this word is first aorist indicative. This emphasizes the fact that Paul highlights the fact of the gift rather than the timing. This is simple past activity. This is a way of adding strong emphasis.

*Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives,
And He gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:8*

We need to remind ourselves that verses eight through ten are a single sentence. You will also notice that they seem to be a parenthesis in the text. You will notice that verse seven deals with their unity. Verse 11 continues the theme by talking about the diversity that exists within the unity.

The word translated "therefore" is "dia" rather than "oun." The importance of this is that the strength of this connective is much weaker. This is an indication of a conclusion, but not a major one. We must keep in mind that this verse is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. Paul was quite prone to do this. There is a definite Messianic reference in this Psalm. There are some problems with the wording of this verse, though they are not major. We must keep in mind, however, that we are still in the context of the unity of the people of God in this chapter.

Observe that this verse points out three things that Jesus did:

- a. **He ascended on high** – Here Paul refers to the ascension. It signaled the completion of Christ's work in the world. He was sent to redeem the whosoever.
- b. **He led captive a host of captives** – This is the picture of a conquering general. He leads his captives home. This theme will be dealt with in greater detail in verses 10 and 11.
- c. **He gave gifts to men** – This, too, is part of the picture of Jesus as a conquering general. Upon completion of the campaign, the general would give some of the

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trophies of war to each of the soldiers who risked their lives under his successful command. This, too, is a picture of the victorious Jesus.

Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? Ephesians 4:9

Paul spoke of the events that transpired during the three days that Jesus was in the tomb. Whatever else this may involve, certainly Jesus did descend into the nether regions to preach to those souls who died across the ages. This place is referred to as Hades. Paul spoke of Jesus as the victorious general. In that culture, when a general conquered territory he would tour the land to establish his claim upon it. It may well be that this is what Paul referred to in these three verses.

He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. Ephesians 4:10

Paul became very deliberate in this verse. It is a forceful way to refer to Christ as the victor. Jesus went to the nether regions and into the heavens to establish His authority over both regions as the risen redeemer who defeated death on behalf of those who are in Christ. There was now no place where His power to be in control was not recognized. Had Jesus not gone into the nether regions, then one might suggest that there was a place, Satan's domain, where the power of Christ was not superlative. The emphasis Paul wished to make is in the last statement in the verse, "that He might fill all things." This was one more way for Paul to describe the ultimate power of Christ over all spheres of the creation.

Observe Paul's careful wording, "He who descended is Himself also He who ascended." When Paul said, "that he might fill all things," he was saying that Jesus was greater than all things.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, Ephesians 4:11

Having described the greatness of Christ, Paul then moved on to describe the work of Christ through the church. We must keep in mind that one of the crying needs of the Ephesian church was for unity among the believers. Paul pointed out that Jesus called different people for a variety of different ministries. People tend to think that everyone must be the same. The design is that people will be different because there is a need for a variety of different skills and functions. This is still a problem in the church. The choices Paul mentioned were all-important, but all different, but not more important than any other. We should not that this is not an exhaustive list, but does represent some of the gifts God has given to members of the body. Notice the illustrations that Paul used to highlight the diversity that is needed in the body of Christ:

- a. "**He gave some apostles**" – The word translated "apostles" is "apostolos" (ἀπόστολος) and means "one who is sent." It might be comparable to an ambassador. It is a messenger who is sent to represent a higher authority. Observe that it say, "He sent **SOME** apostles." Not everyone was to be an apostle.
- b. "**(He gave) some as prophets**" – the word here is "prophetes" (προφήτης). A prophet is an inspired speaker who speaks forth on behalf of another, the proclaimer of a divine message.

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- c. **"(He gave) some as evangelists"** – This word is "euangelistes" (εὐαγγελιστής). This is a messenger of good news. This is essentially a preacher of the Gospel.
- d. **"(He gave) some as pastors"** – The word is "poimen" (ποιμήν) and means shepherd, one who tends the flock on behalf of the chief shepherd, Jesus.
- e. **"(He gave) some as teachers"** – The word is "didaskalos" (διδάσκαλος) one who teaches others specifically in spiritual things.

As you look at this list, it is apparent that you have real diversity of gifts and tasks here. These are the things that are essential in the life of the church, the body of Christ. This fits what Paul has been saying about there being unity in diversity. The Ephesian church had a lot of diversity, but no unity. Because of this, their witness was compromised and the design of God was being frustrated.

For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; Ephesians 4:12

In this verse, Paul points out two purposes for this diverse ministry. The purposes are as follows:

- a. **"For the equipping of the saints"** – The word translated "equipping" is "katartismos" (καταρτισμόν) and literally means "to make something fit," "to make something complete." It was used to describe the repairing of a fishnet. It is to supply what is necessary.

Observe that the purpose of this was "for the work of service." There are many demands on our time and service. We must make sure that whatever else we achieve we must be busy ministering to people to prepare them "for the work of service." This is the purpose for Christ to call people into the identified ministries. This is still the call of God upon His people. If we are not building up the body, then we are about some business other than what Christ intended us to be a part of. The body is built up from the inside. Christ works to build up the church, His body, through people whom He has called to specific ministries.

- b. **"Building up the body of Christ"** – The word translated "building" is "oikodome" (οἰκοδομή) and literally means "to build a house." It came to mean strengthening an existing structure. Paul used the idea to describe the way the gifts of the believers contribute to the spiritual strengthening of the body of Christ.

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:13

The use of the word "until" suggests that there is a period of time in progress, a preparation time. Paul used several images to describe what he had in mind. Look at the way he described them:

- a. **"Until we all attain to the unity of the faith"** – Observe that this statement follows Paul's description of building up the body of Christ. In effect, he was saying that unity will come only as we are all about building each other up in the body, the church. The word translated "attain" literally means "to reach," "to arrive at." This idea was taken from the Olympic races. Each runner was determined to arrive at the goal before the other racers.

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For one thing, this statement means that we are not there yet. The word translated "attain" is "katantao" (καταντάω). This is a very strong word. It means "to come," "to arrive," "to reach a destination." It describes arrival at a literal or figurative place where you had not been previously. Paul insisted that they had not known any unity in the faith up to this point. This is a description of a process rather than an instant attainment. The way it is presented could be misleading. It sounds as though it is a sure thing. It has not happened yet, but it certainly will. The translation "attain" is acceptable, but the form of the word gives a different idea. The form is aorist subjunctive. Simply put, this means that there is an element of possibility here, not necessity. It may or may not happen. It is definitely possible for unity to be achieved, but it is possible that it will not.

The word "unity" is "henotes" (ἑνότης) which is the neuter form of the word "heis" or "one." Again, it does not mean that they all think, do and say the same thing. It means that there is harmony, between them, a sense of oneness. Harmony is intentionally made up of sounds that are each different from the other. The value of it is that when played together they produce a sound that is more beautiful than any of them sound by themselves. The harmony of their faith overarches all other possible differences. It does not mean that they arrived at lockstep doctrinal understanding and pronouncement. It means that their devotion to Christ is unanimous. It means that their commitment to the service of Christ is without a seam. It will not come overnight, but if they desire it with intensity, it will come one step at a time.

- b. **"(until we attain) the knowledge of the Son of God"** – The words "until we attain" are in parenthesis because they do not appear in the text, but it is understood that they belong there. The word translated "knowledge" is "epiginosko" (ἐπιγινώσκω) a very strong form of a compound word.
 - 1. "Epi" means "upon."
 - 2. "Ginosko" means "to know," "the beginning of knowledge," "a progress in discovery."

This usually suggests a relationship between the one knowing and the one being known. It describes a very intense process of discovering who the Son of God really is. It is discovering the depth of His love for us. It is gaining a grasp of the boundlessness of His compassion. It is sensing the limitlessness of His forgiveness. It is learning to place my trust in His limitless power.

- c. **"(Until we attain to) a mature man"** – Again, the word "until" suggests that we are not there yet. The word for "mature" is "telios" (τέλιος). The root meaning is "an end," "to be complete," "to be of full age." It does not mean that the person has arrived mentally. It suggests a level of maturity that can be trusted in a way that youthful immaturity cannot, even if the youth is most precocious. It represents more understanding than the accumulation of facts. It describes a high level of dependable decision-making. It pictures one who has learned from experience what academics cannot teach. This describes a believer who has been molded and shaped by the experience of spiritual conflict and has emerged as a wise and dependable example.
- d. **"(Until we attain to) the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ"** – The Greek text reads a bit differently. One might translate it, "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The word "measure" is a means of evaluating progress toward a specific goal. The word "stature," on the other hand, identifies a

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specific time in a life when certain expectations are realized. In this case, stature refers to that point when the "fullness of Christ" has developed. It is a situation where we want the qualities of Christ to be evident in our lives and are taking steps so that day by day they become more visible and real within us. This statement describes that place where these qualities reach the saturation point. It points to the time when the life is lived as Christ would live. It is the time when our thoughts are what Christ would think. That would be a wonderful place to live.

As a result, 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; Ephesians 4:14

There is a shift in the focus at this point. The focus was on spiritual maturity in verse 13. Note the spiritual focus, in verse 14, is on spiritual infancy. The purpose of this is to point them away from their spiritual infancy.

The words "As a result" are a translation of the word "hina" (ἵνα) which is usually translated "that" or "in order that." This word usually identifies a situation where purpose is about to be described. Paul had been talking about being "mature," about being grown up in the faith.

Now, Paul points to the opposite so that they would not be like spiritual children. He talked about "being tossed about here and there by waves." This is a very apt picture of the theological thinking of new Christians. They do not know what to believe. They hear something and think it is true so they follow that. Then they hear something else and it sounds good so they follow that. It is like being tossed about by the waves. Paul used a second image – the wind. The wind often has counter currents. It will blow a leaf this way and that. There is no real direction to the leaf's movement. Young Christians are like that.

Now, Paul adds another ingredient, trickery. Unfortunately, some teachers have an agenda other than sharing the truth of the Scripture. This is bought up by the young, unsuspecting believer. The word "craftiness" is "panoukrgia" (πανουργία) and stands for unscrupulous conduct. This craftiness works in the area of "deceitful schemes." The words "deceitful schemes" are a translation of the word "kubia" (κυβία). It is the source of our word cube. It literally means dice throwing. It points to the idea of being sly. It is to do something others do not realize you have done. It is frustrating to think that this happens within the church, but it does. Paul was trying to warn these young believers against such practices.

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, Ephesians 4:15

This verse begins with the word "but" and that tells us that a serious contrast is about to be shared. It should deal with the opposite of the devious means previous described. Paul spoke of "speaking the truth in love." The word translated speaking is "aletheuo" (ἀληθεύω) and is a compound word.

- a. The letter "a" at the beginning of a word suggests a negative idea.
- b. "Lanthano" means "to hide."

The word suggests "not to hide" or conversely, "to expose." It is most often used in terms of exposing the truth rather than error. It is more than just not telling a lie. It is refusing to speak in such a way that information is secreted. The form of this word is a present parti-

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cipe. There is a very strong emphasis in this form. It contains two ways of suggesting ongoing action. It is also used to express great certainty. It is to expose and never stop exposing the truth.

This truth must be spoken "in love." The word "love" is "agape" (ἀγάπη) and describes a form of love that has no requirements or boundaries. It is to love whether there is a positive response or not. It is to love just because you love. There are many people who speak the truth in bitterness. They use the truth as a club. They are not trying to help or correct, but to surpass and abuse someone. We are to speak the truth in such a way that it is a loving and helpful expression, not a destructive one.

Speaking the truth in love serves two functions in this sentence. It is the contrast, the opposite of the deceitful things that happen in the body. It now serves the task of providing the impetus for growing up, of maturing in Christ. No one grows up into Christ without learning to speak the truth in love. This is because "truth" and "love" are essential parts of the divine nature. To instruct people to speak truth in love is to instruct them to participate in the qualities of the divine nature.

We are to "grow up." The root word for "grow" is "auxano" (αὐξάνω) and means "to increase." It is to become what you have not previously been. There are two ideas hinted at here:

- a. This is a picture of farm plants growing.
- b. This is the picture of a child maturing into adulthood.

The form of this word is I aorist active subjunctive. The aorist tense focuses on the action rather than the time. The subjunctive mood suggests great uncertainty. There is a definite need to grow up, but it is not certain at the present moment whether these Ephesian Christians will do so or not.

We are to "grow up in all aspects into Him." The emphasis here is on "in all aspects." This is not a single concern. It involves everything. The direction of our growth is "in Christ." It is not growing in our individuality and strength. It is rather growing up into Him. It is to place greater dependence upon His power. It is growing in such a way that we become more and more like Him. This describes a level of intimacy that surpasses the relationships with God for most of us. Paul's addition of the words "even Christ," simply points with emphasis to what he meant when he used the word "Him."

From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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. Ephesians 4:16

The use of the words "from whom" or "of whom" as in the Greek text, indicates the source. This is a picture of the human body. Paul's point is that each part of the body holds the rest of the body together. This is our task in the body of Christ. This only happens when each part of the body performs its designated function. When each part works properly, only then will the body grow.

The word "for" suggests purpose or reason. The purpose of this growth, caused by each member doing that for which it was designed, is to be built up in love. The purpose is not to just mature or grow up. The purpose is to build itself up in love. The building up is something we do, it is not something others do for us.

Ephesians 4:17-24 – Paul Exhorts the Ephesian Christians To Walk In Holiness

This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, Ephesians 4:17

The use of the word "therefore" suggests a coming conclusion, but apparently only on a minor level. This verse begins a summary and redirection. This was a writing tool that Paul often used. He would use the summary of one section as a springboard into the next section of his letter. Paul claims to be joining with Christ to make this instruction. The word "Gentiles" identifies anyone who is not a Jew. In this instance, Paul used the term as he does on other occasions, to identify non-believers.

Paul continued, "in the futility of their mind." The word for "futility" is "mataiotes" (ματαιότης) which means "empty." It is to do something for which there are no results whatsoever. It is to be vain, to hold to claims that are not supported by reality. It is a situation where all their plans amount to nothing. It is that situation where the basis for life is totally empty, where the purposes are meaningless.

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; Ephesians 4:18

Paul spoke of "being darkened" or having been darkened in their understanding. The word for "darkened" is "skoteinos" (σκοτεινός) and means "full of darkness." It is more than just the absence of light. It is not the result of blowing out the candle, but of living a futile life without Christ. These Ephesian Christians remember exactly what that was like. They lived there. As a tent covers a family in the desert, so darkness covers the hearts of those who live their lives in futility. The form of this word is perfect passive participle. The perfect tense points to the fact that this was accomplished some time in the past. One might translate the word "having been darkened." It is not something that they did to themselves, but was done to them as a result of their choices. The darkening took place in the area of their understanding. Things were happening to them and they did not realize what it was or what was the cause. One of the dangers of following an ungodly lifestyle is that our understanding can be covered and we will be none the wiser though the consequences are horrendous.

Paul continued, "Excluded from the life of God." The word translated "excluded" is "apallotrioo" (ἀπαλλοτριόω). It is more than being left out. It is to be alienated. It is exclusion with a purpose. It literally means "not belonging." The alienation is from the life of God. This suggests that people who are not alienated have position, a place in the life of God. It is to be part of the life of God. It is not, however, to be divine. It is rather to be involved in what God is like and what God is doing. Paul gave two reasons they could be excluded from the life of God.

- a. **"Because of the ignorance that is in them."** – These are first generation Christian and they were totally new to the faith. There is a great deal about the faith that they did not know. They could be unaware of the help that was available to them. They were unaware of what God wanted them to be. Ignorance is never a friend of the church. God's people always work hard to eliminate ignorance.
- b. **"Because of the hardness of their heart."** – This does not mean that the pump in their chest was turning hard. The term goes back to the Exodus. Pharaoh hardened

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his heart. Then it meant an unwillingness to believe in God. It also included an unwillingness to do what God wanted the person to do. The word "because" is a translation of the word "dia" (διὰ) which means "through" and indicates instrumentality. The word translated "hardness" is "porosis" (πώρωσις) which means "a covering with a kind of stone." It describes a process of dulled spiritual perception. This was also said of Israel as well as Egypt. This differs from "sklerokardia" (σκληροκάρδια) in that it is a slow process and not deliberate. It also differs in that it is not the product of anger, but of neglect. Hardness of heart is a person's entire mental and moral life. This involves both the intellect and the emotions.

And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. Ephesians 4:19

The Greek text reads a bit differently. The word "callous" does not appear in the text, but the idea is there. One might translate it, "Being past feeling, they gave themselves over to lust." The word translated "callous" or "past feeling" is "apalgeo" (ἀπαλγέω) and literally means "from, to feel pain." In English we would say it "free from pain." The translator interpreted this to mean callousness. It is to become insensitive to God's leading and desire. All restraints have been removed. The word comes out the experience of grief and pain. It describes what a person feels when they have grieved to the point where they can grieve no longer. They are numb. They are "grieved out." Having grieved as much as they can, they become apathetic toward the pain they felt. They reach the point where they are past feeling.

Paul continued, "have given themselves over to sensuality." The word translated "have given themselves over" is "paradidomai" (παραδίδωμαι) and means "to surrender," "to submit oneself." They surrendered themselves to the sexual desire. The word translated "lust" is "aselgeia" (ἀσελγεία) and means "licentiousness," "filthy wantonness," "to be without moral restraint." It is a form of excess and absence of restraint that leads to a variety of vices. It is extreme indecency. Paul speaks of this lasciviousness which begins in the heart as a work of the flesh.

The word "for" indicates that Paul will give a statement of purpose. He said, "for the practice of every kind of impurity." The word for "practice" is "ergasia" (ἐργασία) It means a work or a performance. This is a total self-investment in the object of desire.

The word for "uncleanness" is "akathartos" (ἀκάθαρτος). This is a broad term identifying things unclean, impure. These are things that are not purified. It describes the filthiness of human conduct. It encompasses every kind of debauchery of which a person is capable.

Paul concludes this portion with the words "with greediness." The word translated "greediness" is "pleonexia" (πλεονεξία) and means "to covet." The word is always used in a bad sense. It literally means "to have more." It is an expression of the insatiable desire for anything. It is not related just to money. In this particular instance, Paul is talking about a shopping list of sensual perversions.

But you did not learn Christ in this way, Ephesians 4:20

The use of the word "but" indicates that a serious contrast is pending. The statement is posed in a negative sense. The positive statement of this idea would be, "You learned the Christian faith to be just the opposite of this." This makes it clear that they had been care-

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fully disciplined in the faith. That is not surprising since it was Paul who had taught them during the time that he lived in Ephesus. Observe how Paul expressed it, "You did not learn Christ..." The word translated "learn" is "manthano" (μανθάνω) and means to increase in knowledge. It is to gain knowledge by inquiry and observation. It is to study Christ with the greatest possible intensity.

If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, Ephesians 4:21

There is a bit of tongue-in-cheek in this statement. Paul knew that they had been taught since he was the teacher. It was a way of emphasizing a point. He said, "If indeed you have heard Him and been taught in Him." Paul knew that there was little possibility that they had heard Jesus personally. Paul had taught them the things that Jesus said. Paul, on the other hand, had been taught by the apostles and by the Holy Spirit, the things that Jesus commanded. He, then, taught these Ephesian Christians.

Paul concluded, "just as truth is in Jesus." This is more than saying that Jesus is the opposite of a lie. Paul was responding to the statement of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Truth is all that Jesus is and all that He taught. Paul inferred that there is no other source of truth.

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, Ephesians 4:22

The word "that" does not appear in the Greek text. The words "in reference to your former manner of life," is a way of saying that this is how I want you to deal with the way you formerly lived without Christ.

He said, "You lay aside the old self." The word for "lay aside" is "apothemi" (ἀποτίθημι). It means "to get rid of something." It is "to put something away," "to lay it aside." This is an aorist infinitive that stresses the idea of a definite act. They are not to just talk about this. This is to be taken seriously and acted upon. As the sign says, "just do it!"

The word translated "old" is "proteros" (πρότερος) and means something that is "former." The word translated "self" is "anastrofe" (ἀναστροφή) and is usually expressed as behavior, one's former life or former self. He was describing the way they once lived.

He said of their former life, "which is being corrupted." The word for "corrupted" is "phtheiro" (φθείρω) and it literally means "to shrivel," or "wither away." It is to become morally depraved or to defile. The form of this word is present participle. It is ongoing, not static. It describes a process not carried out by the self, but by forces outside the self. It is the natural result of the way we live our lives.

Paul also said, "in accord with the lusts of deceit." The word translated "accordance" is "kata" (κατὰ). As used here, it describes something used as a measuring stick. The corruption takes place according to the measure of the lusts of deceit. There is a direct relationship between the corrupting and the growth of the lust of deceit evident in their lives. The word translated "lusts" is "epithumia" (ἐπιθυμία). We usually associate this word with intense sexual desire. In fact, it applies equally in all areas. A better word would be desire. These desires are essentially bad. They only become bad when they run counter to the will and command of God. They usually represent something very good that has been perverted.

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The word "deceit" is "apate" (ἀπάτη) and means to deceive by false impression rather than an outright lie. Paul described a burning desire to deceive others that was nearly insatiable.

And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, Ephesians 4:23

The word translated "and" is really "de" which is almost always translated "but." The translator was trying to avoid the appearance of a serious contrast. Still the word is "de" and should probably be translated as a mild contrast using the word "but."

The word translated "be renewed" is "ananeo" (ἀνανέω). It means "to turn something into its original condition," "to revitalize." The form of the word is present passive infinitive. One might literally translate the word, "to be being renewed, as being done by a force outside oneself."

Paul also said, "in the spirit of your mind." This is a delicate statement and not too clear. Paul is at least talking about their attitude. This is what formulates their way of looking at life. This needs renewing. They had some of their old patterns still at work. They needed to be renewed, to be set right again. The truth is that this is a problem in every era of the church. This is one of the strong pieces of evidence that we must be continually studying the Scriptures.

And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Ephesians 4:24

The word for "put on" is enduo" (ἐνδύω). It describes putting things on like armor or like clothes. It is an aorist infinitive. It describes something one does for himself. The emphasis is on the action, not on the time.

These people are to put on the "new self." The new self is a translation of two words "kainon anthropon" (καινόν ἄνθρωπον). The word "kainon" means "new," something other than what one was accustomed to seeing. "Anthropon" means "man." It is not a male designation, but that of a human being. The idea of a new person or new personality would express what Paul was saying quite well. Paul gave us some indications of what such a person would look like.

- a. **"Which in the likeness of God was created"** - This new personality is in the "likeness of God" as opposed to their former way of life. The word translated "likeness" is really "according to". The Greek wording would be literally translated "according to the God." Paul may have been thinking of the Genesis statement where God said, "in our image." "Image," of course, does not refer to appearance, but to the nature and quality of the living. This new man has God-like characteristics. Paul expressed it this way, "Has been created in righteousness." The word translated "created" is ktizo" (κτίζω). It was used to describe the founding of a place like a city or nation. It is an act of God. It describes, like the original creation, making something out of nothing that existed prior to that time. The form of this word is an aorist participle. The aorist tense identifies simple past action. The participle, on the other hand, might be translated "having been created." The words "in righteousness" are very important. Righteousness is the foundation out of which this new life was crafted by God. Righteousness is the quality of being just; it is being right. It is most often looked upon as doing the right thing. It must also

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include doing the right thing for the right reason. The scriptures say that God is righteous. Again, to be righteous is to be like God in that respect.

The word "and" suggests that equal values are being tied together in this portion of the sentence. Righteousness and that which follows are equally the foundation upon which this "new man" was formed.

Then Paul added, "Holiness of the truth." The word for "holiness" is "hosiotes" (ἁγιότης). It is the opposite of corruption and pollution. It is the purifying quality you discover in those who have a strong relationship with God. This is a special kind of holiness qualified by the words "of the truth." Paul described a purified way of life that is fashioned by the truth – the word of God, the example of God's actions and the life of Jesus.

Ephesians 4:25-32 – Paul Exhorted The Ephesian Christians To Practical Holiness

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Ephesians 4:25

The word translated "therefore" is "dio" (διὸ) and means "consequently," "therefore" or "wherefore." It indicates that a conclusion is approaching, but this conclusion is a minor one and not an indication of a division of the book. Paul said, "laying aside falsehood." The word translated "laying aside" is a compound word "apotithemi" (ἀποτίθημι) and is formed in this way:

- a. "apo" means "from."
- b. "Tithemi" means "to put."

Paul's idea was to get rid of something, to discard an undesirable quality, to treat it like a dirty shirt. The Greek form of this word is second aorist middle participle. Simply put, the aorist tense indicates simple action in the past. The participle identifies ongoing action. Together, the emphasis is on ongoing action that was initiated clearly in the past. It is not an isolated incident, but a way of living each day.

Paul instructed them to lay aside "falsehood." The Greek word is "pseudos" (ψεῦδος) which identifies the intent to deceive. It is usually translated a "lie." This life of righteousness and holiness has no place for deception of any kind.

Paul now turns his attention to the other direction when he said, "speak truth." The word translated "speak" is "laleite" (λαλεῖτε). The form of this word is present indicative active. The emphasis of this form is to describe something that begins and does not stop. One might translate it, "speak and keep on speaking." It describes a dramatic lifestyle rather than a single action. Having told them what not to do, Paul now indicates what they should do. They are to speak in such a way that there was no possible way a brother or sister could be deceived or misled. It is more than telling true statements. It is making sure that one's words do not lead people away from the truth.

Paul continued, "each to his neighbor." The context, here, would indicate the distinct possibility that "neighbor" refers to fellow Christians. It certainly would have broader implications as well. This describes an ongoing way of never leading another person to believe something other than absolute truth.

The text continues, "because." The Greek word is "hoti" (ὅτι) and is usually translated "that." When used in a causative manner it should be translated "because" as in this instance. It indicates that a reason is forthcoming.

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Paul said, "We are members one of another." This is Paul's appeal to logic. If we are a part of one another's life, then to deceive a brother is to deceive myself. I need to see that everything I do to my brother, I am really doing to myself.

Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, Ephesians 4:26

When Paul said, "be angry," he used the word "orge" (ὀργή). This is a slow burn of anger rather than a giant explosion. It is more an action than a feeling. It will usually result in revenge over time. The form of this word is a present passive imperative. We need to look closely at this form:

- a. Present tense – this indicates that action is ongoing. One might translate it "be angry and keep on being angry."
- b. Passive voice – the subject, you, is the recipient of the action. This is something that is caused by others. It is not something that we should take the initiative about.
- c. Imperative mood – This is a command, not a suggestion.

Some would say that we should not ever become angry. Paul takes just the opposite position. He commands these Ephesian Christians to be angry. There are some issues about which we should become angry. Jesus was angry about the way the Pharisees lived and pretended to be godly. We must keep in mind, however, that this anger is not an emotional explosion, but a calculated, carefully chosen response to evil.

Paul hastens to add a limiting idea when he said, "yet do not sin." This suggests that there are at least two kinds of anger – that which is righteous and that which is sinful. Paul commanded them to be angry in a righteous way and to refuse to be angry in a sinful way. The word that Paul used and was translated "yet" is "kai" (καὶ) and is usually translated "and." No harm would be done to the idea of the text if we translated the word "kai" as "and" in the way that it is usually translated.

The words "do not sin" can be frightening. If one takes the time to check the Greek form, it is easier to understand. The word translated "sin" is "harmartano" (ἁμαρτάνω). The word means "to miss the mark." It is to do less than is required. It is to fail to do as the law commands. It is also to do what the law forbids. The form of the word is present imperative active. Again, it is important to carefully observe the meaning of this form.

- a. Present tense – this suggests action that is continuous. It describes a lifestyle rather than a single act.
- b. Active voice – this suggests that the subject initiates the action.
- c. Imperative mood – this is a command.

A more direct translation would be "absolutely do not sin and keep on sinning." He commanded them not to make a lifestyle out of sinning. When we see the words "do not sin," we get nervous. We know that we do sin and on a reasonably regular basis. That is not what Paul said. He said do not make a lifestyle out of sinning or of being angry. That is different. We can come to that point of not making sinning a lifestyle while we would not come to the point where we never sin.

Paul continued, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." There are two basic ways to express the negative idea. You can put the letter "a" on the front of a word and in so doing make it a negative statement. You can also use the word "me" (μή). The use of this word is a stronger negative idea than the use of the letter "a" at the beginning of a word.

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In this instance, Paul used the word "me." Paul feels very strongly about this statement. The word translated "let" is "epiduo" (ἐπιδύω) and is a compound word. You may have noticed that we encounter a large number of compound words in Ephesians. That is usually for one or two reasons: It can be done for emphasis or it can be done in order to give a very precise description of the idea of the author. It can also be both of these ideas together. The word here is as follows:

- a. "Epi" means "upon."
- b. "Dorean" means a "present."

It suggests to place a present upon something. It is to freely allow something to come down. The form of this word is as important as the definition. It is in the present active imperative form. It simply means::

- a. Present tense – this suggests ongoing action; a lifestyle rather than a single act.
- b. Active voice – The subject initiates the action.
- c. Imperative mood – This is a command, not a suggestion.

You must absolutely not allow this and continue to allow it. Paul then identified what they were not to allow – "your anger." The word, in this instance, is parorgismos (παροργισμός). We encountered the word "anger" earlier in this verse. The word Paul used, however, is different here. Earlier, the word was "orge." In this statement, the word is "parorgismos". It is a stronger form of "orge." It carries the idea of arousing wrath. It is sometimes translated "provoke." It is not a flash of anger. It is rather a slowly developing anger that is sustained and increased. Paul commanded them that under no circumstances to allow this to develop and grow.

Paul said, in a command, do not let the sun go down on your anger. We need to look carefully at this command. What does Paul mean? Is he saying that if I get angry at night, after the sun goes down, that I can retain that anger until sundown the next day? I think not. Paul was saying that they should not retain their intense anger day after day. Unfortunately, we all know people who have retained their worst anger not for a day, but in some cases for decades. This is disobedience. Paul was saying that there are times when we must be angry, but in no case are we to nourish our anger indefinitely.

And do not give the devil an opportunity. Ephesians 4:27

The word "and" does not appear in the Greek text. The word is "mete" (μήτε) and can be translated "neither" or "nor." In either case, it ties this statement to the previous one about their anger. The statement, "do not give the devil an opportunity" applies to Paul's previous statement about their anger if not to that which follows as well.

The word translated "give" is "didomi" (δίδομι) and means to give or yield. It could be understood to mean to allow without a contest. The passive yielding is as damaging as aggressive pursuit. The form of this word is present indicative imperative. It is a command to refuse to give and never stop refusing to give. They are to make a lifestyle out of refusing to give as Paul has commanded here.

The word translated "opportunity" is "topos" (τόπος). It can identify a place or location. In this instance it identifies refusing to allow the devil an opportunity, an opening into our lives. It is a protection against the unguarded situation where he might take advantage of us.

Paul identified the one he was talking about as "the devil." The word translated "devil" is "diabolos" (διάβολος). The word literally means "one who accuses." It is not just a

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name, but a character description. This is what he is and does. His primary occupation is to accuse those who believe. The suggestion is that prolonged anger plays into this scenario.

Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Ephesians 4:28

We are in the midst of a long list of instructions that Paul gave these Christians as they sought to live their lives in Christ.

It is interesting that he begins with an instruction concerning theft. Paul used the word "steals." The word translated "steals" is "klepto" (κλέπτω) and means "thief." In English we have the word "kleptomaniac," one that is addicted to taking that which does not belong to him or her. The form of the Greek word is very direct. It is a participle and says, "the stealing one." It is the one who is characterized by theft.

Having spoken of the one who steals, Paul said, "steal no longer." This use of the word "klepto" is different. In this instance the form of the word is a present active imperative. We would translate it, "no more let him steal and keep on stealing. It is a way of commanding that the person stop making theft a way of life, a vocation. There is no alternative to this command. He is to stop it and never do it again.

The use of the word "but," which is "de" (δέ), suggests that a serious contrast is coming. Paul said, "rather let him labor." The word translated "labor" is "kopiao" (κοπιῶω) literally means "to be fatigued." It is the result of hard work. Paul did not have a desk job in mind when he said this. The form of this word, again, is present indicative imperative. As indicated earlier, this form is a command to do something and never stop doing it. It is a lifestyle which one must engage in constantly. They are to work and never stop working. Paul spoke of "performing what is good" The word translated "performing" is "ergazomai" (ἐργάζομαι) and means "to toil," "to do work," "to carry out a vocation." This is a present participle. The interesting thing about this form is that it adopts two different forms both of which stress ongoing action. It is a way of strongly emphasizing that this must be done and never stopped. They are to practice their work as a way of life. The word for "good" is "agathos" (ἀγαθός) and means something beneficial. This is quite different from our consumerism mentality. Much of the time little if any thought is given to a person's vocation as to whether or not it is of benefit to others. You may have noticed that this is in sharp contrast to the idea of theft that is a detriment to others. The main concern is usually whether it provides sufficient wealth to live in the style to which they would like to become accustomed. Some have used this statement to indicate that we should avoid modern technology. There is no doubt that all technology is not good for us. The statement "performing with his own hands." That is really not what Paul is talking about.

The words "in order that" are a translation of the word "hina" (ἵνα). It suggests purpose or explanation. It is fair to conclude that Paul is going to give an explanation for his previous command. He said, "he may have something to share with him who is in need." We tend to think of our work as personal and on occasion even selfishly. Our main focus is on taking care of ourselves and those who depend upon us. We might not otherwise ever think of it, but Paul suggested that another reason for our work is to have something to share with the needy. John Wesley admonished his people, "earn all you can; save all you can; give all you can." In our text, it is as important to provide for the needy as it is to

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provide for ourselves and those who depend upon us. This makes the needy a part of our family as well.

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, that it may give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29

Paul continued his admonitions, "let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth." The word translated "unwholesome" is "sapro" (σαπρός) and literally means "rotten." It was commonly used in the kitchen to describe food of all kinds that had become putrid. It also was used to describe things that were unfit to be used. Paul used this idea in this particular instance. He was saying "do not allow any word to be used that is unfit for a believer to use or hear. The word "proceed" literally means to "let go." It emphasizes that personal control. It is something over which we have total control. The use of the middle voice emphasizes this personal control.

The form of this word is a present imperative. The emphasis of this is two-fold:

- a. The present tense insists that this is something that one does and keeps on doing.
- b. The imperative mood is a command and cannot be denied

This means that if we do let unwholesome words come out of our mouths, we are disobedient to God.

The use of the word "but" suggests that a contrast is in process. The contrast is between the unwholesome words on the one hand and words that are good for edification. Unwholesome words never edify. Now Paul turns his attention to "such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment." Paul spoke very carefully. It is possible to speak words that may be good, but have no positive effect upon the need of the moment.

Paul talked about "edification." The word is "oikodome" (οἰκοδομή). This is an interesting compound word:

- a. "Oikos" means "house" or "dwelling."
- b. "Doma" means "to build."

In the same way that a workman would take useless mud and make a dwelling out of it, so our speech must take otherwise meaningless terms and use them to build people up. The things we say must directly improve the quality of life for the people around us.

The word "that" suggests a statement of purpose. Paul said, "that it may give grace to those who hear." Paul has just placed greater demands upon the way we talk to each other. The word translated "give" is "do" (δω). It is, appropriately, in the subjunctive mood. It describes the possibility of action, but not the necessity. It depends on both the giver and the receiver. This is the reason that Paul said "it MAY give grace to those who hear." This means that we, as people "in Christ," must regularly ask ourselves if the things we say provide grace to those who hear us.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

The use of the word "and" suggests that the previous thought is being continued. It also suggests that there is an equality between the two parts of this thought. The statement "do not grieve" is very emphatic. There are a couple of ways to express a negative idea. If I add the letter "a" to the front of a word, it changes that word into a negative statement, but

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a mild one. There is also a specific word that means "not." This is a much stronger statement. In this situation the word "me" (μη) is added and it makes the statement much more forceful. One might translate the words "and absolutely do not grieve the Holy Spirit."

The word "grieve" is "lupeo" (λυπέω). It suggests the presence of great pain. It is not the strongest form of grief. It does, however, create great distress and sorrow. Though the Holy Spirit is God, still He is capable of experiencing unbelievable levels of grief.

The form of the word "grieve" is present active imperative. The present tense indicates ongoing action. It is a lifestyle rather than a single act. It is like saying, "do not make a way of life out of grieving the Holy Spirit." It is in the active voice. This means that the subject, these Ephesian Christians, are being instructed to initiate this action of not grieving. The imperative mood tells us that this is a command and to ignore it puts us in a position of being disobedient to God. The grieving can take place in one of two ways: We can grieve the Holy Spirit by failing to meet goals or expectations. On the other hand, we can also grieve the Holy Spirit when our goals or actions intersect with those laid out for us by the Holy Spirit.

The one we are not to grieve is "the Holy Spirit of God." Paul's use of the statement "Holy Spirit of God" is quite significant. We would have understood exactly what he meant had he just said, "Holy Spirit." The addition of the words "of God" must be there for added emphasis. Paul is trying to remind us that we are talking about deity. This is not just any spirit. This is the third person of the Trinity.

Paul added, "by whom you were sealed." In effect, he has given us another reason why we should be very careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is the one who "sealed us" in redemption. The word "sealed" is "sphragizo" (σφραγίζω). This word suggests an intense level of security and dependability. In the first century, a seal was used much like the modern credit card. The family seal was one's guarantee that they would be responsible for debt incurred.

Paul continued, "for the day of redemption." This does not mean the day on which a person was saved. It rather means a coming day when we will be received into glory. In the meantime, we have no paper that says we will be admitted. Many things may happen along the way. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is our guarantee that we will, indeed, be welcomed into God's eternal presence. Notice that this is in the past tense. It is an accomplished fact. It is not yet reality, but it could not be more dependable if it happened this morning.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Ephesians 4:31

Paul is now launching on a list of things they "must put away" from themselves. Verses 31 and 32 form a single sentence. These two segments of the sentence contain two different kinds of commands. One set is negative and the other is positive. The use of the word "let" suggests that this is a command stated as an exhortation. The force is the same, it is just put more nicely. It should be understood that each of these qualities that Paul identified is preceded by "put away from you." A diagram of this part of the verse may prove helpful.

/| bitterness
/| and

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/ | anger
/ | and
(you) | put away / | wrath
| from you \ | and
\ | tumult
\ | and
\ | evil speaking

This sentence is much more forceful and direct than our translation suggests. The word translated "put away" is "airo" (ἀίρω). The word means "to remove," "to take something completely away from its present location." This is not a suppression of qualities. It is radical surgery, it is the removal of the quality with all its influence. The form of this word is aorist imperative. The aorist tense emphasizes the action and not the timing. The imperative mood means this is an unequivocal command. It is not a suggestion. We ignore this command at our peril. If you look at the list in the verse and on the diagram, you will notice that each quality is separated by the word "and." This is a way of emphasizing two things: First, it adds strong emphasis to his words. Second, it indicates that Paul believed that these qualities were equally bad. It was his way of saying that each negative quality should receive the same total rejection.

"Put away all bitterness."

The first negative quality is "bitterness.," The word so translated is "pikria" (πικρία) and has several forms and meanings. It represents something extremely bitter to the taste. It also represents something extreme in terms of hatred between enemies. Again, it was used to indicate something or some quality of extreme wickedness. Observe, that each of these shades of meaning represent something extreme. Paul was concerned about the extremely harsh, destructive feelings and attitudes that existed between believers in Ephesus. As we indicated before, the words "put away" suggest radical surgery to remove this quality from the lives of these Christians.

"And put away anger"

There were two basic ideas concerning their understanding of "anger."

1. The word "orge" (ὄργη) is an anger that rises slowly and under great control, but is capable of unimaginable destruction.
2. The word "thumos" (θύμος), however, is just the opposite. It flashes up violently, but has no lingering duration.

The word translated "anger" is "thumos" (θύμος). The importance of this will be evident when we consider the next quality "wrath."

"And put away wrath."

The word translated "wrath" is "orge" (ὄργη). As indicated earlier, this word describes a negative emotional level of distress that is very much under control, but totally devastating and destructive over a long period of time, even a lifetime. These people would all have known of people who had been the victim of a vicious crime. There was no doubt but that there would be revenge and of the worst possible kind. Everyone also knew that this revenge would not be dealt with immediately. They also knew that it was not uncommon for the family to wait 50 or 100 years to repay the wrong. The rationale

behind this was to make them wait as long as possible before the crime was repaid. The tension of the delay was part of the revenge. This attitude is behind some of the tensions that linger in the Near east today. In these instances, the father will take an oath with his son that he will avenge their enemy for the wrongs done and increase the tensions by taking as long as possible to do so. They think of this as redeeming the family name. Paul was saying that neither form of anger is acceptable and must be totally removed from the life of a believer.

Paul had set the stage for this statement by dealing with the idea of unity in the church. In his instructions concerning unity, he was saying that what they do to other members of the body of Christ they are in fact doing to themselves. None of them would even think of doing such a thing to themselves.

"Put away clamor"

The word translated "tumult" or "clamor" is "krauge" (κραυγή). This is an interesting word. It is identified with the cry of the raven and was made to imitate the cry of this bird. It was used to describe the scream and shriek of heated disagreement. There is no place for this kind of abuse among the people who are "in Christ."

"Put away slander"

The word translated "slander" is "blasphemeo" (βλασφημέω). This word represents at least two levels of ridicule.

1. To make a mockery of God – when the religious leaders mocked Jesus and made fun of Him on the cross, they were engaged in this kind of ridicule. In the minds of the Jews, to call oneself God or Messiah or to claim to be able to forgive sin was blasphemy
2. To have such contempt for a person that one makes fun of the object of their derision. In this instance, it is not directed at God, but at another person

The level of contempt and mockery may be identical. It is the object of the disparaging derision that makes the difference. Observe that all these commands deal with different forms and levels of division between believers. It is like saying these are the things that destroy unity and I command you not to do any of them.

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

The word translated "and" is "de" (δέ) and is usually translated "but". The translators have used the word "and" to indicate a continuation of the idea. Because each of the five qualities they must put away were separated by the word "And" and translated from the word "kai" (καί). Paul's use of "de" in this instance indicates that this is a very different use of the word. This is a very wise use of the two words in the same text.

The ideas that follow this word, however, are in contrast to the words that precede it. In English, we would normally use the word "but" in such an instance. Having dealt with five negative commands, Paul now launches a list of three positive commands dealing with spiritual qualities.

"Be kind to one another"

The word translated "be" is "ginomai" (γίνομαι) and means to become or cause to be. The word implies that Paul suggested that they become something that they had not been

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previously. The form of this word is in the middle voice. The import of this is that it is something that one does for oneself rather than something that someone does for you.

The word translated "kind" is "chrestos" (χρηστός). This word literally means to touch lightly. It is to furnish what is needed. It was sometimes used to describe the hand that helps. It is the ability to be an instrument of help and improvement for another person. These people had not been known for this in the past. Paul wanted them to begin being such a help.

"Be tender hearted"

This is a compound word composed as follows:

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Splagchnon" literally means "intestines."

They thought of the intestines as the seat of all emotions. Thus, it was natural that they would use this word to describe tender mercy, sympathy and inward affection. Paul admonished them to be inwardly affectionate toward one another within the body of Christ. Another way to say it is become compassionate toward each other.

"Be forgiving of each other."

The word translated "each other" is "eautois" (ἑαυτοῖς). This is a reflexive pronoun and would usually be translated "yourselves." The Greek is a bit more direct than the English translation. "Yourselves" includes forgiving yourself as an individual Christian. "Yourselves" also includes forgiving the other Christians in the community when they have done wrong. It also includes the other Christians in the community forgiving themselves. It is a level of forgiveness that permeates the entire body of Christ.

The word for "forgiveness" is "charizomai" (χαρίζομαι). It comes from the root word "charis" (χάρις) which means "grace" and "graciousness." It is "to be gracious", "to be gratuitous", "to forgive freely", "to pardon or rescue". It is to deal with yourself and others as God has dealt with you.

Paul added the qualifier, "as also God in Christ forgave you." Paul's use of the word "as" suggests that he is going to make a comparison. The example Paul gave them is the kind of forgiveness that God in Christ freely offered us. It is the kind of forgiveness that never keeps score on how many times God forgave us for the same failure in obedience. It is the kind of forgiveness that is offered even when the person is turning their back on the mercy of God. It is that superhuman kind of forgiveness that has no interest in storing away all the details of just how terribly the person offended us in the first place and that without reason. Indeed, it is the kind of forgiveness that is offered to us even before we admit that we are in need of it. This is the kind of forgiveness we are to offer to ourselves and to each other in the body of Christ.

The progression of Paul's arguments is easy to overlook unless the time is taken to spell them out. Review this chapter again. Look at his progression:

1. He begins with an exhortation to unity. This is the prerequisite for all spiritual growth and maturity.
2. He then exhorted them to walk in holiness. A holy walk never grows out of discord or disunity.
3. Paul then spelled out the practical expressions of the holy life he wanted them to live.

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Observe the qualities Paul had in mind when he called them to "live a life worthy of their calling."

1. Verse 2 – Humility, patience, forbearance, love.
2. Verse 3 – Preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" requires diligence – a zeal to do the right things. It is a way of life, not a single act.
3. Verses 4-6 – Paul used the "one body," "one Spirit" "one hope" as illustrations of the oneness we must possess.
4. Verse 7 – Paul contrasts this strong unity with the gift diversity with which the Spirit endows each saint.
5. Verses 8-10 – These verses form a dynamic parenthesis in the text. Notice that verse 7 is a statement about the individual nature of God's grace. Verse 11 describes the individual nature of the ministry to which each of us is called. The parenthesis, verses 8-10, is a dynamic picture of the limitless power of God expressed in His taking authority even over those long since deceased.
6. Verse 11 – Christ gave specific ministries to those whose lives He had changed.
7. Verse 12 – The purpose of our ministry is two fold – equip the saints and build up the body.
8. Verse 13 – The goal of our ministry is four fold:
 - a. Attain the unity of the faith.
 - b. Attain the knowledge of the Son of God.
 - c. Attain to the mature man.
 - d. Attain the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Observe that this is a process.

Observe that this is progressive. It begins with unity and is completed in "the fullness of Christ."

9. Verse 14 – In order to mature, one must be alert to shifts in doctrine and the deceitfulness of men who seek to divert us into destructive directions.
10. Verse 15 – Speaking the truth in love facilitates our maturing in Christ.
11. Verse 16 – The whole body, the church, is strengthened by the input of every part of it. Every believer needs to speak the truth in love.
12. Verse 17 – There must be a contrast between our life in Christ and our former lifestyle. This will also be a sharp contrast to the world around us.
13. Verses 18, 19 – Paul described the tragedy of our former lives. This is a review.
14. Verse 22(-) – We are commanded to lay aside our former decaying lifestyle.
15. Verse 23 (+) – We are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds.
16. Verse 24 (+) – Through righteousness and truth we are to put on a new self.
17. Verse 25-32 – These are practical examples of what Paul exhorted them to be in verses 1-16 and 17-24.
18. Verse 25 – Speak the truth.
19. Verse 26 – Have holy anger.
20. Verse 27 – Refuse to give the Devil an opportunity to creep in.
21. Verse 28 – Be honest and work so that you can give to the needy.
22. Verse 29 – Speak only wholesome things.
23. Verse 30 – Do not cause the Holy Spirit pain.
24. Verse 31 – Flee bitterness, anger, wrath, tumult, evil speaking, all negative and divisive.

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25. Verse 32 – Teach each other with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.
You have probably observed that through this whole painful list, Paul is describing what it really means to be "in Christ."

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 5

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EPHESIANS 5:1 – 33

1. There are four paragraphs in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. On the following table, write a brief summary of seven words or less for each paragraph.

5:1, 2	
5:3-14	
5:15-21	
5:22-33	

2. In 5:1, 2, Paul gave a brief series of exhortations to these Ephesian Christians.
- In 5:1, Paul instructed these Christians to be "imitators of God."
 - How would you explain this to a new believer?
 - Paul continued, "as beloved children." What does this add to his command?
 - In 5:2, Paul gave a command followed by a description of Christ's relationship with us.
 - What is the command?
 - How does Paul describe Jesus?
 - What do the two have to do with each other?
3. In 5:3-14, Paul gave a series of negative commands.
- In 5:3, Paul drew a serious contrast with 5:2.
 - What is being contrasted?
 - In this verse, Paul mentioned three negative qualities.
 - What are these negative qualities?
 - Describe each one very carefully.
 - How does Paul use the words "as is proper among the saints"?
 - In 5:4, Paul listed three negative qualities.
 - Describe each one carefully.
 - What is the effect of Paul's statement, "Which are not fitting"?
 - Paul listed one positive quality in this verse.
 - What is that positive quality?
 - How does it relate to the negative qualities?
 - In 5:5, Paul singled out three kinds of sin for special attention.
 - What is the significance of choosing these three and not some others?
 - What is the impact of Paul's statement in this verse?
 - In 5:6, Paul's treatment of specific sins is more ominous than in other references. What does this tell us?
 - In 5:7, Paul drew a minor conclusion.
 - What points has he made that are being summarized in this conclusion?
 - What conclusion does Paul make?
 - In 5:8, Paul explained the conclusion he drew.

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1. What explanation did he offer?
 2. In this verse, Paul said, "You are light in the Lord." What is added by the inclusion of the words, "in the Lord."
 - g. In 5:9, Paul described "life in the light."
 1. How did he describe it?
 2. In what way do the three qualities mentioned affect life in the light?
 - h. In 5:10, Paul wrote, "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."
 1. What are the implications of this statement?
 2. What light does it shed on your understanding of 5:9?
 - i. In 5:11, Paul presented a contrast.
 1. What is the contrast?
 2. What was Paul really saying?
 - j. In 5:12, Paul explained his comments in 5:11. What explanation did he offer?
 - k. Think carefully about Paul's statement in 5:13. A contrast is being reported.
 1. What two things are being contrasted?
 2. How has this clarified Paul's message?
 - l. There is a quotation in 5:14.
 1. From what source(s) has he quoted?
 2. Paul, like Jesus, often quoted from the Old Testament. Why would he do that?
4. In 5:15-21, Paul issued a series of warnings to these Ephesian Christians.
- a. In the conclusion expressed in 5:15, 16, Paul gave a command, an explanation and a reason.
 1. What is the command?
 2. What explanation of the command does he offer?
 3. What reason does he present to justify his command?
 - b. In 5:17, Paul issued a pair of instructions.
 1. What are these instructions?
 2. These instructions are presented in contrast with each other. How does this affect what Paul said?
 - c. Ephesians 5:18-21, a single sentence, contains a series of instructions.
 1. Though 5:18 is part of a separate sentence from 5:17, still, it is a continuation of the idea.
 - a. How does 5:18 relate to 5:17?
 - b. This verse contains two instructions. What are they?
 - c. These two instructions, one positive and the other negative, are contrasted with each other. What does this tell us?
 2. In 5:19, Paul continued with his list of instructions. This list immediately follows Paul's instruction to be "filled with the Spirit."
 - a. How do these instructions relate to each other?
 - b. How do the instructions concerning singing relate to the other instructions in the chapter?
 3. In 5:20, Paul instructed these struggling Christians to "always give thanks for all things."
 - a. In your view, how does "giving thanks" impact the struggle these Ephesian Christians had with their aggressive, idolatrous neighbors?

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- b. Paul carefully instructed them to give thanks "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." What difference does this make?
- 4. In 5:21, the closing portion of this sentence, Paul gave a final instruction.
 - a. What is this instruction?
 - b. What does it mean?
 - c. What did Paul add to the instruction by the use of the words, "In the fear of Christ"?
- 5. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul gave specific instructions to both husbands and wives.
 - a. In 5:22, Paul gave an instruction to wives.
 - 1. What was this instruction?
 - 3. What does it mean?
 - 4. What is added by his inclusion of the words, "as to the Lord"?
 - b. In 5:23, Paul explained his instruction in 5:22.
 - 1. What explanation does Paul offer?
 - 2. How does the inclusion of the words, "He Himself being the Savior of the body" affect this explanation?
 - c. In 5:24, Paul drew a parallel.
 - 1. What parallel did he draw?
 - 2. Spell out, in careful detail, what Paul meant by this parallel?
 - d. In 5:25, Paul drew another parallel as he gave specific instructions to the husbands.
 - 1. What parallel did he draw?
 - 2. Spell out, in careful detail, what Paul meant by this parallel.
 - 3. What is added by the inclusion of the words, "and gave Himself up for her."
 - e. In 5:26, Paul continued his explanation.
 - 1. What purpose did Paul identify concerning his instruction in 5:25?
 - 2. In verse 26, Paul described Christ's efforts on behalf of the church. In this parallel statement, how does this translate into the husband's intended actions toward his wife?
 - f. In 5:27, Paul continued his statement concerning 5:25.
 - 1. What purpose(s) does Paul suggest in this verse?
 - 2. Again, in this parallel statement, how is the husband to accomplish this goal?
 - g. In 5:28, Paul drew yet another parallel.
 - 1. What are the parts of this parallel?
 - 2. How would you describe what Paul meant when he said, "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies"?
 - h. In 5:29, Paul gave another reason for his instructions to husbands.
 - 1. What reason did he offer?
 - 2. To what did Paul appeal as he offered this reason?
 - 3. What effect does Paul produce on his message when he added the words, "just as Christ also does the church"?
 - i. Ephesians 5:30 is one more explanation that Paul offers.
 - 1. What reason does he offer?
 - 2. What does this mean?
 - j. Again, in 5:31, Paul appealed to the Old Testament for support of his message.
 - 1. Where did this quotation originate?

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2. What is the context of the quotation?
3. What is the effect of this quotation on Paul's argument in Ephesians chapter five?

6. Review chapter five very carefully. What view of the family relationship, for those who are "in Christ" does Paul present in this chapter?

LESSON 5: EPHESIANS 5:1 – 33

EXHORTATIONS TO FAMILY UNITY

Introduction

There are four paragraphs in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. A brief summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

5:1, 2	Positive exhortations – Be imitators of God
5:3-14	Negative exhortations to flee
5:15-21	Warning – Be careful How You Walk
5:22-33	Exhortations For Husbands And Wives

Ephesians 5:1, 2 – Positive Exhortations – Be Imitators Of God

The two verses of this paragraph form a single sentence. It is, therefore, necessary for us to interpret the paragraph in light of this information.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; Ephesians 5:1

We should keep in mind that verses one and two are a single sentence. Verse divisions make this difficult, but it is true and must be treated as such. The word "therefore" is a translation of the word "oun" (οὖν) which means "therefore." In many cases it identifies a strong conclusion, but that is not the case here. In almost every instance, however, it does signal the approach of a practical section. In this instance, it identifies a conclusion within the final conclusion of the whole epistle.

The form of the word "be" is present middle imperative. As we have seen, the present tense reminds us that this is an action that begins and does not cease. It is a lifestyle, not a single action. The middle voice speaks of the subject receiving the action of the verb. The imperative mood reminds us that this is a command and not a suggestion. Paul's intent is clear. People who are "in Christ," must have a lifestyle, a way of living that reminds others of the ways of God. One might translate it, "be and never stop being imitators of God."

The word translated "imitators" is mimetes" (μιμητής) and means "a mimic," "an actor." It is one who imitates the actions and words of another. It was the term used to describe a stage actor in the ancient Greek theater. Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to imitate the things that God says and does. When people see our lives, they should see the actions, values and words of God in human form.

Paul now attempts to define what it means to be "imitators of God." He began by saying, "as beloved children." The word "as" suggests a comparison will be forthcoming. The word translated "beloved" is "agape" (ἀγαπή). This word defines love without boundaries. It is love that requires no response. It is to love just because you love. In this instance it is the love of a parent just because you love. This is a parent-child love relationship that is most positive.

The word translated "children" is "tekna" (τέκνα). This is a word that is used to describe a grown child as opposed to a little child. Such a child is grown and capable of having learned from the actions of the parent and now emulates them. Those who are "in

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Christ" do the things that God does in the same way that a grown child does the things that he/she sees the parent doing.

And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Ephesians 5:2

Again, we must remember that verses one and two are a part of the same sentence. This verse should be seen as a part of verse one. The word "and" at the beginning of verse two also supports this idea. The word for "walk" is "peripateo" (περιπατέω). This word is used to speak of walking in two different ways: It was used to describe the act of walking from one place to another. It was also used to describe a way of life. That, of course, is the way it is used in this verse. The word for "walk" is in the present active imperative form. The present tense indicates action that is ongoing, a way of life. The active voice speaks of the subject initiating the action. The imperative mood indicates that this is a command, not a suggestion. Paul commanded those who are in Christ to live a life that is constantly characterized by selfless, limitless love. At this point, Paul attempted to explain what he meant by walking in love. He used the words "just as." These are a translation of the word "kathos" (καθώς) which is usually translated as "just as" or "according to". It is a very emphatic form of the idea. It was Paul's way of stressing just how strongly he meant his words. It is a very strong parallel. It uses something well known to describe something not known at all. They might not have known anything about showing love for each other. They did know, however, just how much Christ loved them. Paul built upon this awareness to exhort them to love each other. This is the strength of the use of the word "as". It sets the stage for the comparison between the love of Christ for them and the love they are to have for each other.

Paul continued with the word "and." This indicates that this material is tied to the previous statement. "Just as Christ loved you" and "gave Himself up for us." These two parallels were intended to help these Ephesian Christians to understand just what he meant by "walk in love." Paul made a very strong statement in the words, "As Christ also loved you." Christ loved us before we were forgiven and transformed. Christ loved us while we were rejecting Him. He loved us while we were rebelling against His control and love. We are commanded to love the unregenerates while they are rejecting Christ and us. We are being commanded to love the unregenerate while they stand against us. We are commanded to love the unregenerate while they actively attack us and our position. This is what we saw in Stephen as he prayed for those who were stoning him to death.

Paul further explained his message when he added "(as He) gave Himself up for us." The word translated "gave up" is "paradidomi" (παράδιδωμι). It is a compound word and is formed as follows:

- a. "Para" means "beside."
- b. "Didomi" means "to bestow" or "to yield."

This is the idea of offering up a sacrifice. It carries the idea of surrendering, to entrust, to deliver control to another. The form of this word is aorist active indicative. The aorist tense is simple past action. It describes action as accomplished rather than emphasizing the time of the action. The active voice suggests that the subject initiates the action. The indicative mood emphasizes a fact. For Paul this statement was not debatable. Jesus really gave Himself up for us. This is a continued parallel. We are to give ourselves up for

others, sacrificially, just as Jesus gave Himself up for us. That is at least part of what is meant by being "imitators of God."

Paul continued with his statement about the love of Jesus by saying "an offering and a sacrifice." The word translated "offering" is "prospora" (προσφορά). This is a reference to the Old Testament sacrifice. It is a gift to God. It is an acknowledgment of His greatness and power. It is also an admission of our brokenness.

Paul also spoke of a "sacrifice." This word is "thusia" (θυσία). It is that which is offered to God. This is a response to a divine command. It suggests deep need. It was sometimes used to describe the presentation of the self as in Romans 12:1. Paul spoke of a "sacrifice to God." It was not just a sacrifice. It was a presentation to God. He spoke of it as a "fragrant aroma." It is that which is acceptable to God. It is something that is pleasing to God. This was the intent of the idea in the Old Testament.

Paul's intent was clear. Those who are in Christ are to imitate what God does. We do this best by giving ourselves as an offering to God. We do it by relinquishing control of self to the care of God. We do this by presenting the self to God in the way a Jew would have presented his lamb in the sacrifice. That is what is involved in being "in Christ."

Ephesians 5:3-14 – Negative Exhortations to Flee

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; Ephesians 5:3

Verses three and four form a sentence by themselves. We will attempt to keep this in mind as we study the verses together. The word "but" indicates a serious contrast is in progress. That which follows is the opposite of that which preceded. Paul listed three qualities that are the opposite of being "in Christ." The first is "immorality." The word is "porneia" (πορνεία). This word describes illicit sexual intercourse. It includes adultery. It also points particularly to the acts of pagan worship involved in fertility cults. There is no place among those who are "in Christ" for participation in illicit sexual behavior.

The second quality that Paul called upon them to flee was "any impurity." This is a sweeping statement. The word translated "impurity" is "akathartos" (ἀκάθαρτος) which is a compound word.

- a. "A" means "not."
- b. "Kathairo" means "to purify of filthiness."

This involves both physical and ceremonial impurity. Again, remember that Paul used the sweeping term "any impurity." For those who are "in Christ" there is absolutely no place for impurity of any kind.

Again Paul listed another quality from which these Ephesian Christians should flee. The word is "pleonexia" (πλεονεξία) which is, again, a compound word.

- a. "Pleon" means "more"
- b. "Echo" means "to have."

This idea points in two directions:

- a. It can mean wanting what someone else has or simply wanting more than one has.
- b. It can also mean being habitually dissatisfied with what one has.

There is need for those in Christ to be completely satisfied with whatever their lot may be.

Paul continued with even stronger words, "Do not let it be named among you." This is a very strong statement. The word translated "named" is "onomazo" (ὀνομάζω). The

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word means to give something a name. Naming something has a different connotation in that culture than it does in the west. To give something a name is to give it character. We tend to name children because we like the name or because it is the popular name that year. They named a child seeking to give the child a quality that the name implied. When Paul instructed that these things not even be named among them, he strongly insisted that they not even be given the character that a name implied in that culture. This is a call for absolute separation from these evil qualities.

The form of this word is present passive imperative. The present tense describes action that is ongoing, a lifestyle rather than a single act. The passive voice indicates that the subject receives the action. The imperative mood indicates that this is a command, not a suggestion. Paul has indicated that this is not a negotiable instruction. It must be the case if these people are "in Christ."

Paul continued, "As is proper among saints." The word translated "proper" is "prepo" (πρέπω) and literally means "to tower up," "to be conspicuous," "to be suitable," "to be comely." Paul described life qualities that are appropriate for believers, people "in Christ," people who love Christ first and foremost in their lives.

The word "saints" refers to believers, not to people who have achieved a higher level of purity than any other believers.

And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. Ephesians 5:4

We should keep in mind that verses three and four are a single sentence. The use of the word "and" suggests a continuation of the previous thought. Paul continued, "there must be no filthiness." The verb for this part of the sentence is the same as in verse three, "do not let..." This, also, describes ongoing action; a lifestyle rather than a single act. The word translated "filthiness" is "aischrites" (αἰσχρίτης). The word means "to be base," "to be shameful." It is to be and do that which is disgraceful. The word identifies a broad range of activities that were considered shameful and beneath the dignity of human beings. There is no place for such activity among those who are "in Christ."

Paul also said, "There must be no silly talk". The word translated "silly talk" is "morologia" (μωρολογία). It is a compound word and is formed in this manner:

- a. "Moros" means "to be stupid," "absurd" and "dull."
- b. "Musterion" means "secret" or "mysterious."

This deals with conversation that is either absurd or delving into the mysterious. This was a particular problem among some of the believers in that area. It was common for people involved in idolatry to also be involved in the occult. Paul made it plain that among those who were "in Christ" there was no room or time for the absurd or for dabbling with the mysterious.

"There must be no course jesting." The word translated "course jesting" is "eutrapelia" (εὐτραπεία). This, again, is a compound word. It is broken down as:

- a. "Eu" means "good" or "well"
- b. "Trophe" means "to turn" or "revolve."

This deals with words that have a double meaning. This was particularly true when dealing with double-intendre concerned with sexual matters. Paul intended to suggest to them that for those "in Christ" there is no room, time or place for this kind of base reference.

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Paul added, "Which are not fitting." This applies to each of the qualities that he has just mentioned. The word translated "not fitting" is "aneko" (ἀνήκω) and is a compound word. It is broken down as follows:

- a. "Ana" means "proper" or "to come up."
- b. "Heko" means "to arrive."

This word describes that which is fitting to be spoken of in polite company. In some translations it is described as that which is becoming. Paul simply said that such things have no place among those who are "in Christ."

Paul continued, "But rather." It would have been sufficient to simply say, "but." The addition of the word "rather" adds a very intense emphasis to his statement. The word translated "rather" is "mallon" (μᾶλλον). This word is sometimes translated as "greater," or "particularly." It is used to indicate a greater degree or to emphasize the superiority of one thing over another. Paul indicated that that which followed was far greater than that which preceded.

"Thanksgiving"

The word translated "thanksgiving" is "eucharaistia." (εὐχαριστία). The word means "gratitude," or "language which expresses gratitude." It is from this word that we get our English word "eucharist." Again, the intent is clear. Those who are "in Christ" are to be so preoccupied with giving thanks to God that they have no time, place or desire for inappropriate speech.

*For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
Ephesians 5:5*

This verse is a sentence by itself. It will require careful attention to make sure that it is interpreted in that light. The word "for" suggests that a reason is about to be given. The word translated "this" is "touto" (τοῦτο) and adds strong emphasis and specificity. Paul then said, "know with certainty." The word translated "know" is "ginosko" (γινώσκω). There are two basic words translated "knowing" in Greek:

- a. "Oida" means "to know absolutely."
- b. "Ginosko" means "to progress in knowledge."

The latter is the word Paul used here. The form of this word is a present active participle. The present tense is action that begins and does not end. It is a lifestyle, not a single act. At the same time, the participle describes action that is ongoing. In this instance, Paul used both the present tense and the participle form. This is repetition used for the purpose of emphasis, strong emphasis. In this instance, Paul was saying he wanted them to know and increasingly to discover the way of God.

"That no immoral or impure person, or covetous man..." This statement, in the English is presented in a negative form. The Greek, however, presents this information in a positive form. It would read, "all immoral and impure persons or covetous man..."

"All immoral (persons)"

The word translated "immoral" is " pornos" (πόρνος). This word identifies a person who participates in fornication or illicit sexual intercourse. It would also include the area we refer to as pornography. This is the same word used in the previous sentence

"(All) impure persons"

The word translated "impure" is "akathartos" (ἀκάθαρτος). This word describes both physical and ceremonial impurity. It identifies impurity of a sexual nature in this instance. Again, this is the same word that was used in the previous sentence.

"(No) covetous man"

The word for "covetous" is "pleonexia" (πλεονεξία). As indicated in the previous sentence, this word means "to be habitually unsatisfied". Paul's intent is that among those who are "in Christ" there is no place for the greedy and habitually dissatisfied person. Put positively as this verse does, those "in Christ" will be content.

"Who is an idolater"

Paul goes on to identify those who are covetous. Covetousness is a form of idolatry. It is to worship things rather than the creator. It places things and possessions in the place of God. It is loving things and possessions with a love we should reserve for God. It is a violation of the first commandment.

"Has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God"

We too easily associate an inheritance with things of value. It had a different meaning for them. If one lost his inheritance, it also meant that he lost his place in the family. It was being removed as a family member. That is exactly what Paul meant here. People with such characteristics will lose their inheritance. More importantly, they will lose their place in the family of God.

Observe that this is referred to as "the kingdom of Christ and God." Paul identified the kingdom in such a way that it is shared by the Father and the Son. The suggestion is that if we retain our inheritance, we will share joint ownership of the kingdom with Jesus and the Father. This is the intimacy Paul has been describing all through the epistle as being "in Christ."

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Ephesians 5:6

Again, verse six is a separate sentence. Try to keep this in mind as you study the verse.

"Let no one deceive you with empty words"

The word translated "deceive" is "apatao" (ἀπατάω) and means "to beguile," "to cheat," "to delude." It is to demean the true character of evil by making it seem inconsequential. The form of this word is present active imperative. Again the present tense indicates ongoing action, a lifestyle rather than an action. The active voice means that the subject initiates the action. The imperative mood indicates that this is a command, not a suggestion. These people, "in Christ," are to make a lifestyle of being on the alert lest they be deceived by the appeal of sin.

The word translated "empty" is "kenoo" (κενόω). This word means "to pour out." It is the same word used in Philippians 2 where Jesus "emptied Himself." In Romans, Paul used the same word when he said,

For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; Romans 4:14

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Here the word "void" means "empty." It is a description of meaninglessness. Paul talked about words that describe no truth at all. Paul continued, "For because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." The word "for" suggests that Paul is going to provide an explanation of his command. The Greek text has a slightly different form. "for through these comes the wrath of God." By the use of the word "through" Paul draws attention to the fact that these things are causative. The use of the words "because of," as found in our text, suggests results which is a bit different.

"The wrath of God comes"

The word translated "comes" is "erchomai" (ἐρχομαι). This is the most common word used to express the idea of "come." The word stresses the action of coming rather than the arrival thereof. The form of the word for "comes" is present middle indicative. The present tense indicates ongoing action, a lifestyle. The middle voice tells us that the subject is acted upon or participates in the action. The indicative mood tells us that great stress is placed on the statement of fact. Paul's intent is clear. He wanted to stress two things:

1. He wanted to stress that the wrath of God will come and never stop coming against these things.
2. He wants to stress the dependability of these statements.

The word translated "wrath" is "orge" (ὄργη) and identifies a strong expression of anger. There are two basic forms of anger, as we indicated earlier:

- a. "Orge" is slow rising, but steady anger. It is an abiding form of fury that often leads to revenge. It is most apt to retain its depth of fury.
- b. "Thumos," on the other hand, is abrupt and volatile. It is a more inward form of anger. It blazes up quickly and cools down.

Paul used the word "orge" and in so doing suggested that this anger of God will not pass, but will remain and will ultimately reveal itself against unrepentant sin.

"Upon the sons of disobedience"

This sounds like another way to identify sinners. It is much more than that. The New Testament identifies the righteous as "children or sons of God." The New Testament also identifies the sinner as "sons of disobedience." It is a way of identifying them as members of the family in the same way that the righteous are members of the family of God. "Sons of obedience" or "Sons of God" identifies the righteous with the family characteristics. In the same way, "sons of disobedience" identifies the sinner with the characteristics of the enemy of God.

Therefore do not be partakers with them; Ephesians 5:7

Ephesians 5:7-14 is another of those very long sentences for which Paul is well known. The use of the word translated "therefore" is "oun" (οὖν) which suggests that a conclusion is forthcoming. In this case, however, it is not a major conclusion. This conclusion will recommend action on the basis of previously given information.

The word translated "be" is "ginomai" (γίνομαι) and means "to come into existence." The form of this word is a present imperative. Again, the importance of this fact is that it describes ongoing action that is a serious command. It is not a suggestion. One might translate it, "And do not be and keep on not being."

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The word translated "partakers" is "summetoxos" (σὺμμέτοχος) which is a compound word:

- a. "Sun" means "with."
- b. "Mimeomai" means "an imitator." This word describes an actor from the ancient Greek stage. The combination of the two words is for purposes of strong emphasis.

Paul used these two words, however, to describe carefully how the scenario works. Those who get involved with these people begin to mimic what they do. They become mutual participants with them in their evil designs.

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light Ephesians 5:8

This is a before and after scenario. Paul's use of the word "for" suggests a coming explanation. He will give a reason for his command. He said, "you were formerly darkness." The word translated "darkness" is "skotos" (σκότος) and identifies both spiritual and physical darkness. In this context it refers to spiritual darkness, a life of sin. Paul reminded them that their former way of life was spiritual darkness.

The word "but" suggests that Paul is drawing a serious contrast in this verse. The addition of the word "now" adds great emphasis to his intent. What follows is the opposite of what was presented just previously.

Paul continued, "You are light in the Lord." The word translated "you are" is "eta" (ἦτε) which means "I am." The imperfect tense describes action as viewed in progress, but in the past. The indicative mood, on the other hand, describes a fact. This is in the active voice which stresses that the subject is initiating the action.

"Light" is a translation of the word "phos" (φῶς) and means to give off light. This word identifies both physical and spiritual light. Observe that Paul said that they were "light in the Lord," not "light in the world." The difference is very important. To be "light in the world" is to reveal an example of goodness. On the other hand, to be "light in the Lord" is to reflect the light of God's presence.

"In the Lord"

This does not identify a location so much as it does a relationship with God. It is what John described in John 15 when he quoted Jesus saying, "I am the vine, you are the branches." We are to be "light in the Lord." It is living such a life of obedience that we are in harmony with Christ and He dwells in us and is in harmony with our lifestyle.

"Walk as children of light."

The word for "walk" is "peripateo" (περιπατέω) and is used in two different ways in the New Testament. It describes putting one foot in front of the other, which is the way it is often used in the Gospel records. It is also used to describe the entire range of human activity in the Epistles. It is a way of saying, "live your life." Let every facet of your daily life be filled with and reflecting the life of Christ. The form of the word for "walk" is present active imperative. The present tense describes ongoing action, a lifestyle, not a single action. The active voice indicates that the subject initiates the action. The imperative mood tells us that this is a command, not a suggestion. To fail "to walk as children of light" is as disobedient as violating one of the ten commandments.

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"Children of light" is important in this context. The word translated "children" is "teknon" (τέκνον). There are a number of Greek words that are translated "child or children." This present word describes a young person, but old enough to be responsible, old enough to be an adult, though the offspring of an older adult. The emphasis here is not on age identification, but on identity itself. Children tend to imitate their parents. Paul called upon these Ephesian Christians to imitate the light - a reference to God and the lifestyle we find in Him.

*For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth,
Ephesians 5:9*

In this instance, some texts read, "the fruit of the Spirit." There is very little support for this reading. The word "for" suggests a coming explanation. This explanation will elucidate the command Paul gave in the previous verse. The word translated "fruit" is "karpos" (καρπός) and here it means the attempt of a living organism to reproduce itself. It is that in our lives which seeks to reproduce the life of Christ in ourselves and convey it to others.

"Light"

The word translated "light" is, again, "phos" (φῶς). As indicated earlier, it signifies spiritual light; a moral quality of life that stands out in a darkened community. The fruit of the light involves several qualities:

"Goodness"

The word translated "goodness" is "agathos" (ἀγαθός) and represents that which is good in its character. It is that which is morally honorable; that which is pleasing to God. Those who are "in Christ" are identifiable by the obvious moral character of their lives. They stand in sharp contrast to the lives of people among whom they live.

"Righteousness"

The word for "righteousness" is "dikaiosune" (δικαιοσύνη). It means "right actions"; it is the gift of God in Christ by which all who believe "in Christ" are established in a right relationship with God. It is, indeed, a gift, it cannot be earned.

"Truth"

The fruit of the light involves a life of all "truth." This word is "aletheia" (ἀληθεία). It identifies that which is real, genuine. It is the reality that matches appearances. Too often, truth is considered the opposite of a lie. It is that, but it is more. More often, truth is what one is, more than what one says. It is to be exactly what one appears to be. It is the rash unwillingness to mislead in any way or degree. There are occasions when the greater lie is to say nothing at all. On these occasions, silence is totally misleading. Truth in that instance is to be totally above board, to hide nothing. The more you look at these verses, the clearer it becomes that the fruit of light represents a life that is lived imitating God.

Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:10

The word translated "trying to learn" is dokimazo" (δοκιμάζω) and literally means "to think." It was used to convey the idea of testing, discerning the value of a substance. We might translate it to assay, to examine with great care. This statement, "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" is part of the previous statement about goodness and right-

eousness of the truth. It is not so much about living by a long list of conditions as it is about being well pleasing to God. We are to look with unusual intensity to discover what is well pleasing to God. The form of this word is a present active participle. Again, the present tense places emphasis on ongoing action rather than a single action. The active voice points to the fact that the subject initiates the action. The participle describes action that is in process. This form is used to convey a very intense, almost exaggerated expression of action in process. One might say it, "trying to learn and always trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."

"Well pleasing to the Lord."

The compound word translated "well pleasing" is "euarestos" (εὐαρεστος) and is broken down as follows"

- a. "Eu" means "well" or "good."
- b. "Arestos" means "that which is pleasing or agreeable to the point that it causes great excitement."

Our occupation is to examine the conditions of life as carefully as possible in order to determine what sort of thought and conduct will be so pleasing to the Lord that He would become excited over it. Because divine wisdom is greater than human logic, we must study to discover what is really pleasing to the Lord.

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; Ephesian 5:11

the word "and" indicates that this is a continuation of the previously presented idea. Paul said, "Do not participate." The word translated "participate" is sugkoinoneo (συγκοινωνέω). There are two reasons for compounding such words in the Greek

1. They may wish to express a delicate meaning for which there is no single word that really conveys the precise meaning.
2. They may wish to add a level of emphasis that no single word will convey.

It appears that the latter idea is what is being employed in this instance. The meaning of this word breaks down in this manner:

- a. "Sun" means "with."
- b. "Koinoneo" means "to share," "to partake of," "to communicate with," "to participate," or "have fellowship with." Paul spoke in firm, graphic language. Do not fellowship or participate with "unfruitful deeds of darkness."

The form of this word is present active imperative. As we have seen, the present tense identifies an ongoing lifestyle. The active voice indicates the subject initiates the action and the imperative mood indicates that this is a command not a suggestion. One might translate this word, "I command you, always make it a way of life to not fellowship or participate in these things."

Next, Paul spoke of "the unfruitful deeds of darkness." The word for "unfruitful" is "akarpous" (ἄκαρπος). Again, we are dealing with a compound word. The makeup of it is:

- a. "A" means "not"
- b. "Karpous" means "fruit." It literally means "plucked." It describes something that is not fruit, something not valuable. It will lead to no benefit.

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The word "deeds" is "ergon" (ἔργον) which means "work" or "labor." An unfruitful work is an act that does not benefit; an act that is not beneficial in any way.

Again, the word translated "darkness" is "skotos" (σκότος) and means "obscure," "shadiness." It is more than the absence of light. It is an action that one is certain there is something drastically wrong with it.

"But instead even"

Here it is very clear that Paul is using emphasis to identify just how important this statement is for the Ephesian Christians. Paul used three different words when any one of them would have sufficed. He used the words:

- a. "Mallon" means "rather."
- b. "De" means "but."
- c. "Kai" means "and" or "even."

Paul is going to extend his strong statement and used the combination of three words to indicate just how emphatically he felt about it.

Paul continued, "Expose them." The word translated "expose" is "elencho" (ἐλέγχω) which means "to convict," "to rebuke," "to expose to the light." This, of course, fits the context very well. The exposing is accomplished by being children of light and living lives that are characterized by goodness, righteousness and truth. This involves making their hidden deeds obvious. It also exposes by showing the difference between their actions and our own.

*For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
Ephesians 5:12*

The word "for" suggests a coming explanation. Paul said, "it is disgraceful." The word translated "disgraceful" is "aischros" (αἰσχρός) and means "shameful," "very immodest," "absolutely impure." It is that which is beneath human dignity. It is easy to see how strongly Paul feels about this situation. His words are full of extreme forms.

"Even to speak of the things"

The word translated "speak" is "lego" (λέγω) which means "to use speech." It also includes the idea of affirming what has been spoken. In that culture, one tries not to speak of things they do not affirm. It is disgraceful even to speak of such things, much less affirm them.

"The things that are done"

"The things that are done" is the translation of one Greek word "ginomai" (γίνομαι). This is a bit difficult in English, but not in Greek. The word literally means "to be" or "to become." The form of the word is a present participle. The force of this is that Paul used both the present tense and a participle. It has the effect of giving a very strong emphasis that this is something that is happening and keeps on happening.

"In secret."

The word "secret" is "krupto" (κρύπτω). It means "something hidden," "something others are not aware of." It carries the impression that it is hidden because they want no one to know about it. That, of course, was absolutely true.

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. Ephesians 5:13

The word "but" suggests a contrast is in progress. We have seen the first part of the contrast, and the second part will come immediately. This word for "but" is "ta de" (τὰ δὲ). This is quite different from the word usually used. Here again, Paul used two words rather than the usual "'de" (δὲ). It was one more illustration where he used more words in an effort to add strong emphasis.

"All things become visible"

The use of "panta" (πάντα) to indicate "all things" literally means "all." It is all-inclusive. Nothing is excluded. The word for "become visible" is a translation of the word "elencho" (ἐλέγχω). This is the same word that we observed in verse 11. It means "to rebuke," "to reprove," "to convince of a fault." The form of the word is, again, a present participle. It portrays an ongoing lifestyle, rather than a single act. The participle suggests action that is in progress. Again, Paul has used this form to emphasize the ongoing nature of this situation in the body. One might translate it, "all things are always convinced of fault and never stop being convinced of being faulty."

"When they are exposed to the light"

The Greek text reads a bit differently – "is revealed by the light." The Greek word for "exposed" is "phaneroo" (φανερόω) and means "to appear," "to shine," "to render apparent." The form of the word is a present participle. As you can see, this is a form that Paul has used repeatedly in this chapter. The two forms both stress ongoing activity and lifestyle. Paul uses both of these forms to stress just how ongoing this activity must be if they are to be obedient. One might translate this, "but all things are always being convinced of their fault when they are exposed to the light for everything is continually being exposed to light." This may be difficult to understand. It helps to remember that light consists of goodness, righteousness and truth. The exposing is two sided:

- a. These qualities focus the spotlight upon the error of evil.
- b. Goodness, righteousness and truth by just being light, reveal (expose) the difference between them and the evil in such a way that evil becomes undesirable. There is great encouragement in the fact that what appears to be getting away with evil will ultimately be exposed for the sinfulness that it really is.

For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:14

When Paul wrote, "for this reason it says," we know that a quotation from Scripture is coming. It is really a combination of quotes from Isaiah 26:19 and 51:17. It is further supported by Isaiah 60:1. Jesus did this repeatedly, in arguments with the Pharisees and Paul followed his Master's example. There is almost always more than one quote in the reference. Secondly, this deals with the fact that the Old Testament states that truth is established by two or three witnesses. Further, if the quotation was from the Old Testament, then the religious enemies of the Gospel could not argue the point because they would then be contending with Scripture.

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The quotation begins with two commands, "Awake sleepers and arise from the dead." The form of "awake sleepers" is present imperative. It is like saying, "sleepers, awake and never stop being awake."

The second command is "arise from the dead." The form of this command is an aorist imperative. In this instance, the emphasis is on the act of rising, not the timing of it. These two commands are part of a conditional statement. In this statement, there are two conditions and one promise. We have mentioned the two conditions. The promise is, "Christ will shine on you." The word translated "shine" is "epiphausko" (ἐπιφάσκω). This compound word literally means "to shine upon" or "focus upon." The form of this word, future indicative active, places attention upon the simple fact of action that will take place in the future. It is a very strong way to place emphasis upon Paul's idea that Christ is the one who will shine upon them. The light will not come from within them.

Ephesians 5:15-21 – Warning – Be Careful How You Walk

Ephesians 5:15, 16, form a single sentence. We will attempt to keep this in mind as we consider the content.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, Ephesians 5:15

The word "therefore" "oun" (οὖν) indicates that a conclusion, howbeit a mild one, is forthcoming. It is a conclusion concerning the material immediately preceding the word. The Greek reads a bit differently, but the meaning is not greatly changed. One might translate it, "You see/watch how carefully you walk." Again, this is a present indicative active form. As you know, we tend to translate this form by saying, "You watch and never stop watching." "You make watchfulness a way of life."

"How carefully you walk"

The word translated "carefully" is "akribos" (ἀκριβος) and means "circumspectly," that is "perfectly." It describes the precision with which one studies his own actions. As we have seen before, the word for "walk" is "peripateo" (περιπατέω). It means to walk, to live, to consider what one does. The form of the word is present indicative. The present tense stresses the ongoing action. The indicative mood stresses the simple statement of the action. The emphasis is on the action, not the time.

"(Do) not (walk) as unwise men."

Paul emphasized his point, again. First, he told them what it is not. Then he told them what it is. The word translated "unwise" is really the word for "fool." Paul used the word to identify a person who does not do righteousness. This is a restatement of the first part of the verse, "See how carefully you walk."

"But as wise"

The word "but" indicates a contrast is being completed. Having talked about the unwise, he now turns his attention to the "wise ones." The word for "wise" is "sophos" (σοφός). This is an insight into the true nature of life as it is lived by believers. It is more than information and knowledge. It is the opposite of disobedience. Wisdom here, as in Proverbs, is considered a more spiritual than an intellectual one.

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Making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:16

The word for "making the most" is "exagorazo" (ἐξαγοράζω). This is a compound word and means "to snatch from," "to rescue from loss." It is an interesting concept. Universally, cultures attempt to get their people to work rather than be lazy. Here, Paul speaks to the ones who work. He urges them not only to be busy, but to make the very best use of their time and do so urgently. The form of this word is, again, a present participle. It is two forms that stress ongoing action that is a lifestyle rather than a single action. Do this and never stop doing this.

"Because"

"Hoti" (ὅτι) is the word translated "because." It is usually translated "that." In either instance, it conveys the idea of stating a purpose. That is certainly true in this instance.

"The days are evil"

The word translated "days" is "hemera" (ἡμέρα). This word literally means "tame" or "gentle." It is the way they thought of the time between daylight and dark. In this instance it does not identify a 24 hour period. It identifies a span of time of indeterminate nature.

"Evil"

The word for "evil" is "poneros" (πονηρός). This word means "pain" or "anguish," "something hurtful," "calamitous," "vicious" or "derelict." You may have realized that the word describes the results of evil rather than the fact of evil. Paul said that these are times in which horrendous things happen because of evil ways. This is reason enough to be extremely careful to use the time we have with extreme care.

So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:17

The words "so then" are a translation of the words "dia touto" (διὰ τοῦτο). Some would translate these words "because of this." Whatever the choice, they are words of transition that identify a coming conclusion or pending exhortation. This is indeed what is about to happen.

"Do not be foolish"

The word for "foolish" is "aphron" (ἄφρον). This word means "foolishness," "stupidity," "to be rash," "unbelieving" or "egotistical." These words indicate that we are dealing with a condition which is tied to unbelief and an overwrought ego. Perhaps the latter leads to the former.

The form of these words is a present imperative. The suggestion here is that the present tense suggests an ongoing lifestyle. One might translate these words, "Do not be foolish and keep on not being foolish." The imperative makes it abundantly clear that this is not a suggestion. To fail to obey this command is to be disobedient to God.

"But"

The word "but" indicates that a strong contrast is in process. That which follows is the opposite of that which precedes.

"Understand what the will of the Lord is."

The word translated "understand" is "suniemi" (συνίημι) which is a compound word:

- a. "Sun" –means "with."
- b. "Heimi" means to "send."

It means "to put together," "to act piously," "to carefully consider," "to understand." This is an understanding that grows out of putting pieces together. We are talking about the will of the Lord. That is indeed how one gathers together the pieces to grasp what God is doing at any specific time. The form of the word "understand" is present imperative. The present tense stresses a lifestyle of ongoing action while the imperative mood indicates that this is a command. One might translate this, "Understand and never stop putting the pieces together."

The word translated "will" is "thelema" (θέλημα) and means purpose or inclination. This statement suggests several things:

- a. It suggests that God has a specific will, a purpose for each child of His.
- b. It further suggests that that specific will is discernible by those who will seek to understand.
- c. It does not suggest a time sequence when this "will" is discernible. Indeed, it may only be discernible in retrospect.
- d. This understanding is a way of fleeing foolishness.

Paul, in this verse, described an ongoing process that never ends. We must always be fleeing foolishness and studying what God is doing in order to understand it, to some extent, and become a part of what He is doing.

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:18*

Ephesians 5:18-21 form a single sentence. Watch carefully for this as you study. The word "and" here suggests a continuation of the previous idea. The previous idea was a list of things that people should and should not do if they are "in Christ." Paul resorts, again, to his design of saying do this, but do not do that.

"Do not get drunk with wine"

The word for "drunk" is "methusko" (μεθύσκω) and means "to be intoxicated," "to be unable to control oneself or one's thoughts." This is present imperative in form. It is ongoing action, a lifestyle which is a command. The believer should always refrain from getting drunk – out of control, unable to control one's thoughts and actions. He did not say, do not drink. He did say, do not get drunk. To get drunk is always to be disobedient. Again, Paul identified a way of life, not a single action.

The inclusion of the words "with wine" raises questions for some people. Paul did not explain this inclusion. It seems appropriate to assume that this does not give approval to getting drunk in other ways, as some have stretched it to mean. Wine was the most common alcoholic drink in that culture. It appears that Paul is drawing a contrast here between being filled with alcohol and being filled with the Spirit.

There is an interesting dimension in the next few words. Paul used the word "for." The words translated "for" are "en ho" (ἐν ᾧ) which is usually translated "in which." Whatever translation one chooses, the meaning would be at least similar. It identifies a coming explanation. Paul said, "that is dissipation." The word for "dissipation" is "aso-

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tia" (ἀσωτία) and means "unwholesomeness," "excess," "riot" or "profligacy." Some texts translate this debauchery. This word is often associated with sexual excess. Of course, drunkenness, by itself, is a form of excess. Paul intends to convey that it also leads to other forms of excess and debauchery.

The word "but" indicates a contrast. The contrast is between being filled with alcohol and being filled with the Spirit. It also extends to a contrast between the consequences of the two conditions. One must grant, that there are times when being filled with the Spirit includes a higher emotional expression. Other than this, the two situations are direct opposites.

"Be filled with the Spirit."

The word for "filled" is pleroo" (πληρώω]. The word literally means to cram something into a smaller place. It is to fill to overflowing. This is a term that comes from the marketplace. They too had troubles with false measures. They agreed upon a standard measure of grain. They would place this container in the grain sack and fill it up until it runs over on all sides. Only then is it filled full. One might convey the best understanding of Paul's statement by saying, "be being filled with the Holy Spirit."

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; Ephesians 5:19

We must remind ourselves that 5:18-20 are all one verse. Verse 19 immediately follows Paul's statement concerning being filled with the Spirit. We must assume that this is also part of that understanding. The word for "speaking" is "laleo" (λαλέω). The word means "to speak." It is more than simply saying words. To speak might be better translated "communing with each other." Some believers take this word literally and only quote scripture to each other. This is a great deal like what the conservative and orthodox Jews do regularly as they study Scripture together.

"In Psalms"

The word translated "psalms" is "psalmos" (ψαλμός). The word literally means to strike or to twitch with the fingers as one would do with a musical instrument. It is used to identify the Psalm as we know them being presented with musical accompaniment.

"Hymns"

The word translated "hymns" is "hymnos" (ᾠμος). This is a song of praise addressed to God. We must keep in mind that pagan worshippers sang hymns to their deities. This is, apparently, unaccompanied, though we cannot say for sure. It identifies a song of praise much as we know them.

"Spiritual songs"

The word translated "spiritual songs" are "pneumatikos hode" (πνευματικός ᾠδε). We are not really sure, but this may be a spontaneous song of praise to God inspired by the Spirit. It appears that the early church differentiated between the three forms, but we are not sure how or why they did so. The significance of this is that these believers were to spend time giving praise to God in a variety of ways and means. By contrast, this is a far better experience than becoming drunk. Each of these three forms is a present participle.

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In each case, Paul used two designations, both of which focused on the ongoing nature of the instruction. There is no more powerful way to make this emphasis.

Paul continued, "Singing and making melody". The word translated "singing" is "hodo" (ᾄδω) and identifies singing in the way we do it today. The word translated "making melody" is "psallo" (ψάλλω). It is a way of celebrating God's presence with singing and making music. It is a joyful outburst of praise to God.

"With your heart"

The Greek text reads "in the heart of you." There are at least three different ways one can understand this.:

- a. It can mean that it is in the heart and not verbal.
 - b. It can be a verbal expression of the heart, but quite vocal.
 - c. It could also be a combination of the two – a silent song that came from the heart.
- Some of the most praiseful songs are totally soundless, deep in the heart.

"To the Lord"

The object of these songs is God. It does not focus any attention upon the one singing or the one worshipping. God is the single focus of such praise.

Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; Ephesians 5:20

Again, this is a continuation of the sentence, 5:18-21

"Always giving thanks"

You cannot help but notice how deliberate this part of the sentence is worded. The word for "always" is "pantote" (πάντοτε) and should be understood as meaning "all the time."

"Giving thanks"

As before, the word translated "giving thanks" is "eucharisteo" (εὐχαριστέω) which is a compound word.

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Karis" means "to be gracious," the effect God's grace has upon the forgiven heart – gratitude. This, of course, is the source of our word for the "eucharist."

The form of this word, again, is a present participle. Paul has once more used two forms that both stress the ongoing nature of that which he is suggesting. This is for the purpose of strong emphasis. The giving of thanks is a never-ending attitude and activity for those "in Christ."

"For all things"

The apostle has used some unusual wording in this phrase. The word translated "for" is "huper" (ὑπέρ) which is usually translated "upon". This does no violence to the meaning of the text. The deliberate form is Paul's way of emphasizing that there are no exceptions. They always are to give thanks for everything. This may be difficult for some of us. We tend to think of thanksgiving for good things. We would never think of giving thanks for hardship and pain. Frankly, there was a time when I did not believe that Paul meant what he said here. Paul meant every word of it. He did not say that we should be

overjoyed at hardship. It does not mean that we are exuberant that pain has come. He did say that we should always give thanks for all things. It does mean that we can be thankful that God has counted us worthy to suffer for the Gospel. It does mean that we can be thankful that God has used pain to help us grow spiritually because it is more important to grow than it is to be comfortable. This is one of the factors of divine wisdom that becomes real for those "in Christ."

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ"

Christians, today, have a thing about "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." We are to pray in His name, so we never end a prayer without saying the words, "in the name of Jesus Christ." It is difficult for some to realize that one can obey the command to do this without adding the words to the end of every prayer. In that culture, one's name was the symbol of their authority. Christ has invited us to approach the Father in the authority of His name in order to gain the things that we need as children of God. We are to give thanks and keep on giving thanks to the Father in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"To God even the Father"

"God" is the object of the songs of praise. It does not focus any attention on the one singing or worshipping. God is the single, the only focus of such praise. Anything or anyone who diverts attention away from God in these songs comes into conflict with what Paul is teaching about the worship of those who are "in Christ." The same must be said about the prayer life of those who are "in Christ."

And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Ephesians 5:21

This is the last part of this sentence that began in verse 18. We must be aware that the word "and" does not appear in the Greek text. The word translated "being subject" is "hupotasso" (ὑποτάσσω). As happened so often in this second section of the book, Paul used the double form present participle. In both instances, he stressed the ongoing nature of the word or idea in question. One might translate the word "be being subject." This compound word is a military term. It is compounded as follows:

- a. "Hupo" means "under."
- b. "Tasso" means to "arrange."

It is to arrange under authority. It comes from the reputation of the Trojan army. If threatened with defeat, which did not happen often, they would form a solid circle with their commander standing atop their shields. Though they knew they would be defeated and die, they would not break ranks and run. It is to stand under authority with no thought as to the consequences. This is the way people filled with the Spirit relate to the authority that they grant to each other. That is part of the deep meaning of being "in Christ."

"In the fear of Christ."

The basis of their submission to each other was not the deference of position. It was not that one had a higher position than another. It was because they had reverence for Christ, they accepted the authority of each other in the church.

Some Greek manuscripts have the word "God" instead of the word "Christ." There is little support for this in our best manuscripts.

Ephesians 5:22-33 – Exhortations For Husbands And Wives

Ephesians 5:22, 23, form a single sentence and must be so interpreted. It is clear that in this paragraph, Paul has changed directions completely. He has been talking about praise and mutual obedience in the church and now turns to the family relationships within the church.

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Ephesians 5:22

There is a bit of a problem in the Greek text and it is extended in the English text. One Greek text reads, "The wives, to the own husbands as to the Lord." Another text reads, "The wives, to the own husbands subject yourselves." The textual support for both possibilities is weak and the end result is much the same. Still you should know that there is a problem there. For our study, we will focus on the first possibility, "the wives to the own husbands as to the Lord." There is a difference between the two possible readings:

1. "Be to your husband as to the Lord" opens a broad possibility of touching every facet of life in that relationship.
2. "Be subject to your own husbands" deals exclusively with the matter of subjection.

"Wives be to your husbands as to the Lord."

First, we must notice that the word "be" does not appear in the text. It simply says, "to your own husbands." This needs explanation. Before this can be completely clear, we must clearly identify what is our relationship to Christ and then identify what is the relationship between husband and wife.

There is a deep love and respectful relationship between the believer and the Lord. There is a strong relationship of faithfulness between the believer and the Lord. There is need for an obedience relationship between the believer and Christ. All of these and much more are involved when Paul spoke of "as to the Lord." On this basis, all of these are involved when Paul said, "to your husband as to the Lord." The relationship with Christ is the model the wife should follow in her relationship with her husband.

At this point, we must add a note that we will repeat later, but it is essential here. The balance of the epistle will talk about a number of different scenarios in which every part of the body of Christ must take a position of submission, not just the wife. In this place, Paul has identified the submissiveness of the wife. We will also see the submissive stance of fathers, children, employees' etc. Being "in Christ" brings a situation where there is a mutual subjection of every believer to all the others. No member of the body of Christ is free of the need to be subject to other members of the body. We will see this idea surface again later in our study.

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. Ephesians 5:23

The use of the word "for" suggests that an explanation of the previous statement is forthcoming.

"The husband is the head of the wife"

The word for "is" is "estin" (ἐστίν) and the form of it is present indicative active. Again, present tense describes ongoing lifestyle action. Active voice indicates the subject

performs the action. In this case, that is the husband. The indicative mood suggests that this is a simple declaration. This form was used to add strong emphasis to the statement.

The husband is "head" of the wife. The word translated "head" is "kephale" (κεφαλή). This word is used in more than one way:

- a. It is used literally to identify the human head.
- b. It is also used to identify the place of human responsibility.
- c. It is also used to identify the place of human authority.

Paul clearly states that the husband has authority over the wife. This is offensive to modern women, but we cannot explain it away. This is a divine design. If a man understands what Paul has said, he will take no easy comfort in Paul's teaching.

Paul continued, "as." This word suggests that a comparison is being pursued. Paul is going to compare something that they know very well with something that they do not understand at all.

"As Christ also is the head of the church."

Christ's headship of the church is the pattern husbands are to follow in their relationship with their wives. We must determine what was the relationship between Christ and the church. Christ loved the church unconditionally. The husband "in Christ" can do no less. Christ sacrificed on behalf of the church. The husband "in Christ" can do no less. Christ provided carefully for the needs of the church. The husband "in Christ" can do no less. Christ forgave the church her many faults when she confessed to Him. The husband "in Christ" can do no less.

"He himself being the savior of the body"

The Greek text reads a bit differently, but not essentially. It says, "He savior of the body." The emphasis added by the word "himself" is not present in the text. The verb "being" suggests an ongoing situation. This word, however, does not appear in the Greek text. The word translated "savior" is "soter" (σωτήρ) and means "deliverer," "preserver." We should remember, this is a comparison between Christ's headship of the church and the husband's headship of the wife. The emphasis here is on the husband's requirement to protect and provide for his wife rather than his requirement to command her. As Christ is the protector and preserver of the church, so the husband is the protector and preserver of the wife.

But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Ephesians 5:24

The word "but" suggests a strong contrast is in process. In the previous section, Paul dealt with a picture of Christ as savior of the church. Now he is going to deal with the place of the wife. Paul next used the word "as" which indicates there is also a comparison in progress. He will compare the relationship of the church to Christ with the relationship of the wife to the husband.

"The church is subject to Christ"

You will remember that Paul elsewhere refers to the church as the "body of Christ," a part of Himself. This is essential to our understanding here. In this instance, the comparison supports the idea that the wife is a vital part of the husband. We meet the word "subject" again. The meaning is the same – to stand under authority. It does not mean that one

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is better than the other. It does mean that for efficiency's sake one makes a decision and the other assists in carrying them out. This is never an issue of power. It is a relationship of love. If this is not a shared responsibility, then there is disobedience present. Christ directs because of his unlimited love for His church. The church accepts the direction because of her unlimited love for Christ.

The form of the word translated "is subject" is present middle participle. This is most significant.

- a. Present tense suggests an ongoing action, a lifestyle rather than a single act.
- b. The middle voice suggests that the subject (church) is the recipient of the action.
- c. Participle indicates action in process at present.

The use of the present tense and the participle form indicate ongoing action as a way of giving emphasis to the idea. The subjection of the church to Christ is a way of life, not a single action.

"So also"

Observe that Paul used two words where either one would have been sufficient. This, he customarily does for purposes of extreme emphasis. The word "so" is sufficient to indicate that the second part of a comparison is about to be provided. The addition of the word "also" does the same thing. This gives us a clue that this is of utmost importance to what Paul is trying to say. Paul does not want them to miss this idea.

The wives ought to be to their husbands."

The Greek text simply says, "the wives to the husbands." The translators addition of the word "ought" adds a high degree of contingency, possibility, but definite uncertainty. This is not Paul's idea at all. He is saying that no matter what, wives be to your husbands as the church is to Christ.

"In everything"

There are no exceptions. There are no protected areas. This is an all-encompassing instruction. Lest this be seen as treating wives in the manner of the ancient Near East, Paul quickly moves to talk with the husbands.

Observe that 5:25-27 form a single sentence. It must be treated as a whole. In overview, verse 25 is the affirmative statement and verses 26 and 27 form the reasons for what Paul has said in verse 25. Again, 5:25-33 deal with specific instructions Paul gave to the husbands in the Ephesian church.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; Ephesians 5:25

Paul now focuses his attention on instructions to the husband who is "in Christ." The word translated "love" is "agape" (ἀγάπη). This is love without boundaries. It is love that demands no favorable response. In fact, it requires no response at all. It is the kind of love that God has for the rebelling sinner. It is to love just because you love. It is the word that the New Testament commonly uses to describe the love of God. The form of the word, in this case, is a present imperative. This suggests that it is an ongoing action, a lifestyle rather than a single act. It is a command, not a suggestion. The husband is to make a lifestyle of loving his wife unconditionally. It reminds one of Hosea. It is not that the husband loves and keeps on loving his wife as long as she pleases him. It is that he

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loves and keeps on loving her no matter what she does. This is a command. To fail to obey this command is as severe an offense to God as disobeying any one of the Decalogue.

"Just as"

The Greek New Testament statement is more dramatic – "even as also." The word "as" would have been sufficient. The additional words again indicate the emphasis Paul wanted to place upon this idea. Paul is going to draw a parallel comparison between the husband's love for his wife and Christ's love for the church. A sentence or two ago, Paul drew a comparison between the way the church responded to the Lord and the way the wife responds to her husband. Now Paul's attention shifts to the husband.

"Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her"

The word for "loved" in this instance is exactly the same as we have been dealing with in recent verses. The form of the verb, however, is different. This form is aorist indicative. This is a significant shift. The aorist tense focuses upon the action, not the time. The indicative mood focuses upon a declaration of the action from the speaker's point of view. It is clear that Paul placed strong emphasis on the action – Christ really loved the church and never stopped loving the church.

"And"

This indicates that what follows is an equal part of that which preceded it. It is also equally important to what the author is saying.

"Gave Himself up for her."

The word for "gave" is "paradidomai" (παράδίδομαι) which means "to yield up," "to surrender the self up to authority." The form of the word "gave" is exactly the same as the form of the word "love." This is to be expected because they are part of the same statement. In this aorist indicative form Paul is again stressing the fact of the action rather than the time. He is making a declaration of action as he previously did. Paul stressed the fact that Christ gave Himself up to the cross because of His love for the church. The point of this retelling is that he is drawing a parallel between Christ's expression of love for the church and the husband's love for his wife.

That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, Ephesians 5:26

We should remind ourselves, again, that this verse is a continuation of verse 25. It is more than the same sentence; it is the same idea spelled out.

The word that is translated "that" is "hina" (ἵνα) and means "in order that." This suggests that a strong statement of purpose is about to be given.

"He might sanctify her"

The word for "sanctify" is "hagiazō" (ἁγιάζω) and means "to sanctify," "to make holy," "to purify" or "consecrate." The form of the word is aorist subjunctive. The first aorist expresses simple past time, while the subjunctive expresses the mood of possibility of contingency. In this form, Paul spoke of the simple fact that the purpose of Christ's love for the church was that he might set her apart for God, to sanctify her. Christ is the one who makes the church holy, who sets her apart for God. Remember, however, that this is

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a comparison intended to reveal how a man should love his wife. The husband must love his wife sacrificially and have as his purpose to set her apart for God.

"Having cleansed her"

The word for "having cleansed" is "katharizo" (καθαρίζω) and means "to cleanse," "to purify" and "make clean." The definition of this word suggests that the item cleansed had become unclean. This unclean item could be made clean, as though it had never become impure. The elements of mercy and forgiveness are very strong in the meaning of this word.

The form of this word is a first aorist participle. Again, the first aorist is an expression of simple past time. The participle, of course, identifies action in process. The cleansing took place in the simple past time, but it continues on in ongoing fashion.

Again, we must remind ourselves that this is a comparison between what Christ does with the church and the way the husband is to love his wife. There is to be that ongoing expression of mercy and forgiveness that attends his limitless love for his wife.

"By the washing of water with the Word"

It is clear that the reference here is to baptism. It is not that the waters of baptism cleanse us from sin. It is that the waters of baptism confirm that the cleansing has taken place already. Observe that the washing with water is not sufficient. Paul adds, "with the word." The fellowship and instruction of the word are essential ingredients in this sanctifying.

That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. Ephesians 5:27

We need to be reminded, again, that verse 27 is a part of the sentence 5:25-27. This is the second use of the word "that" the second statement of purpose in this sentence that Paul has given us.

"That He might present to himself"

The word translated "he might present" is "paristemi" (παρίστημι) which is a compound word.

- a. "Para" means "by."
- b. "Histemi" means "to set."

It means to stand beside, or to exhibit. This word painted a picture that the people of that day would understand only too well. It was a picture of a wedding. After the ceremony the groom would place the bride by his side. He would present his bride to the assembled guests, especially to his father. Everyone present would rejoice with him at this joyous occasion. Paul spoke of Jesus taking the church, His bride, to Himself with great joy.

"The church in all her glory"

This statement is a little difficult. In this very epistle, Paul has presented the church as a light that was much less than glorious. The important thing about this has to do with how Christ felt about the church, rather than whether the church was totally without fault. Each bride and each groom has faults, weaknesses. In the eyes of their beloved, however,

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only the positive stands out. The bride is glorious, especially in relation to what she had been before the groom died for her redemption.

Observe that Paul speaks of the church as the "ekklesia" which means the called out ones. The Greeks used the word to identify a group of people gathered to discuss official matters. In the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, the word was used to identify the gathering of the people of Israel. The church was called out of the world not to be isolated, but to deal with holy things; to focus their attention on the presence of God in a world that thought only of itself.

"Having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

The word for "spot" is "spiloo" (σπιλόω), which means "to make a spot and in so doing defile." This represents anything that would present a person as defiled before a holy God. Paul said that Christ presented the church to Himself without spot. Again this is impossible in view of what we have seen concerning this church prior to this point.

"(without) wrinkle"

The word is "rhtis" (ῥυτίς) and literally means "to draw together." It describes the flawlessness of the church. This is difficult for us to comprehend since we know about the church. We need to keep in mind, however, that we stand not in our righteousness, but in His. This is how Christ views the church having given Himself upon the cross for our redemption.

"(without) any such thing."

The addition of this word was to make it all-inclusive. Nothing could be added. Nothing could be omitted. Such is the beautiful picture of how completely Jesus loved the church that he had cleansed and sanctified unto Himself.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; Ephesians 5:28

The word "so" indicates that the last half of a comparison is about to be presented. The word translated "ought" is "opheileo" (ὀφειλέω) and stands for "duty" or "obligation." It can also be understood to mean that this is something that someone wants desperately to do.

The word for "love" is "agapao" (ἀγαπάω). This word was invented by the church. The Greek culture had no concept of this kind of love. It represents a form of love that has no boundaries. It is the word that is used in the New Testament to describe the love of God for His Son, for the church and for the world. This love is an action, not a reaction. It has no necessary response. It loves because it loves. It loves, even if rejected. The love for the responsive is exactly the same as for the unresponsive. This is the way a husband should love his wife.

"As their own bodies."

The word "as" suggests a comparison. The way God loves rebellious mankind is the way a husband is to love his wife. There is this second comparison in this passage. A man is to love his wife as he loves himself. A man does not hate his own body if he is of sound mind. He protects his body. He respects his body. Though he may never say so, he

likes his body and to some degree is proud of it. This is also the way he should love his wife.

"He who loves his own wife loves himself"

This may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. It is a very serious statement. It naturally follows because she has become a part of him in the same way that the church has become part of the body of Christ. Paul gives the husband two reasons to love his wife:

- a. It is obedience to the command of God.
- b. In so doing, he is loving and benefiting himself.

Having said this, we must ask, "how does one love him/herself? To one extent or another, we all attempt to design our lives so that we have a degree of comfort with the way we live. This becomes the mandate for the husband to do for his wife. Every person has an inborn penchant to survive. We will sacrifice everything in order to preserve that possibility. A husband can do and think no less than this for his wife. In one's looks, actions, words and relationships, there is the total determination to present oneself in the best possible light. This must be the husband's priority on behalf of his wife. There is an inner striving for meaning and purpose in the heart of every person. It is God's intent that the husband be as concerned for this on behalf of his wife as on his own behalf.

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, Ephesians 5:29

We need to keep in mind that 5:29, 30 form a single sentence. We must keep this in mind as we study the verses. The use of the word "for" suggests that a reason is about to be presented. This verse is an appeal to logic. The word translated "no one" is "oudeis" (οὐδεὶς) and means "not even one." This is a strong choice of words for the purpose of emphasis. The word for "hated" is "miseo" (μισέω) and means "to detest." The word translated "nourishes" is "ektrepho" (ἐκτρέφω) and means "to rear to maturity." It is to train and nourish the young until it is totally equipped to take its place in the adult world. This is more than providing food. It is to do everything possible to bring the beloved to its fullest potential.

The word for "cherishes" is "thalpo" (θάλπω) and literally means "to warm." It is "to brood" upon. It came to stand for intense cherishing. It is to hold one close and express indescribable affection and satisfaction in the one beloved. The two ideas – nourishing and cherishing – are held together by the word "and." Paul used this means to indicate that the two are equal and equally important in the sentence. Nourishing without cherishing is inadequate to express what Paul wanted to teach. On the other hand, cherishing without nourishing is a contradiction in terms.

"Just as Christ also does the church"

Paul's parallel between Christ's relation to the church and the husband and wife continues. The statement in the Greek text is a bit more direct. Our text reads, "Just as Christ also does the church." The Greek text reads, "even as also the Lord the church." The Greek text is a bit stronger. This is a way to place strong emphasis on an idea without saying so in so many words.

Because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:30

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The word translated "because" is "hoti" (ὅτι) and is usually translated "so that." There is a difference between the idea of "because" and "so that." Because indicates a coming reason. "So that," on the other hand, suggests a coming statement of purpose. Jesus does not nourish and cherish us because we are members of His body. The two things are totally separate. We are members of His body, but that does not cause Him to give the kind of loving care we experience. He loves just because He loves.

"We are members"

The word translated "we are" is "esmen" (ἔσμεν). This is a present indicative form. This is a forceful way to speak of ongoing action. That is precisely what Paul wants to convey. We are and we will always be members of His body.

"Members of His body"

The word for "members" is "melos" (μέλος) and means "a limb," "a part of the body." This is part of what is involved in being "in Christ." This speaks not so much of physical location as it does of a spiritual relationship. There is a difference in the text of the King James Version and that of the other modern translations in this area. There are two phrases included in the King James that do not appear in our texts. The older Greek text – Textus Receptus – includes these phrases. Our more recent texts do not include them. Neither form will substantially change our understanding of this verse. Both of these omitted statements affirm that we are part of the body of Christ.

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. Ephesians 5:31

This verse, as you probably realize, is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. If you go back to Genesis, you will notice that this is the story of creation. God's purpose in creating both male and female was that there be not only freedom from loneliness, but that the two should have fellowship and intimacy which are vital for a sense of meaning and purpose. Paul's inclusion of the quotation, here, suggests that without such a relationship, the marriage would be meaningless and God's purposes would not have been fulfilled. The fact that it is an Old Testament quotation tells you just how important this point was to Paul. When Paul came to his most important point he invariably backed it up with a quotation from the Old Testament.

"For this cause"

The word translated "for this cause" is "anti" (ἀντὶ) and is usually translated "because" or "against." The effect is minimal.

"A man shall leave his father and mother"

This is a comparison between the relationship between Christ and the church with that of a man and his wife. The word translated "shall leave" is "kataleipo" (καταλείπω) and means "to abandon" or "forsake." This word indicates the direction of one's focus rather than physically leaving or abandoning. Indeed, in that culture, when a man marries, he simply moves into a room that was added to the house or tent. The form of this word is future indicative. This is a simple declaration of what will happen, but has not as yet, from the viewpoint of the speaker. Paul was definitely describing a turning point in a man's life. Up to this point his focus had been on himself and his parents. Now, he is

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married and his focus shifts to focus upon his wife. This is exactly the picture that Paul borrows from the relationship between Christ and the church. Being part of the body of Christ involves strict obedience and in the Old Testament we are commanded to make that shift at the time of marriage.

"And shall cleave to his wife"

The word translated "and" is "kai" (καί) and indicates that the following statement is part of the previous statement and equally important. The word for "shall cleave" is "proskollao" (προσκολλάω), which is a compound word. It is broken down as follows:

- a. "Pros" means "toward" or "to."
- b. "Kollao" means literally "to glue" or "to stick."

This combined word was used to describe things that had been joined, glued together. The form of this word is future indicative. The importance of this is that it describes action that will take place and the indicative form identifies a simple declaration of action. It is a way of placing stress upon the certainty of something that has not taken place as yet.

"And the two shall become one flesh"

Again, the word "and" indicates that this is a continuation of the previous idea. The word translated "shall become" is "eimi" (εἶμι). It is a form of the word "to be", "to exist." Paul here uses the present indicative form to indicate ongoing action, lifestyle, which is simply declared and certified. One might translate the meaning of this word as "shall become and always will be becoming."

The word translated "flesh" is "sarx" (σάρξ) and means "the flesh," "the body." Paul described two individuals becoming inseparably and indistinguishably a part of each other. We should remember that Paul used the relationship between Christ and the church to parallel the relationship a man should feel and share with his wife.

*This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:32*

"This mystery is great"

Paul begins with an emphatic statement. It is more emphatic in the Greek than in the English. The word translated "mystery" is "musterion" (μυστήριον). It literally means "to shut the mouth," "to keep a secret." It describes something hidden or difficult to perceive. It is like the silence required of initiation into some religious rites. This was particularly true of the Jews. Kabala is a good example. Among the very strict religious Jews, there is serious study of Kabala. One facet of this study is assigning a numerical value to each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. By adding the value of letters in a word or phrase and comparing this with the value of other words or phrases, they believe they can discover hidden meaning and messages in the text. This is about all we know about Kabala because it is a well-kept secret reserved for these strict Jews alone. There are a number of books written about Kabala and its meaning. None of them, however, enable us to understand this avenue of study.

For two persons to become one person is in fact a real mystery, but we understand it quite well. Most of us know people who have been married for 60 years or more. They walk alike, they talk alike, they tend to think alike, they do most everything alike. That may not have been true before their marriage, but after 60 years it is absolutely true.

"But"

This always indicates a contrast is in process. Paul will contrast the image of the family he has used with the image of Christ and the church.

"I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church"

There is an interesting use of words in this sentence. Paul was talking about Christian men loving their wives. He pointed out how the Christian man should love his wife. He pointed out how the husband and wife should relate to each other – indistinguishable and inseparable. He then turned it around and focused it on the central issue in the epistle – the intimate relationship between Christ and the church, particularly this fellowship in Ephesus.

Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. Ephesians 5:33

This is a very deliberate and emphatic statement. It isn't possible to translate it into smooth English. One might translate it, "nevertheless, you one by one, each of himself wife so let him love as himself, and the wife in order that she fears the husband."

You have probably noticed that nowhere in these instructions did Paul instruct the wife to love the husband. Paul does not explain why he deals with the issue in this way. It appears that this is true because there is not the problem with the wife loving the husband. There appears to be, however, a problem with the husband unconditionally loving the wife. Again, Paul nowhere instructs the husband to respect the wife. This appears to be because there is a problem with the wives respecting the place where God has placed the husband, but no problem with the husbands respecting their wives.

"Let each...love his own wife."

The word translated "love" is "agape" (ἀγαπή). This, of course, is love without limits or restrictions. It is an action, not a reaction. It is conditioned upon no particular response expected from the beloved, even if rejected. The form of the word "love" is present imperative. This is a command that becomes a lifestyle. One might translate it, "let each one love and keep on loving his wife." It is a command. To fail to obey this is direct disobedience to God.

"The wife see that she respect her husband"

The Greek text reads, "and the wife that she fears the husband." The verb for this statement harks back to the previous statement and would read, "and let..." The word translated "respect" is "phobeo" (φοβέω) and originally meant "to be put to fear," "to frighten," "to be deeply alarmed." The church transformed this word and used it to describe "reverence," "to hold in awe." It is to hold in respect because of whom the person is. It is to hold in respect because of the task the person is commanded to perform. The form of this word is present subjunctive. This is interesting. The present tense describes ongoing action, a lifestyle. The subjunctive mood, however, describes the mood of contingency. This is something that is not yet real, but has the potential to be.

The implications of this form are that important. This is the way that the wife is always to respond to her husband. Because of the middle voice, this is action in which the wife is involved. The subjunctive mood suggests that this has not yet happened, but the

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possibility is there. It is as important for the wife to respect the husband as it is for him to love her. It is as much obedience for the husband to love as it is for the wife to respect. Both have a command from God, through the apostle to obey. It is equally disobedience for both if they fail to do as commanded. In keeping with the overall theme of the epistle, Paul is saying that this mutual submission is a part of what it means to be "in Christ."

As you observe verse 33, you realize that in verse 22, Paul dealt with the wives first. Now, however, in verse 33, he dealt with husbands first – just the reverse. Paul made no effort to explain why he did this. We can only guess. It appears that Paul did this for purposes of balance in his presentation. If in two different places he instructed the wife first in one and the husband first in the other, then both of them are less likely to feel singled out and uniquely attacked.

Conclusion

In the confines of this chapter, Paul exhorted the Ephesian Christians to careful alertness concerning the threat to their faith as well as to practical directions to promote family unity. Throughout this epistle, Paul dealt with the need for a special intimate relationship with Christ. Family harmony is as much a part of that special relationship "in Christ" as is watchfulness for spiritual attack.

All through the New Testament, obedience is the key to this intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the key for dealing with the oppression Christians face from the enemy and his people. It is the key to unusual harmony within the body of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 6

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

EPHESIANS 6:1 – 24

1. In this chapter, there are five paragraphs in the Greek text. On the following table, write a brief summary of seven words or less for each paragraph.

6:1-4	
6:5-9	
6:10-20	
6:21, 22	
6:23, 24	

2. In 6:1-4, Paul gave specific instructions to fathers and their children.
- In 6:1, Paul gave Christian children specific instructions concerning their relationship with their parents.
 - What was Paul's instruction?
 - Why would Paul include the words "in the Lord"?
 - What reason does he give for these instructions?
 - In 6:2, Paul quoted from the Old Testament presentation of the Law in Deuteronomy 5:16.
 - Why would he do this?
 - What would be different if verse two were omitted?
 - Paul mentioned the fact that this is "the first commandment with a promise."
 - Read Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. What observation can you make in view of Paul's statement?
 - What difference does it make?
 - Paul begins 6:3 with the word "that." This usually indicates a statement of purpose.
 - What purpose does he suggest?
 - What is the importance of this purpose?
 - In 6:4, Paul gave fathers instructions concerning the rearing of their children.
 - Did you ever wonder why Paul only mentioned fathers?
 - Why is that?
 - Read this verse again, carefully. What do you observe about the two parts of the sentence?
 - What is important about this observation?
 - What did Paul mean "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"?
3. In 6:5-9, Paul turned his attention to the relationship between Christian slaves and their masters.
- In 6:5, Paul instructed Christian slaves in regard to their relationship to their master.

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1. How did he tell them to deal with their owners?
 2. What important instruction did Paul not give them? Why?
 - b. In 6:6, 7, Paul explained his general instruction in 6:5.
 1. What did he say?
 2. What did Paul mean by these instructions?
 - c. In 6:8, Paul explained, in principle form, the results that slaves would realize from their obedient conduct. What principle did Paul suggest?
 - d. In 6:9, Paul turned his attention to Christian masters.
 1. What instruction did Paul give them?
 2. What was the basis of Paul's instruction?
4. In 6:10 – 20, Paul gave a series of instructions to the whole Christian community.
- a. In 6:10, Paul described the style of life for the believer. To what did he urge them?
 - b. In 6:11, Paul used a military simile.
 1. What was it?
 2. What does he infer by this instruction?
 - c. In 6:12, Paul explained the reason for the instruction in 6:11.
 1. What explanation did he give?
 2. What is the implication of Paul's explanation?
 - d. In 6:13, Paul drew a simple conclusion.
 1. What was his conclusion?
 2. What purpose did he say this would accomplish?
 - e. In 6:14-18, Paul gave specific details for his instructions in 6:10-13.
 1. Identify each detail he spells out in these verses.
 2. What reasons does he give for each instruction?
 3. What was Paul really saying in all these instructions?
 - f. In 6:19, 20, Paul had completed his instructions and made a request.
 1. What was his request?
 2. Give two reasons why Paul would make such a request.
5. In 6:21, 22, Paul explained the mission of Tychicus when he delivered the letter to the church.
 1. What was Tychicus to do?
 2. Why would this be necessary?
6. In 6:23, 24, Paul concluded his letter to the Ephesian church.
- a. In these two verses, Paul wished four specific things for these Ephesian Christians. What are they?
 - b. What does each one mean?
 - c. In view of your study of this epistle, how will these four things help the Ephesian congregation in their walk with God?
 - d. How does Paul suggest these four blessings will come to the Ephesian congregation?
 - e. What conditions does Paul place on the receiving of grace? Why?
7. Review your study of chapter six.

- a. What observations can you make about it?
- b. What relationship can you observe between the content of 6:1-9 and 6:10-20?

LESSON 6: EPHESIANS 6:1 – 24

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Introduction

There are five paragraphs in the sixth chapter of Ephesians. A summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

6:1-4	Instructions To Christian Fathers and Children
6:5-9	Instructions to Christian Slaves and Masters
6:10-20	Exhortation – Put On The Whole Armor Of God
6:21, 22	Tychicus Brought News About Paul
6:23, 24	Peace, Love and Grace To All

Ephesians 6:1-4 – Instructions To Christian Fathers

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ephesians 6:1

Observe that Paul addressed the weaker party, those with less power, first. This was also true in the previous discussion concerning husbands and wives. This paragraph is addressed to fathers and children.

The word translated "children" is "teknon" "teknon" (τέκνον). This word identifies a chronologically mature progeny of an older adult. This is different from the word "teknion" (τεκνίον) which identifies little children and babies. This verse is usually quoted to remind little children to be obedient. That was not Paul's intent.

"Obey your parents"

The word translated "obey" is "hupokoe" (ὑποκοή), which is a compound word. It is broken down in the following manner:

- a. "Hupo" means "under."
- b. "Akouo" means "to hear."
- c. It means "to listen attentively," "to be subordinate," "to be under authority."

The form of this word is present active imperative. Simply put, it means:

- a. Present tense – this is ongoing action, a lifestyle rather than an action.
- b. Active voice – The subject – "children" – performs the action.
- c. Imperative mood – This is a command.
- d. One might translate this word, "Obey and never stop obeying your parents."

"Your parents"

Observe that it refers to "parents" not just to fathers. The reason for this is clear. If you look at the fifth commandment, it states, "honor your father and mother..." We need to keep in mind that this would put them at cross-purposes with the pagan culture. In that culture, a grown boy would listen carefully to his father out of fear. The situation with his mother, however, would be quite different.

"In the Lord"

There is open discussion about the meaning of this phrase. It could be a reference to Christian parents. It could also mean that mature Christian children should obey their parents. It also would include that obeying parents is part of what is involved in being "in Christ." The latter would be my preference for what Paul said in this sentence.

"For this is right"

Paul's use of the word "for" suggests that a reason is forthcoming. The reason for obedience is very important. Some would obey because it is politically correct. Others would obey because they were afraid to do otherwise. The real reason to obey is because it is right; it is righteous.

*Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise,
Ephesians 6:2*

We must keep in mind that verses two and three are a single sentence and must be interpreted as such.

The word translated "honor" is "timaō" (τιμάω). It means "to revere," "to fix a value upon," "to esteem," "to hold as precious." This requires careful thought. It does not mean that we feel everything they did was perfect. It does mean that despite their weaknesses, God has commanded us to hold our parents in honor and respect because they are our parents. For one thing, without them we would not be here. From a practical standpoint, people who do not respect their parents have a tendency to view all of life defensively and become aggressive toward most everyone else.

In this verse, Paul made a very subtle statement. He said, "which is the first commandment with a promise." Paul might have said that this is the only commandment with a promise. In raising this observation, Paul made a subtle point. By pointing this out, Paul suggested just how very important this issue really is. He has added another reason to take this commandment with great seriousness.

The form of this statement is present imperative. As we have pointed out repeatedly, the present tense indicates ongoing action. It identifies a lifestyle rather than a single act. The imperative mood tells us this is a command. To disobey it would be no different than disobeying the command not to bear false witness or to fail to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. One might translate this statement by saying, "honor/revere your parents and never stop honoring them." This becomes a way of life.

Inevitably the question is raised, "What is the difference between 'honoring' our parents and 'obeying' our parents?" It is possible to obey one's parents and have absolutely no respect for them at all. This happens often. Some people obey their parents because they are afraid to disobey. Experience has taught them that it is healthier to do as they are told. On the other hand, one can hold his/her parents in great respect, count them as precious. It is to place yourself under their authority by desire, not by fear. It is because they are our parents, because God has commanded us to hold them in respect; count them as precious because God has commanded us. It does not mean that you believe they were perfect parents. It does not mean that they did you no harm. It does mean that we hold them in respect and honor because God instructed us to do so.

That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Ephesians 6:3

In verse three, Paul continued his portrayal of the benefits of honoring one's parents. He started this part of the explanation with the use of the word "that." The word translated "that" is "hina" (ἵνα) and is usually translated "in order that." The word inevitably introduces a statement of purpose.

"That it may be well with you"

The word translated "be" is "ginomai" (γίνομαι) and means "to be" or "to become." The form of this word is II Aorist subjunctive. II aorist expresses simple past time. The subjunctive, on the other hand, is the mood of possibility or contingency. It is for this reason they translated the word "may be."

The word translated "well" is "eu" (εὖ) which originally meant "noble," but came to be used to express the idea of "something good," "a job well done," "a situation sufficiently comfortable for living a full life." Paul said that one of the byproducts of honoring one's parents is that one can have a fully, satisfying life.

Paul's use of the word "and" indicates that the material that follows is part of and equally important as the preceding material.

He said, "That you may live long on the earth." Paul's message was very clear to them. Both a long life and great riches were thought to be signs of a righteous life. You may remember from the Old Testament that Methuselah and others lived "to a good old age." It was thought to be one of the rewards for a righteous life. When Paul spoke of the possibility of their living a long life, he acknowledged that they were righteous and gently urged them to be more holy.

He implied that holding one's parents in great respect was an outstanding expression of obedience and would be rewarded with obvious longevity.

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

This sentence begins with the word "and," but it is not a part of verse three. It is, however, a continuation of the same general subject matter in a new sentence. This sentence deals with mutual subjection within the family as we discussed earlier. This particular sentence is addressed to fathers in relation to the way they deal with their children.

"Fathers do not provoke your children to anger"

Typical of Pauline style, he told them what they must not do and then identified what they must do. The word translated "provoke" is "parorgizo" (παροργίζω) and is a compound word.

- a. "Para" means "beside."
- b. "Orgizo" means "to enrage" or "to exasperate."
- c. One might say it means to be beside oneself with rage and distress. It is obviously necessary for Paul to say this because that is what some were doing.

The form of this word was present imperative. Again, the present tense suggests ongoing action, a lifestyle, rather than a single act. The imperative mood identifies this as a command. We would translate this literally as, "Do not enrage your children and keep on enraging them."

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The words "to anger" do not appear in the Greek text. It simply says, "Do not provoke your children." Paul spoke very forcefully, to say the least.

The word "but" suggests that the following material will stand in strong contrast to the previous statement.

Paul continued saying, "Nurture them." The word translated "nurture" is "ektrepho" (ἐκτρέφω) and means "to rear up to maturity," "to cherish," "to train." The form of the word is also present imperative. One might translate it, "nurture them and keep on nurturing them." He told them to make a lifestyle out of nurturing their children.

"In the discipline and admonition of the Lord."

The word translated "discipline" is "paideia" (παιδεία) and means "to correct" or "to train by chastening," "to educate" or "to instruct."

Again, the word translated "instruct" is "nouthesia" (νουθεσία). This word describes a mild rebuke, a gentle warning and admonition. The difference between "discipline" and "admonition" is one of degree. "Discipline" is more forceful while "admonition" tends to be more gentle.

The words "of the Lord" apply to both discipline and admonition." The phrase, "of the Lord" describes how the Lord corrects and redirects our thinking and actions. It identifies the character of that discipline and instruction. It must be holy, loving and forgiving.

Ephesians 6:5-9 – Instructions To Christian Slaves and Masters

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; Ephesians 6:5

At this point, Paul shifts the direction of his instructions. He has been commanding husbands, wives and children. At this point, he turned his attention to slaves. One might think of these verses as dealing with employees since we have no slaves. Keep in mind that 6:5-8 form a single sentence and all deal with the conduct of slaves who are believers.

A slave is one who is in subjection, one who is subservient. Some would argue that though employees are not literally slaves, still the conditions apply. Most however, would identify serious differences between the two. We should keep in mind that though this does not seem extreme to us, it was radical in their thinking.

The word translated "be obedient" is "hupakouo" (ὑπακούω), a compound word.

- a. "Hupo" means "under" or "through"
- b. "Akouo" means "to hear," "to understand."
- c. It means to listen attentively and to heed and conform to a command.

Again, the form of this word is present imperative. It is a command to an ongoing lifestyle. Much like a little child, some slaves pretended not to hear orders in an attempt to ignore them. Paul instructed Christian slaves to be different. One might translate this word, "I command you to obey and never stop obeying."

"Obey your masters according to the flesh"

The word translated "masters" is "kurios" (κύριος) and stands for one who is in authority, the controller. It was also the title of respect and the name by which Jesus was often identified. This is what a slave called his owner.

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Observe that Paul added the words, "according to the flesh." It is a way of identifying another human being. In this case, it also carries the idea that there are at least two spheres of influence. "According to the flesh" identifies that area of influence in which the slave literally had no rights and was totally under the control of his owner. On the other hand, there is a spiritual sphere of influence. In this sphere, the owner had absolutely no control and usually would not even know if his wishes were being carried out by his slave. The owner could command the slave to worship his idol of preference. The owner would never know, however, whether the slave performed the rituals out of necessity or desire.

Paul gave four qualifiers concerning how the Christian slave should obey his master.

1. **"With fear"**

The word translated "fear" is "phobos" (φόβος). Originally, the word meant "flight." Eventually, especially in the church, it came to be understood to mean "to hold in intense respect." In most cases, slaves were understandably spiteful of their owners. Though it was not healthy to allow these thoughts to be known, still there was a seething, silent contempt in which many slaves held their owners. Paul said this should not be the case with slaves who were Christians. Despite their loss of freedom, they were to hold their owners in highest respect.

2. **"With trembling"**

The word translated "trembling" is "tromos" (τρόμος). It means "to dread" or "be terrified." It is "to quake with fear." This creates a problem for many Christians. We do not believe we should live in terror. Still, that is what the word means. Though the text does not clearly say so, it seems to me Paul said that the believing slave should take his owner very seriously. He should be prepared to do whatever the owner commands.

3. **"In the sincerity of your heart"**

The word translated "sincerity" is "haplotes" (απλότης). There are a couple of ways to view the meaning of this word.

a. It can mean "singleness."

b. It can mean "simplicity" or "sincerity."

Both of these possibilities are involved. Our English word "sincere" comes from the Latin words "sine chera," literally without wax. It comes from the sculptor's trade. Lesser tradesmen would fill gouges with wax to cover up their mistakes. This led skilled tradesmen to sell their work only in the heat of the day to demonstrate that it was "sine chera" "without wax." It was what it appeared to be. It means to be exactly what one appears to be. Slaves were to be sincere in their service. The compliance with their owners wishes, no matter how cruel he might be, was to be their single priority; their motive in life.

4. **"As to Christ"**

This is a tall order for any slave, let alone those owned by cruel, thoughtless masters. It is not as difficult to serve the Lord with fear and trembling. He always looks after our best interests. He is always loving and merciful. Obeying a slave owner is different. His interests surpass all other interests. In many cases, owners were brutal to their slaves. Literally, the life of a slave meant nothing. Without qualification, the believing slave was to respond to his owner in the way he would respond to Christ. Difficult? Yes! Impossible? No! We know there were many

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who obeyed Paul's instruction at the cost of their lives. They viewed this as taking up their cross and following Jesus even when it meant the ultimate sacrifice.

Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Ephesians 6:6

As indicated earlier, this verse is part of the sentence begun in 6:5. This part of the verse attempts to be more specific about what it looks like when a servant serves his/her master as he/she would serve Christ. Paul accomplishes this by saying what it is not and then describes what it is.

"Not by eyeservice"

The word translated "eyeservice" is "ophthalmodoulia" (ὀφθαλμοδουλία) which is a compound word.

- a. "Ophthalmos" means "eye."
- b. "Doulos" means "slave."

It was not uncommon for servants to perform beautifully when being observed, but became quite dilatory when no one could observe. This is pretense and the opposite of sincerity. It is not what Paul instructed them to do. "Eyeservice" also includes anything that appears to be one thing when in fact it is another or comes from a different motive.

"Not as menpleasers"

The word translated "menpleasers" is "anthropareskos" (ἄνθρωπάρεσκος). This is also a compound word:

- a. "Anthropos" means "men."
- b. "Aresko" means "to please."

This describes the person who determines to please men rather than God. It has to do with the purpose of life. Again, there are those who serve well, but not out of desire. They serve their master out of selfish motive. It may be the hope of an easier task or a more secure position. It might also be out of fear of punishment if they do not serve well. These motives are always selfish. They are, at root, expressions of dishonesty. The slave appears to be serving his master, when he is really serving himself. The service to the master is incidental.

"But"

This word usually indicates a contrast is in process. Having told these Christian slaves how NOT to do their work, Paul now instructs them how TO do it.

"As slaves of Christ"

These slaves are to work for their human owners as though they were directly serving Christ. This leaves no room for deception or false motives. This is a service of "agape" love, even when offered to unlovely owners. Again, it is self-sacrificial even when it does not seem to be appreciated.

"Doing the will of God"

It is more than simply doing the right thing. "An eye for an eye" has no place in this kind of relationship. One must be ready to do good in the presence of evil. Paul said the

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servant must be willing to do the will of God. It will include loving enemies, turning the other cheek; doing good to those who would do you harm or use you.

"From the heart"

The word translated "heart" is really the word for "soul" "Psuches" (ψυχῆς). The word literally means "breathe." It includes that which identifies our physical life. One might translate this as "with my whole being." It is doing the right thing for the right reason and with the right attitude. Paul continued to describe how Christian slaves conduct themselves.

With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, Ephesians 6:7

"With good will"

The word that is translated "good will" is "eunoia" (εὐνοία). The word means "kindness." It describes the way a person cares for their spouse. It is the ability to be conciliatory in a positive way. Paul described loving care for others in this phrase.

"Render service"

The word translated "render service" is "douleuo" (δουλεύω) which means subjection and subservience. It is much more than work without pay. It involves serving whether it pleases us or not. It means serving even when what we are called upon to do does not seem to make sense, and might well be costly to us. Paul described serving that is more important than the consequences of that service.

Now look at the form of this word. This is a present participle. By using both the present tense and the participle, Paul emphasized the idea of intense action in an ongoing fashion. One might say it this way, "give sacrificial service and never, never stop giving sacrificial service."

"As to the Lord"

This is repetition. In verse five, Paul told them to do their service "as to Christ." There is a slight difference, but it is essentially a repetition. "As to Christ" indicates that the servant is to serve his master the way we serve Christ. "As to the Lord," is a play on words. The word "Lord" means master. Remember this is a section describing the relationship between a Christian slave and his non-Christian master. At the same time, the word "Lord" is the name by which people knew Jesus.

"And not to men"

This is one of the few places in the New Testament where the word "and" signals a contrast. Our relationship with Christ and our relationships with other people are drastically different. A slave dealing with a non-Christian master should be one of loving action, not reaction. It is to deal with the slave owner as we would deal with Christ, not in terms of reaction to their treatment of the slave.

Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. Ephesians 6:8

There are two basic words translated "know" in the New Testament.

- a. Ginosko – this is a gradual process of ongoing discovery.
- b. Oida – this is full knowledge with no process.

BEING IN CHRIST

Our word in this verse is "oida." One might say it, "knowing absolutely." The form of this word is a perfect participle. The perfect tense identifies ongoing previous action. The participle identifies action in progress. This form indicates that the "knowing" is past action whose consequences continue. The use of the perfect tense and the participle place a stress on the action of knowing.

"That"

This word usually indicates the coming of a statement of purpose. In this case it identifies a purpose or a result.

"Whatever good things"

The word translated "whatever" is a conditional word. This is the reason it is used to explain the idea of "whatever" which is an indefinite specification.

The word translated "good things" is "agathos" (ἀγαθός). It means "something good;" "something beneficial."

"Each one does"

The word translated "does" is "poieo" (ποιέω) and means "to cause something to happen." It is more than simple action. The form of this word is first aorist subjunctive. The first aorist identifies simple action. The subjunctive mood, on the other hand, suggests the idea of possibility. One might translate these words, "each one might do."

"He will receive this back from the Lord"

The word translated "he will receive" is "komizo" (κομίζω) and means to receive or provide. It is to have something so as to use it in a specific way. Paul said the good things one does, God will return them to him. Even if a person does not do good deeds in order to receive personal gain, God will make sure that he receives the personal gain anyway. The difference is that if you do something for selfish reasons, that is your goal. In this scenario, however, the purpose is to obey Christ. The receiving of the gift anyway is a byproduct of that obedience, not the purpose of it.

"Whether slave or free"

This is a rejection of the caste system. That culture recognized a strict caste system with attendant privileges for some. Paul rejected that whole system. It does not matter which group you happen to be a part of. It is as though there was no caste system in the church though it was most prominent in the culture around the church. God will return what you have done, both good and bad. Obedience never leaves God's people with less than they would have had if they had followed selfish motives.

*And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
Ephesians 6:9*

In this instance, the use of the word "and" indicates that this is a continuation of the previous thought. Though this is a new sentence, it is just a different part of the same discussion. The previous segment dealt with Christian slaves. This section deals with Christian masters. Notice that Paul does not instruct the masters to set their slaves free.

"Masters, do the same things to them"

The word translated "masters" is "kurios" (κύριος) and means "slave owner," "one with authority." Titus and the epistles of John are the only New Testament books that do not contain this word. When Paul spoke of "the same things" he referred to his instructions to the slaves to do in relationship to their masters – deal with your servants as though you were dealing with the Lord. Paul was telling the masters to "do the will of God from the heart" in relationship to your slaves. This is revolutionary to say the least. This, to be sure, would create great tensions between the Christian slave owners and the non-Christian owners. Basically, masters thought of their slaves as they thought of an inexpensive tool. It could be thrown away when it was no longer useful. Masters would receive a great deal of pressure from other slave owners if they were not cruel to their slaves. This is the issue Paul dealt with so delicately in the epistle to Philemon. Paul was talking in revolutionary terms to say the least.

"And give up threatening"

The use of the word "and" suggests that the following statement is equally a part of the preceding one. The word translated "give up" is "aniemi" (ἀνιέμι) and means "to send up," "to desist from some activity," "to forbear certain actions." The form of this word is a present participle. The present tense speaks of ongoing action, a lifestyle rather than a single action. A participle indicates ongoing action. The use of the present tense and the participle gives a double emphasis that this is action that does not stop. You might translate it, "give up threatening and never stop giving it up." The word translated "threatening" is "apeile" (ἀπειλή) and means "to threaten with great harm." Paul was telling the masters to stop being a menace to their slaves. Slaves were being forced into harder work by threats of great pain or death. This happened all the time and the threats were carried out. Paul indicated that this was intolerable among believers.

"Knowing that their master and yours is in heaven."

Again, this was radical thinking. In that culture, it was unthinkable to say that masters and slaves were in any way equals. That, however, is exactly what Paul said. In that culture, the masters were considered to be superior in everything. Paul had the audacity to say that both the masters and their servants had the same Master. Now, the masters would never agree that they had a master. To say this would be to say that the master was also a slave. It opens the door to say that they would receive the same treatment from this Master. That was unthinkable in first century Ephesus. To speak of their master as being in heaven was to portray Him as supernatural and omnipotent. That is exactly what Paul wanted them to remember.

"And there is no partiality in Him"

The word translated "partiality" is "prosopolepsia" (προσωποληψία) and means "to show favoritism," "partiality," "to show respect to a person." The "masters" and other "free men" were guaranteed partiality and favoritism in this culture. Paul was carving out new territory. He declared that the privileged class was eliminated in the church. Everyone stood as equals before God. In Christ there is no favored class; no special treatment for the privileged few. Everyone stands equally in the presence of God. This was the most radical thing they could possibly imagine.

Ephesians 6:10-20 – Exhortation – Put On The Whole Armor Of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Ephesians 6:10

The word translated "finally" is "loipon" (λοιπόν), but instead of meaning "finally," it really means "furthermore" or "moreover." There is a difference between the two. "Finally" indicates that a conclusion is forthcoming. "Furthermore," on the other hand, means that additional information is about to be given. It seems that the latter understanding is to be preferred.

"And"

This word indicates that there is a continuing of the idea previously presented. It presents the two concepts on an equal basis; one is as important and vital as the other.

"In the strength of His might"

The Greek text reads, "in the might of His power." The difference between the two renderings is not superficial. Look at the two words:

- a. The word translated "might" is "kratos" (κράτος) and means "dominion," "power" or "strength."
- b. The word translated "power" is "ischus" (ἰσχύς) and means "ability" or "force."

Paul had something specific in mind. For Paul, the "strength" was derived from the omnipotent power of Christ. "Might" is the source of the "strength" they need.

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6:11

Verses 11 and 12 are a single sentence. At this point we need to be reminded that the bulk of the people in this congregation are Gentiles. Be it coincidence or intention, Paul does not say which, but each of the items of battle equipment listed in this paragraph are a parallel to something used by the Jews in the preparation and adornment of their scrolls of the Torah. The Torah was treated as a special person, a friend. When it is transported, it is "dressed" in a "talit" as a man is when he comes to the synagogue to pray. When a Torah is no longer usable, it is properly buried just as a family member would be. In preparation for the burial, the Torah is wrapped in a "talit" as an orthodox man would be. In every synagogue, the "ark" is where the Torah is kept. In that ark, the torah is "dressed" just as Paul admonishes these believers in Ephesus. We will identify each piece of clothing as we proceed.

"Put on the whole armor of God"

The word translated "put on" is "enduo" (ενδύω). It means "to array" or "to clothe." This is a broad instruction covering the entire clothing process. The form of this word is first aorist imperative. The first Aorist tense places emphasis on the action rather than on the time of this action. It stresses what is being done. The imperative mood means that this is a command. It is a bit like the modern directive, "do it!"

"The full armor of God"

The word translated "full armor" is "panoplia" (πανοπλία). This compound word means "all weapons." It describes the complete equipment at the disposal of the heavily armor infantryman. It simply means full covering, full armor. This is modified by the

words "of God." Paul was very insightful. Our temptation is to fortify ourselves with our own abilities. It is to avail ourselves of the protection that God provides and not our own strength. The inference is that they are about to become involved in a horrendous battle.

"That you may be able to stand firm"

The word translated "that" is "pros" (πρός). It is usually translated "before," but is on a few occasions translated "that." If you look at the Greek text, you will note that this word appears seven times in verses 11 and 12. This makes it clear that Paul has chosen to use this word in more than one way in order to add strong emphasis to his statement.

"You may be able"

The word translated "you may be able" is "dunamai" (δύναμαι) and means "possible" or "to be able." The form of this word is a present passive infinitive. The present tense indicates ongoing action, a lifestyle. The passive voice indicates that this is something that happens to the subject. The infinitive indicates ongoing action. By using both the present tense and the infinitive form, Paul has placed great emphasis on the fact this is ongoing action. One might translate the word, "that you may be able and go on being able."

"To stand firm"

The word translated "to stand" is "histemi" (ἵσταναι) and means "to stand," "to resist," "to be steadfast." The form of this verb is second aorist infinitive. The second aorist tense emphasizes the action, not the time. The infinitive indicates ongoing action. This is the reason for the translation "to stand." A more literal translation would be "to keep on standing."

"Against the schemes of the devil"

The word translated "against" is "pros" (πρός) and means "against" or "before." The use of this word is the first of seven uses in which he stresses the idea of standing against something.

The word translated "schemes" is "methodeia" (μεθοδεία). This compound word literally means "over boundaries." It suggests trickery, the use of wiles or to lie in wait. This was Paul's way of saying that the mode of operation, by the enemy, is deception and subterfuge.

"Of the devil"

Paul clearly states that the enemy against whom we fight is the devil himself. This presents a problem for those who do not believe in a literal devil. Paul, however, speaks very directly at this point. There are many other references to the existence of a literal devil throughout Scripture. Paul made a deliberate, emphatic statement saying the devil is the one against whom we are engaged in spiritual combat. He further stated that this enemy will use every possible form of subterfuge in order to defeat the believer.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12

The word translated "for" is really "hoti" (ὅτι) which is usually translated "so that." There is a difference between the two words.

- a. "For": suggests that a reason will follow.
- b. "So that" indicates that a statement of purpose is forthcoming.

The word "for" may well fit the context better, but the text does use the word "so that."

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood"

The word translated "struggle" is "pale" (πάλη) which literally means "to vibrate." It describes a very intense form of struggle. Paul often used these Olympic contests to illustrate spiritual struggles. Granted, people may be involved, but our struggle is not with people.

"But"

This word inevitably indicates a serious contrast is in progress. Paul will contrast "flesh and blood" with a number of enemies of the church.

"Against the rulers"

The word translated "against" is "pros" (πρός). Its repeated use, as previously suggested, is a means to convey a strong emphasis. We will see this use on five more occasions. We will not identify them hereafter.

The word translated "rulers" is "arche" (ἀρχή) and is used to identify "civil rulers." It was also used to identify evil forces. It seems appropriate to refer to "evil forces" here because there will be other references in the next verse which refer more appropriately to civil authority.

"Against the powers"

The word translated "powers" is "exousia" (ἐξουσία) and means "magistrates," "potentates," "authorities." This word usually is used to indicate the civil authority found in any community.

"Against the world forces"

The word translated "world forces" is "kosmokratoros" (κοσμοκράτορος). This is a compound word. Compounding is usually done for purposes of emphasis. The words are:

- a. "Kosmos" means "world."
- b. "Krateo" means "dominion."

This is a way of referring to Satan.

"Of this darkness"

The Greek text literally reads "world forces of the darkness of this age." The word translated "darkness" is "skotos" (σκότος) and means "darkness," but also carries the idea of "shadiness," "obscurity," "of being blinded." There is an evil connotation to this word.

The word translated "age" is "aion" (αἰών) and carries the idea of continuing duration. It deals with the idea of being perpetual. It is an ongoing span of time.

"Against the spiritual forces of wickedness"

The word translated "spiritual forces" is "pneumatikos" (πνευματικός). There are two facets of this word that are always present.

- a. The idea of great power
- b. The idea of invisibility

The context must reveal whether these spiritual forces are good or evil. In this instance, the context makes it abundantly clear that the intent is an evil force. This is obviated by the words "forces of wickedness."

The word translated "wickedness" is "poneros" (πονηρός) and describes a form of evil. The evil identified here leads to painful labor, sorrow and pain. It is the opposite of kindness and identifies injury and destruction.

"In heavenly places"

The word translated "heavenly places" is "epouranios" (ἐπουράνιους). The word literally means "above the sky." It is a way of pointing out something celestial. Evil is often thought of as being restricted to earthly relationships. The battle between good and evil started in heaven. It continues, today in every area outside heaven itself.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Ephesians 6:13

The words translated "therefore" are "dia touto" (διὰ τοῦτο). The word "dia" is usually translated "through." The word "touto" is usually translated "this." The word "therefore" suggests a coming conclusion. The words "through this," however, suggest a statement of purpose or means. The word "therefore" fits the context very well. The words "through this" actually appear in the text.

"Take up the full armor of God"

The word translated "take up" is "analambano" (ἀναλαμβάνω). It is a compound word and is made up as follows:

- a. "Ana" means "up."
- b. "Lambano" means "to take" or "to seize."

It conveys the idea of appropriating for oneself.

The word translated "full armor" is "panoplia" (πανοπλία). It means "full covering" and was used to describe military protective wear that was worn like a coat. This, of course, is what every soldier wore when going into battle.

Paul described this armor as being an "of God" kind of protection. This was more than a descriptive statement. All too often, when people face spiritual trials, they rely on their own ability to stand true. Thus, he stressed God's armor rather than personal resolve.

"That you may be able to resist in the evil day"

The word translated "that" is "hina" (ἵνα) and means "in order that." It suggests that a statement of purpose is about to be given. Again, the words "you may be able" are a translation of the word "dunamai" (δύναμι) and means "to be able" or "to have the power." The form of this word is helpful to our understanding. It is first aorist subjunctive. The first aorist focuses upon the action and not the time. The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility, but not certainty. The fact that this is in the subjunctive mood suggests that Paul knew it could happen, but there was no certainty that they would do so.

"To resist"

The word translated "to resist" is "anthistemi" (ἀνθίστημι), a compound word made up as follows:

- a. "Anti" means "opposite" or "against."

b. "Histemi" means "to stand."

The word is an emphatic form that suggests resistance, to stand up against serious opposition. The inference is that the believers will have the necessary confidence that they will be able, with God's help, to withstand every evil attack.

"In the evil day"

The word translated "day" is "hemera" (ἡμέρα). The meaning of this word is quite flexible. It can mean a 24 hour period. It can also identify any given span of time. Again, the word translated "evil" is "poneros" (πονηρός) and means "diseased," "vicious," "malicious," "wicked." The emphasis is not on the level of degradation of the day. It is, rather, an emphasis on the kind of damage that can be done to these believers in their struggle against evil.

"And having done everything to stand firm"

The word for "and" is "kai" (καί) and suggests that the material that follows is equally important with that which proceeded. It is part of the same idea. The word translated "having done" is "katērgazomai" (κατεργάζομαι). This is a compound word and can be broken down as follows:

- a. "Kata" means "down" or "against."
- b. "aergazomai" means "to toil" or "to work."

The word means to work against or to do everything. The form of the word is interesting. It is a first aorist participle. Again, the first aorist tense stresses action rather than time. It is a way of being quite emphatic about what you are saying. The aorist participle describes completed action in the past. It can usually be identified by the accompanying word "having."

The word translated "everything" is "hapas" (ἅπας) and is a strengthened form which means "absolutely everything." The word translated "to stand firm" is "histemi" (ἵστημι) and means "to stand," or "to abide," "to refuse to move." This is the ultimate value. It is not how well you start, but how well you finish the race.

Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, Ephesians 6:14

Again, verses 14-16 of the text form a single sentence. Paul's use of the word "therefore" suggests a coming conclusion. As you know, there are several levels of conclusions. As we indicated in chapter four, the word "therefore" in 4:1 identifies the main conclusion for the entire book. It is the same word that is used in this verse. The conclusion here, however, is much less dramatic, to say the least. This use of the word "therefore" forms a conclusion dealing with the material in just the previous sentence.

"Stand firm"

The word translated "stand firm" is "histemi" (ἵσθημι) which is obviously the same word that was used in the previous verse. It is more than just remaining upright. It carries the idea of intense resistance. It is a picture of steadfastness. If you look carefully at the context, you will note that this usage fits quite nicely. The form of this word is second aorist imperative. The second aorist emphasizes the action rather than the time. The imperative indicates that this is a command. One might wonder why Paul used the second aorist tense rather than the present tense. This is certainly a command that Paul would want

them to make a lifestyle. That would be accomplished by the present tense. Remember, however, that the sense of the passage conveys the idea of the present tense. Paul is ultimately interested in emphasizing, for these Christians, that they must stand firm. It is the action that is most important, not the time specific idea. That, of course, is accomplished by the use of the second aorist tense.

"Having girded your loins with truth"

The word translated "having girded" is "perizonnumi" (περιζώννυμι) which is a compound word. It is made up as follows:

- a. "Peri" means "through."
- b. "Zonnumi" means "to bind about."

Frankly, the word "zonnumi" would have conveyed the idea. The compounding of the word adds intense emphasis. The form of this word is first aorist participle. The first aorist conveys the idea of a simple fact. The participle indicates that this is action in process. This form stresses two things.

- a. This is a choice and activity the person makes.
- b. It is a lifestyle. It is something that begins and never stops.

"Your loins"

This is a picture that everyone who read the words would understand. The people of that day wore an undergarment that was floor-length. It was hardly possible to work or do anything physically demanding in that outfit. Servants also wore this garment. When they had to do demanding work, they would tuck the lower extremity, from the back, under their belt in front. This covered them and worked like a pair of shorts.

"With truth"

Truth was the preparation they needed to stand firm. Paul did not say gird up your loins with physical strength or moral determination. He did not say gird up your loins with brilliant minds. He said gird up your loins with truth. Truth is the primary defense against the attack of the enemy.

"And having put on the breastplate of righteousness"

The word "and" is "kai" (καί) and ties the previous idea to the one Paul is about to present. They are equally important and a part of each other.

The word translated "having put on" is "enduo" (ἐνδύω) and means "to sink into a garment," "to array oneself in clothing." The outer garment was a bit like a shawl. Paul was quite graphic about the truth he was attempting to convey. They were to wrap themselves in righteousness the way one would wrap his "talit" or shawl, around him in the cold.

The form of this word is first aorist middle participle. The first aorist tense suggests a simple statement of fact. The middle voice suggests that this is something that you do for yourself. The participle suggests ongoing action. Again this form stresses two things:

- a. This is a choice and action the believer makes by himself. No one does this to or for you.
- b. This is a lifestyle, not a single action.

Paul wanted to stress the idea that surrounding oneself with truth was to be as continuous as breathing.

"The breastplate of righteousness"

The word for "breastplate" is "thorax" (θώραξ) and means "the chest." Obviously, this is the word for our word "thorax." The breastplate is a piece of defensive weaponry. Two plates of metal were fixed together to protect the torso and back of a warrior. This would defend the wearer from the thrusts of the enemy.

"Of righteousness"

The word for "righteousness" is "dikaiosune" (δικαιοσύνη). It means "to be innocent," "to be equitable of character and action," "to be justified." Inner strength and positive attitude do not protect us from the attack of the enemy. Living a life beyond reproach is our defense. Being equitable in character and action form a defense against the attack of our enemy.

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Ephesians 6:15

The word "and," again, is "kai" (καὶ) and indicates that the preceding and following ideas are tied together and equally important.

"Having shod your feet"

The word translated "having shod" is hupodeo" (ὑποδέω) which is a compound word.

a. "Huppo" means "under."

b. "Deo" means "to bind" or "to tie."

It is the word that was usually used to describe the binding of a sandal to the foot.

The form of this word is first aorist participle. As indicated earlier, this form emphasizes the fact not the time. The participle, on the other hand, stresses ongoing action. Throughout this sentence, Paul used a series of images to convey a very important truth. We will spell this out in just a moment.

"Your feet"

The foot was immensely important in combat. If anything would cause him to slip just a little bit, he would immediately be at a serious disadvantage against his foe. If his sandals came untied, his life would definitely be in jeopardy.

"With the preparation of the Gospel of peace"

The word translated "preparation" is "hetoimazo" (ἑτοιμάζω). It means "to make ready," "to prepare for whatever God would have one to do in service." This is not the preparation of strategy. It is the preparation that the message of the Gospel provides. The Gospel brings peace in a troubled world and situation when one suffers for their faith. Again, Paul's intent is that the Gospel of peace is to be our constant protection in the same way that a soldier's well-tied sandals protect him from the attack of his enemy.

In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. Ephesians 6:16

The words translated "in addition to all" is "epi pasin" (ἐπὶ πάντων). These words mean "upon all" or "above all." This is different from "in addition to all" "In addition to all" suggests some additional information. "Above all" suggests that this piece of information

is more important than other pieces of information in the text. The latter of these possibilities appears to be the better choice.

"Taking up the shield of faith"

The word translated "taking up" is "analambano" (ἀναλαμβάνω) which is a compound word. The word is broken down as follows:

- a. "Ana" means "up."
- b. "Lambano" means "to take."

Frankly, the word "lambano (take) would be sufficient to convey Paul's idea. The compounding adds strong emphasis to the idea. That, of course, is what Paul intended to do.

The form of this word is second aorist participle. The second aorist tense focuses on the simple fact of action rather than time. The participle form focuses on the present action that continues. Taking up faith is to be a way of life, a never-ending activity.

"The shield"

Again, the shield is a defensive weapon. Throughout this section, Paul described the attack of the enemy upon the believer and identified several defensive weapons that will protect the believer in this battle. Interestingly, most of what Paul described is defensive in nature, not attack weapons.

"Of faith"

The word translated "faith" is "pistis" (πίστις). There are a couple of ingredients in the idea of "faith." It includes the things that we accept, things we believe. It also includes the conviction that God is and does what He says he will do. It is to rely completely upon the promises and teachings of God. It is the assurance that despite appearances, God is in control and will bring right out of chaos.

Again, our protection is not in our brilliant plans or the extent of our power. Our protection is in the dependence upon the faithfulness of God; the certainty that God is in control and will ultimately win the battle.

"With which you will be able"

The words translated "with which" is "en ho" (ἐν ᾧ). The exact meaning is significant.

- a. "En" means "in."
- b. The word "ho" means "which."

The words "with which" paint a picture of faith as a weapon. On the other hand, "in which" deals with faith as a life quality rather than strictly a weapon of defense. It is a lifestyle that proves, also, to be a defensive weapon.

"You are able":

The word translated "you are able" is "dunamai" (δύναμαι). It means "to be able." It stresses the idea of power. It is the source of our word "dynamo." The form of this word is future indicative. The future tense describes action that will take place, but has not as yet. The indicative mood points to a simple declaration of action. The use of the indicative mood, here, increases the emphasis of Paul's words. There is a high degree of certainty in this statement. There is no doubt you will be able.

"To extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one"

The word translated "sbennumi" (σβέννυμι) means "to put out," "to extinguish." In that era, arrows were often dipped in tar and then set on fire just before being shot. If the arrow touched a person's skin or weapons, they would burn because the flaming tar would stick to anything it touched. This was a frightening prospect for any soldier. In an attack, the danger of a flaming arrow was a real threat. It did two things:

- a. It was a way to kill in a horrendous way.
- b. It distracted the enemy. Some soldiers would have to stop fighting to put out the flames. It diverted the soldier's attention. He had to be very careful to stay away from the fire. He also had to focus careful attention on the soldier who was attacking him. His effectiveness would be greatly diminished.

"Of the evil one"

These missiles came from the devil, the enemy of the believer. They were intended to destroy the person, not to just incapacitate them. Paul certainly believed that the Devil would aggressively attack any believer who is faithful to God. This is the idea behind the message in this sentence.

Observe that the aorist participle is used repeatedly in this sentence. Paul wanted his instructions concerning these weapons against the evil one to be very clear. In each case these forms perform two functions:

- a. It focuses on the action and not on the time.
- b. It indicates that this is an ongoing call for alertness against the threat of the devil for the life of the believer. It must be a lifestyle if we are going to survive.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17

Verses 17-20 form a single sentence. The use of the word "and" suggests that the following information is as important as that which proceeded. It is also tied to that information.

"Take the helmet of salvation"

The word translated "take" is "dexomai" (δέχομαι) and means "to take" or "receive." The form of this word is an aorist middle imperative. The aorist tense focuses attention on the action, not the time. The imperative mood tells us that this is a command. The form of the word was carefully chosen. Paul wanted to stress the action. The aorist tense does this. He wanted to stress the fact that the believer receives this salvation. The middle voice accomplishes this. We receive salvation, we do not earn it. The imperative mood makes it very clear that this is a command, not a suggestion.

The idea of the helmet is important. The helmet was a most important piece of protective clothing for battle. If a person was struck on the head with a sword, the wound usually would be fatal. This is spiritual warfare and Paul urged them to take every possible precaution against a cunning enemy. The enemy would attack in many places and ways, but none so certain as the mind.

As mentioned earlier, each piece of protective gear that Paul mentions in this passage represents part of the covering that was used to cover their Torah scroll. The helmet is no exception. Each scroll was topped with a crown. Today these tops are made to look like crowns and are usually made of pure silver.

"The helmet of salvation"

In battle, the head is one of the most vulnerable parts of the soldier's anatomy. In the warfare of the spirit, the mind is one of the most vulnerable places concerning the enemy. It is a defense we cannot maintain without the help of God. The salvation that is ours "in Christ" is our able defense.

"And the sword of the Spirit"

On every Torah scroll there is a pointer attached. This is used so that the oil from a person's hands does not stain the scroll. The sword mentioned here is a short sword or dagger. It is capable of inflicting death on an adversary. Elsewhere, in Hebrews 4:12, the author spoke of the Scriptures as a "two-edged sword." This was a late invention that enabled a soldier to cut in both directions without turning the sword. The Scriptures cut into the human conscience like a two-edged sword cuts into a human body. In the next phrase, Paul identified the sword of the Spirit as the Word of God.

Observe that Paul speaks of this sword as "the sword of the Spirit." It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to use the Scriptures to cut into the human conscience and point them to God. This is the means God has chosen to speak to the hearts of people; to draw them to Himself.

"Which is the word of God"

Paul has focused on the great power of God. The Spirit is powerful to draw the rebel back to God. The Scriptures are powerful to open the mind of the rebel to the truth of God and to draw that person to God even in the midst of the rebellion. This is part of what Paul spoke of when he said, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, Ephesians 6:18

The Greek text reads a bit differently. It reads, "through all prayer and petition,..." The word "through" suggests that Paul is presenting us the means by which the sword of the Spirit functions. Notice that Paul said "through ALL prayer and petition." This is not a casual, occasional prayer. It is concerted prayer that will call upon God to work until it happens.

"With all prayer and petition pray"

"Prayer" and "petition" are two different words. Prayer is "proseuche" (προσευχή) which is a compound word.

- a. "Pros" means "to" or "toward."
- b. "Euchomai" means "to wish," "to pray to God."

The word for "petition," on the other hand, is "deesis" (δέησις) and means "to request" or "petition." This describes a greater intensity of the request.

"Pray"

This is the same word for "pray" encountered previously in the sentence. The form of the word is a present middle participle. The present tense describes action that is ongoing, a lifestyle. The middle voice indicates that this is something that the believer does, not something done to him. The participle identifies ongoing action in the immediate present. Paul described prayer as something the believer did for himself. The use of the present

tense and the participle form strongly stress the idea of ongoing action in the present. One might translate this, "pray and keep on praying."

"At all times in the Spirit"

There are two instructions in these words. First, we are to pray at all times. Prayer is usually considered something one does in church and once a day if you have devotions. Paul was talking about something you do constantly. He viewed prayer as a way of life.

Second, they are to pray in the Spirit. It means to pray under the guidance of the Spirit. Often we do not know how to pray. The Spirit knows and will guide our request. We are to pray under the enabling of the Holy Spirit if we are going to know the will of God. We will pray in the passion of the Spirit as we seek to know and express the will of God for our lives.

"And with this in view"

Again, the word "and" suggests a continuation of the previous idea on an equal footing. "With this in view" is a way of saying, "in view of these facts..."

"Be on the alert"

The word translated "be on the alert" is "agrupneo" (ἀγρυπνέω) which is a compound word.

- a. The prefix "a" means "not."
- b. The word "Hupnos" means "sleep."

The word means the opposite of sleep, an intense alertness.

The form of this word is a present active participle. The present tense indicates a lifestyle, not a single act. The active voice means that the subject initiates the action. The participle indicates that this is another expression of action in progress. By using both the present tense and the participial form, Paul added great emphasis to the intense ongoing action he has pictured. He really wants them to make a lifestyle of being very alert.

"With all perseverance"

The word translated "perseverance" is "proskarteresis" (προσκαρτέρησις) which is a compound word. The breakdown of this form is as follows:

- a. The word "pros" means "toward" or "near."
- b. The word "kartereo" identifies "great strength," "steadfastness."

This word identifies an intense perseverance, a dogged persistence that will not give up. The threat of the enemy is so great that one never stops being extremely alert. Intercession is more than posting a wish list before God. It is an intense petition; it is praying until God answers. It is not wearing God down to give us what we want. It is, rather, persistently waiting upon God's time and God's answer.

"And petition for all the saints"

Again, the word "and" indicates that this is a part of the previous material and is equally important. The word translated "petition" is "deesis" (δέησις) and means "supplication for a need." It is asking for what one needs. Paul used two different words to describe prayer.

- a. "Proseuche" (προσευχή) is a word Paul used to describe prayer in general.
- b. "deesis" (δέησις) is the word Paul used to describe an intense form of need.

It is easy to see why Paul would choose two very different words.

"For all the saints"

Paul, here, points to an intense ministry of intercession. This is important. Every believer is called to be an intercessor at one level or another. For some, this is their priority ministry. For all of us, however, it is essential if we care; if we are serious about our accountability to each other. It is a total self-investment in the petitioning of God on behalf of other believers.

And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, Ephesians 6:19

Again, the word "and" indicates that the previous message is being continued.

"Pray on my behalf"

Paul had just asked them to pray for all the saints. This, of course, included himself. Now he specifically asked them to pray for him. We should note that the word "pray" does not appear in the text. It is, however, clearly understood. Paul assumes the use of the word "deesis" (δέησις) in this phrase as well. The Greek text literally says, "and for me."

"That utterance may be given to me"

The word "that" is "hina" (ἵνα) and indicates that a statement of purpose is forthcoming. The Greek text might be translated, "to me may be given speech/words". The word translated "may be given" is "didomai" (δίδωμαι). It means "to bestow upon," "to yield to another." The form of this word is first aorist subjunctive. Simply put, it means that the focus is on the action, not the time. The subjunctive mood suggests a mood of possibility, not certainty. The use of this word intensifies the idea of the action, but does not deal with time or certainty of action.

The word translated "utterance" is "logos" (λόγος) and means "word." It describes "an expression," "a communication." Paul requests that they pray that the opportunity and ability to communicate the Gospel be given both to him and to the church there.

"In the opening of my mouth"

The word translated "opening" is "anoixis" (ἀνοιξις) and has to do with the throat. It means "to open," "to speak" or "relay a message." The form of this word is future indicative active and might be translated "may open and keep on opening my mouth." Paul was describing an ongoing lifestyle in the future.

"In boldness"

The word translated "boldness" is "parresia" (παρρησία) and means "to be frankly confident," "to speak boldly and plainly." It is to be outspoken, in a good sense. It is not that Paul just wants to talk. He wants to speak boldly and clearly the message of the Gospel to people who do not know it. Timid witnesses tend to skirt the real issues and full meaning of the message. They tend to give a sanitized version that is not the whole truth of the Gospel.

"To make known"

The word translated "to make known" is "gnorizo" (γνωρίζω) and means "to give understanding," "to make known to another." It is to cause others to understand. The form of this word is first aorist infinitive. The first aorist tense indicates an emphasis on the action, not the time. The infinitive indicates a single act that is beginning.

"The mystery of the Gospel"

The word for "mystery" is "mustyerion" (μυστήριον) and literally means "to shut the mouth." For us, "mystery" can mean strange, confusing. For them, however, it was like a secret code of a group into which one was initiated. It is not that Paul did not want others to know. It is that these people could not understand until they, too, had been redeemed. He was talking about the personal knowledge of the Gospel. It is that shocking discovery of the greatness of God's gift having been redeemed.

For which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:20

The word translated "ambassador" is "presbeia" (πρεσβεία) and literally means "senior" or "elder." The word was sometimes used to identify members of the Sanhedrin. Paul spoke of himself as "an ambassador in chains." This would be considered a contradiction in terms. Then as now, regal representatives had immunity from prosecution. It was no secret that Christians were treated differently than others. Persecution was commonly accepted as "normal."

"That in proclaiming it"

The word "that" is "hina" (ἵνα) and usually indicates that a statement of purpose is about to be given. The Greek text reads a bit differently from the English text. The word "proclaiming" does not appear in the Greek text. The Greek text reads, "That in it I may speak." The difference is slight, but appropriate. The use of the word "proclaiming" is an interpretive move. If you use the word "proclaiming," it points to the mystery of the Gospel mentioned in verse 19. Without the word "proclaiming," it points to being in bonds, but speaking boldly. I prefer this second option. To say, "in bonds speaking boldly" is a contradiction in terms. Because of the seriousness of being brought to trial in chains, most people would not think of speaking boldly while in chains. They would speak as cautiously and as humbly as possible in the hope of clemency. Paul sought just the opposite.

"I may speak boldly"

The word translated "speak boldly" is "parresiazomai" (παρρησιάζομαι) and means "to speak with great confidence," "to speak with spirit and confident demeanor," "to be bold." The use of the word "may" is a hint that this is a subjunctive mood. It tells us that there is a possibility of action here, but it is not certain. It may not happen. Paul was quite honest about the possibility of his inability to measure up to his own expectations.

"As I ought to speak"

The word translated "ought" can be deceiving. The word is "dei" (δεῖ) and literally means "to be bound" or "compelled." This identifies a necessity. The word "required"

gives a more accurate intent to Paul's statement. The form of this word is present indicative active. It is something I ought always to do and never stop doing. Paul said that we are required to speak our witness clearly and directly. To fail to do this is to be disobedient.

Ephesians 6:21, 22 – Tychicus Brought News About Paul

But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. Ephesians 6:21, 22

We have placed verses 21 and 22 together because they form a single sentence. Paul has added strong emphasis to this statement by the use of both the word "but" and "that." The word "but" is "de" (δέ) and indicates that a serious contrast is in process. The word "that" on the other hand, is "hina" (ἵνα) and suggests a coming statement of purpose.

"You may also know about my circumstances"

Apparently, the Ephesian church had heard inaccurate rumors about Paul's condition. Some have suggested that they had heard that Paul was having severe physical problems. Observe how carefully Paul spoke. He used repetition to convey strong emphasis. He stressed his total disclosure about himself. As a final attempt to help them understand his situation, Paul sent Tychicus, a local boy, to bring them up to date. His purpose was simple. These people cared a great deal about Paul. He wanted them to know the whole truth about his situation. They would trust Tychicus to tell them the whole truth about Paul.

Ephesians 6:23, 24 – Peace, Love and Grace To All

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6:23

Verses 23 and 24 form a benediction. Paul viewed a benediction much differently than we do. In many cases, we view a benediction as a necessary ceremony before we can leave the church service. It is not often taken too seriously. Paul thought of it in very different terms. It was very serious. It was a very intentional prayer. As you know, Paul sometimes placed a benediction in the middle of an epistle. It was a natural outburst of praise. It was a serious request asking God to bless and strengthen his readers.

Paul petitioned God for three blessings upon the Ephesian congregation. Notice how he prayed:

"Peace to the brothers"

Some might be distressed that Paul prayed on behalf of the "brothers" rather than the whole congregation. Actually this was his way of addressing his prayer on behalf of the whole congregation. A message to the whole congregation would be addressed to the leaders, the "brothers." In Galatians 3:28, Paul made it clear that in Christ there is no difference between the men and the women within the body of Christ.

The word for "peace" is "eirene" (εἰρήνη) and describes a harmonious relationship with God. This harmonious relationship with God results in a harmonious relationship

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between believers. It describes serious friendship among the faithful. It represents freedom from persecution and reconciliation among the saints. The Hebrew term "shalom" (שָׁלוֹם) speaks of wholeness and completeness. It describes harmony in the body. Paul wants this to be the basic relationship among the Christians in the city.

"Love (to the brothers)"

The word for "love" is "agape" (ἀγάπη). This is an idea that was not understood in the Greek culture in the first century. The church had to coin a word to describe the love that God shared with them and asked that they share with each other. It is an action, not a reaction. It is love without limits; love just because you love. It does not require or insist upon a response. Love has a universal quality. It is not reserved for those we like best. It is the word used to describe God and His dealings with His people. John said it clearly, "God is love." I John 4:8. It is an expression of divine love in a human context.

"With faith"

This faith is a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon our knowledge of God and how He works in the lives of His people. It is a personal surrender to God based upon our experience of His faithfulness.

"From God the Father"

This is Paul's way of saying that these qualities – peace, love and faith – come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not something that Paul could give or that these believers could develop on their own. We should remember that these believers have, to some extent, seriously disappointed Paul by their inability to stand firm against sin. Still, he asked God to place such a blessing upon their lives.

*Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible.
Ephesians 6:24*

The Greek text reads a bit differently. It says, "Love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility." The difference is slight, but important.

- a. "Love incorruptible" describes a pure form of love.
- b. "In incorruptibility" applies to all of life, not just to love.

The word translated "incorruptibility" is "aphtharsia" (ἀφθάρσια) and is a compound word:

- a. The letter "a" added to the beginning of a word identifies a coming negative idea.
- b. "Phthairo" (φθείρω) means "to destroy by producing conditions that corrupt or lead to a decline in purity." It is to lead the believer away from the life of holiness in which he should live every day. It is what the evil one does when he deceives and misleads a child of God into corrupt conduct imperceptibly.

Paul talked about people who live their lives, every day, at a high level of holiness. He asked God to give grace, unmerited favor, to those who live their lives in such a way. In one sense, it was a way of nudging these believers to a higher level of holy living than they had displayed up to this point. What a way to end the epistle!

THE CONCLUSION

In the six chapters of Ephesians, there are 28 references to the intimate relationship with God to which Paul exhorted the Ephesian Christians. As you read through this conclusion, it is our hope that the significance of these will become quite apparent.

There are eight different ways that Paul describes this intimate relationship with God. The differences are not so much in substance as they are in emphasis. The phrase "in Christ" places an emphasis on Jesus as "the Anointed one," "the Messiah."

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:1

In this verse, Paul established a definite connection between being "in Christ" and the faithfulness of the Ephesian Christians. Faithfulness is a by-product of being "in Christ." If we are going to be faithful, it will not be because of trying harder, but because we are "in Christ" and He is at work in our lives.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Ephesians 1:3

Paul has given us several insights here. Being "in Christ" is the intimate relationship in which God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing." "In Christ," we live on two plains. We live in the here and now on the earth. In this arena, we share the magnificent bounty of being "in Christ." At the same time, we are also participants "in the heavenly places." Here, again, we share the indescribable blessing of being "in Christ." This unique relationship of living and sharing in both spheres "in Christ" is shared by no one else except fellow believers.

With a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him Ephesians 1:10

As believers, we are participants in that intimate relationship with our Lord that Paul described as "in Christ." In this verse, he talked about "the summing up of all things in Christ." Paul's intent was to point out that the control of all things in heaven and earth is ultimately vested in Christ. We have an intimate, personal relationship with the one who single-handedly governs every feature and power in the universe. The greatness of His power is a source of great comfort to those who are "in Christ."

To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:12

As human beings, we are keenly aware of our limitations and weaknesses. In this verse, Paul suggests that this relationship, being "in Christ," is the foundation of the hope that is ours. In verses 13 and 14, Paul went on to say that this hope involves "being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This is a reference to the binding relationship with God mediated by the Holy Spirit. This eternal covenant guarantees our eternal presence with God and brings glory to Him. All this is involved in being "in Christ."

Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:20

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This is exciting! In previous verses, Paul described our "being in Christ." In this verse, Paul described a situation in which the Father is at work in Christ. Paul detailed this truth with two things:

- a. The Father raised Jesus from the dead.
- b. He seated Jesus at his right hand in heaven.

It is awe inspiring to reflect on the fact that at the same time the Creator of the universe is at work "in Christ," we too sustain a personal relationship with Him.

And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6

This is a continuation of the picture Paul painted in 1:20. There are two parallels in the verse. Just as the Father raised up Jesus from the dead; He will also raise us up. Again, just as He seated Jesus at His right hand, the place of supreme power, so we too will be seated with Him in heaven. This is a vital part of that intimate relationship of being "in Christ."

In order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7

Because we are "in Christ," God chooses to totally reveal to us the indescribable riches of His grace. This is a kindness He will bestow upon us in eternity because we are "in Christ."

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

"In Christ" our transformed lives are a divine creation. He designed this new life of ours to focus upon "good works" which He intended to be a lifestyle, a way of life for us. These are good works that come about because of our intense desire, not necessity. This intense desire is a divine creation. We desire to do good works because we are increasingly becoming like Jesus.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13

This relationship, "in Christ Jesus," totally transforms our lives. Once we were "far off," alienated from God. "In Christ Jesus," we have "been brought near," restored in fellowship through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. This describes the growing intensity of our fellowship with God, in Christ.

To be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, Ephesians 3:6

This is exciting. God used the Gospel to share with us the fact that we Gentiles have received a special relationship with Himself. It is expressed in three different ways:

1. "We are fellow heirs." Jesus is the "heir of all things." Along with the redeemed of "His chosen people," we are privileged to be equal partners with Jesus as "the heir of all things."
2. "We are fellow members of the body." This is another of Paul's images used to describe our relationship with Christ. We have this vital, essential relationship

THE CONCLUSION

with Christ much like the heart is an indispensable part of the human body. It is because we are "in Christ."

3. We are "partakers of the promise." Because we are Gentiles, we were not part of "the promise of God." Being "in Christ," we are as much partakers of the promise as the chosen people are. Though we were "aliens," still, "in Christ," the Father has agreed to be "our God" and has accepted us as "His people."

In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, Ephesians 3:10-11

"In Christ," we are a privileged people. In God's eternal purpose, He chose to use the church, those of us who are "in Christ," to reveal to those in authority, both on earth and in heavenly places, His eternal purpose as carried out "in Christ Jesus our Lord." In eternity before time, God provided that those "in Christ" should reveal His greatness and power to all who rule.

To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:21

God ordained that those "in Christ," those in the church, to be the vehicles, the means by which the indescribable glory of God would be made visible to those of all generations. What a privilege is ours!

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

"In Christ," God has forgiven us our sins. This, as we well know, is totally undeserved. Along with this, our transformed relationship "in Christ" is the foundation of a unique relationship with other believers. It involves being kind, tender hearted and forgiving of each other in a world where these qualities are rare if not non-existent.

The word "Lord" means "master." It is the word a slave used to refer to his owner. It suggests total control. More often than not, the master struck fear in the heart of the human beings he owned. Jesus invested this relationship with a whole new set of values and meanings.

The idea of service continued to be applicable. The thought of existing to accomplish the will of another was a vital part of our Lord/servant relationship. The difference was choice. The believer was servant because it gave him great joy and purpose to do so. Jesus was "Lord" by our desire, not by His physical or legal power. Having been brought into the family, we have chosen to make Him our "Lord."

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ephesians 6:1

Paul talked about "parents in the Lord." We take this to mean Paul referred to parents who were forgiven and actively participating in an intimate relationship with Christ as Lord of their lives. Paul described a relationship in which Christian parents and their Christian children are bound together in a unique, intimate relationship "in the Lord." The beauty of this is exciting. To be "in the Lord" is an indescribable ecstasy all its own. To share this

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exciting relationship with our believing children is an excitement beyond ecstasy, beyond the comprehension of human language.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Ephesians 6:10

Again, we are painfully aware of our weaknesses and limitations. In this verse, Paul described a vibrant relationship in which Jesus, in a unique way, is the source of our strength, no matter how weak we might be. We have the privilege of bringing "His might" to bear on all the problems and situations in life that are clearly beyond our limited strength. We are "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might," not in our own power or skill, because we are "in the Lord."

References to "in Him" are just another way of saying "in Christ." Again, it stresses a relationship, not a location.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love Ephesians 1:4

"In Him" is a reference to a relationship we share with Christ. Observe that being "in Him" is a result of divine choice. Despite our many weaknesses and our sordid experiences of spiritual failure, still God has chosen us to share this intimate relationship with Jesus.

The timing of this choice was "before the foundation of the world." Knowing in the great expanse before time just how weak and faltering we would one day be, still God chose to enter into this intimate, personal relationship with us.

Paul described the results of this intimate relationship as "that we might go on being holy and blameless" as a lifestyle rather than a single holy and blameless action. We are very clear that we cannot, by ourselves, be set apart for God in purity. "In Him" we can be holy.

We are called to a blameless way of life, but we cannot approach being "without blemish" much less make a lifestyle of such purity and committed devotion to God. What we cannot do, He will accomplish in our lives because we are "in Him."

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, Ephesians 1:7

Paul identified a difference between "redemption through His blood" and "forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace." The difference is more of emphasis than substance. Speaking of redemption, one emphasizes the work of Christ on the cross in restoring us to God's family. On the other hand, the "forgiveness of our trespasses" highlights the cancellation of our guilt and responsibility for a life and actions of sin.

Both of these benefits are the possession of those who are "in Him," "in Christ." This highlights another insight. Because those who are "in Him" are the recipients of God's redemption, the forgiveness of sins; it stands to reason that this intimate, personal relationship of being "in Him" is available to every believer. It is available to every believer, but this does not mean that they all avail themselves of this great gift. "In Him," that is "in Christ" God has made the "riches of His grace" available to all who believe.

Which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight Ephesians 1:8

"Which He lavished upon us," - The intimate relationship of being "in Him" is one of lavish abundance. It is God's joy to surround us with an abundance that defies measurement.

THE CONCLUSION

The word "lavish" describes both the extent of the gift as well as the joyful attitude in which it is presented.

"...In all wisdom and insight. He made known to us the mystery of His will." People of great power and wisdom tend to keep the secrets of their greatness to themselves. Sharing this intimate relationship of being "in Him," with us, God is eager to share with us the great mystery of His will. In order to do that, God must provide levels of wisdom and insight far beyond normal human grasp.

Though we have often faltered and failed, still God purposed "in Him" to display "His kind intentions" toward us. In these verses, Paul has painted a picture of the lavish generosity of God to those who are "in Him," "in Christ."

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

God wants us to possess a secure confidence concerning His promise of eternity. God gives us a legal guarantee of our future. This comes through the seal of the Holy Spirit as the pledge of our eternal inheritance. It is one thing to promise a great future. It is quite another thing to make good on that promise. God has given his Holy Spirit as a guarantee of the future of those who are "in Him."

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, Ephesians 4:15

One of the characteristics of this intimate relationship with God is that those who participate in it are deeply committed to "speaking the truth in love." They are determined to lovingly live a life of complete disclosure.

The rest of this lifestyle is that "we grow up in all aspects into Him." In this verse, Paul refers, again, to the image of the human body. We increasingly become a functional part of His body. We respond to His loving commands much as our hands and feet respond to the directions of our minds. The result is a smoothly running spiritual organism that functions as the human body does. The more we focus on living a life of total disclosure, the more like Him we become and the more securely we enter into a union with Him. What a privilege this is!

If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, Ephesians 4:21

Because God is infinite and we are finite, our penetrating discovery of His greatness is difficult at best. "Truth is in Jesus," and if we are ever to discover something of His greatness and wisdom, He must be our teacher. One of the magnificent blessings of being "in Him" is that He discloses His greatness and wisdom to those who share this personal, intimate relationship with Him.

When Paul speaks of something being "through Him," he focuses his attention on this relationship as being the means by which great things are accomplished on our behalf.

For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:18

BEING IN CHRIST

Because of who and what we are, we cannot possibly deserve a hearing before God. When Paul said, "through Him," he indicated that Christ is the means that opens access to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Looking at the reverse of this statement helps our understanding. Without this means of access, we have no opening for the Spirit to provide access to the Father on our behalf. Our intimate relationship with Christ enables us to convey our needs to the Father, who is able and eager to meet every need.

Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, Ephesians 2:20

In 2:19, Paul stressed that fact that we, "are of God's household." We are family. Paul used the image of a building to describe this intimate relationship. "Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." The word "cornerstone" is really the "keystone." This stone, in the arch, is what keeps all the stones in the archway. Remove the keystone and the arch will collapse. This intimate relationship with God is sustained and held together by God Himself.

In whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; Ephesians 2:21

Paul drew on the building image a second time. "In Christ" all the believers are part of the building. The idea of "being fitted together," was aptly chosen to describe the way individual Christians were fashioned into the life of the church. In this intimate relationship, God takes a group of believers and makes them "a holy temple," a place set apart for the worship of God. The intimate, personal relationship with God enables Him to use the lives of those who share this relationship to bring praise and glory to Himself.

In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22

Read the verse again. You will see the action of the trinity. "In Christ," separate, individual believers are formed together into a dwelling place for God. In that culture, dwelling together always suggested a harmonious relationship. Aside from this intimate relationship with God, this is not a possibility.

This takes place, "in the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the matrix, the forming center in which those in this intimate relationship with Christ are formed and shaped in order to be favored as a divine dwelling place.

And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Ephesians 4:24

Paul spoke carefully, but with uncanny beauty when he said, "in the likeness of God." Again, "likeness" might better be translated "according to." In this intimate relationship, God has taken the broken person we were prior to our redemption and remade us according to the pattern of Himself. This new person we have become, because of our intimate, personal relationship with God, is identifiable because it is characterized by righteousness, and "holiness of the truth." This relationship with God creates a beautiful character within us we could never achieve for ourselves.

THE CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is harmoniously active in this intimate personal relationship with God. The Spirit is the one who carries out the molding, transforming work God wants to accomplish in our lives.

Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; Ephesians 3:5

God is not satisfied with a relationship in which those with whom He shares have no understanding of that relationship and its characteristics. He shares with us in this intimate relationship. Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to understand, to grasp "the mystery of Christ" which without His teaching would be totally incomprehensible to us.

In effect, the message of this epistle, and of this intimate relationship, can be summed up in simple terms. God, in Christ, has ransomed these Ephesian believers out of a life of debauchery, wickedness and destruction. The forces of evil will do everything within their power to destroy this new-found faith. The solution to this dilemma is to be found in a personal, intimate relationship with God in Christ. It transforms all our actions and relationships and enables us to stand firm in our faith.