

C4 - Studies in the Epistles Ephesians

Study 1 - Blessings in Christ

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians Chapters 1 and 2

KEY VERSE:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 1: 3

As we discovered in C3 Study 1, the Apostle Paul, went to Ephesus during his third missionary journey and stayed there for almost three years. (See **Acts 19: 1, 8-10; 20: 17, 18, 31**) During that time, many people became Christians, and a church came into being. This letter was written towards the end of his life whilst in prison in the city of Rome, because of his faith in Christ. It tells us why we need to become Christians and also how God wants us to live the Christian life.

A. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1: 1 - 14

The moment we receive Christ as our Lord and Saviour the following become ours:

- We are blessed by God with SPIRITUAL THINGS. (**verse 3**) They are ‘spiritual’ blessings, because they deal with ‘heavenly’ issues which apply to our ‘inner’ life for our enjoyment.
- These blessings were all planned for us by God, long ago. (**verse 4**)
- His purpose was that those who were His enemies might be brought into His family with all the status and privilege of being His children. (**verse 5**) (See also **1 John 3: 1-3**)

- We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and had our sins forgiven because of the **“riches of His grace”**. (**verse 7**) The word ‘grace’ tells us we did not deserve to be so blessed nor could have achieved them by our own efforts.
- We have an understanding of God’s plan for the future. The Lord Jesus Christ will, ultimately, have control of things in Heaven as well as on earth. (**verses 9-10**)
- We have been **“sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”** who is the guarantee of our spiritual inheritance. (**verses 13, 14**)

B. PAUL’S FIRST PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIANS AT EPHESUS

Ephesians 1: 15-23

- **Verse 17** - that you may know the Lord better.
- **Verse 18** - that you may know the hope to which He has called you.
- **Verse 19** - and **“the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe.”**
- In **verses 20-23** Paul states that this is the same power which was demonstrated in the resurrection and enthronement of the Lord Jesus in Heaven.

C. A BACKWARD LOOK

Ephesians 2: 1-3

In these verses Paul gives a description of people before Christ saved them. Before salvation they were spiritually dead because of our sins, (**verse 1**), following the ways of the world and the devil, (**verse 2**) and fulfilling the desires of our sinful nature. (**verse 3**)

D. THE EMPHASIS UPON GOD INTERVENING

Ephesians 2: 4-10

- **Verses 4-5** tell us of God’s great love, rich mercy, and grace. He **“made us alive together with Christ”**. We are no longer spiritually dead!
- **Verses 6, 8** - He has **“raised us up”** and **“saved”** us.
- **Verse 10** - We now enjoy a new life far better than the previous one. No longer under the condemnation of God, we are able to fulfil the purpose of our salvation.

E. BROUGHT NEAR THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Ephesians 2: 11-22

- **Verses 11-17** – We are reconciled and now at peace with God.
- **Verse 18** – We are brought into a new relationship with God.
- **Verse 19** – We are members of the household of God.
- **Verse 20** - We are built on a wonderful foundation.
- **Verses 21-22** – We are a **“holy temple”**. A dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

Without Christ we are dead, separate from God and without hope. (**2: 12**) Think of all the blessings we have, if we are ‘in Christ’!



Ancient Ephesus

C4 - Studies in the Epistles Ephesians

Study 2 - Unity in Christ

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians 3: 1 - 4: 16

KEY VERSES:

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory...”

Ephesians 3: 20, 21

A. CHAPTER 3: 1-21

1. PAUL EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY

Verses 1-6

By ‘mystery’ is meant, NOT something mysterious, BUT something previously hidden but now revealed for all to understand.

In **verses 1-5**, Paul is saying that teaching never heard before was revealed to him by God through the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6 explains this particular mystery. It is the fact that Gentiles who become Christians have the same privileges as Jews who become Christians and are united together in the body of Christ.



2. PAUL IS ENABLED TO PREACH

Verses 7-13

In **verse 8** he states that God has appointed him to preach **“to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”**. He has spoken about **“riches”** of mercy and grace in **chapter 2. Verse 10** explains that **“through the church”** even the angelic beings and heavenly powers are learning about **“the manifold wisdom of God”**. (See also

1 Corinthians 11: 10) The people who were enemies of God and of each other, are now displaying the wisdom of God in an ungodly world, and to **“the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places”**. (**verse 10**)

3. PAUL ENGAGES IN PRAYER A SECOND TIME

Verses 14-21

In these verses Paul turns from preaching to prayer. The content of his prayer:

- For strength (**verse 16**) - in the inner being, i.e. where God is working.
- For love (**verse 17**) - a sure foundation for life.
- For maturity in the love of Christ. (**verses 18, 19**)

These things should have priority in our prayer life!

B. CHAPTER 4: 1-16

1. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Verses 1-6

Here is a seven-fold unity made and sustained by God. It is a spiritual unity. It is not man-made and cannot be broken by human beings.

1. **“There is one Body”**. The old distinctions between Jews and Gentiles are abolished. All true believers, from every race are ONE in Christ. They are joined to Him as the Head, and are under His control, rule and guidance.
2. **“And one Spirit”**. All are personally indwelt by the same Holy Spirit.
3. **“You were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.”** All share one inheritance. All will one day share the same eternal glory. (**Philippians 3: 20** and **1 Peter 1: 4**) Natural hope sometimes dies but Christian hope never can!
4. **“One Lord.”** All serve one Lord. See **Acts 2: 36** and **Acts 9: 6**
5. **“One Faith.”** All possess a great treasure in **“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** (**Jude 3**)
6. **“One Baptism.”** Baptism is Christ’s command and has been practised by Christians ever since. (**Matthew 28: 19**)
7. **“One God and Father of all, who is over all,** (His pre-eminence) **and through all** (His power) **and in all”**. (His presence)

2. GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH – THE BODY OF CHRIST

Verses 7-16

The provider of spiritual gifts is Christ. (**verses 7-10**)

The gifts are varied. (**verse 11**)

They are for building up the Church, equipping it and bringing it to maturity. (**verses 12, 13**)

As each member of the Church operates according to the ‘gift’ or ‘ability’ that God has given, so the Church develops and becomes strong. (See **verses 14-16**)

Answer Sheet

C4 - Studies in the Epistles

Ephesians

Study 1 - Blessings in Christ

Return address on back of answer sheet

Name: _____

Address: _____

1. Read again *Chapter 1: 3-4* and list four spiritual blessings that we receive when we trust in the Lord Jesus.

i) _____ ii) _____
 iii) _____ iv) _____

 /4

2. Express in your own words, what the Lord Jesus did to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven. (Read 1: 7) _____

 /2

3. What three things does Paul want the Christians to know? (see 1: 17- 19)

i) _____
 ii) _____
 iii) _____

 /3

4. In *Chapter 2* Paul contrasts the life of a Christian and a non-Christian. Tick the column to which these descriptions belong:

	A Christian	A non-Christian
Dead towards God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alive towards God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saved through faith in Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depending on 'good works'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having no hope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

 /5

5. What does Paul mean when he says "you ...were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked"? (See 2: 1) _____

 /2

6. Gentiles, non-Jews, were regarded by the Jews as not belonging to God's chosen people, without God and without hope. Which verse in *chapter 2* tells us this?

 /1

7. What difference has the death of Christ made to the Jews who were "near" to God and the Gentiles who were "far off" from God? (see 2: 16-19)

 /4

8. In these chapters, the church in its relationship to Christ, is viewed in two ways.

a) What are they? (see 1: 22-23 and 2: 20-22) _____
 b) In what way is Christ related to each of these? _____

 /4

THINK: Reflect on the spiritual blessings that you have received as a Christian (1: 3-4) and thank God for His work in your life.

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

C4 - Studies in the Epistles

Ephesians

Study 2 - Unity in Christ

CHAPTER 3

1. What is the secret, or mystery, about which Paul writes? (3: 6) _____
_____ /2
2. How does Paul explain his calling in verses 7-9? _____
_____ /3
3. What are the angelic rulers (*“rulers and authorities in the heavenly places”*) learning from the church? (see 3: 10)

_____ /2
4. Read again Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian Christians. (3: 16-19) and list four things that Paul prays for them.
i) _____ ii) _____
iii) _____ iv) _____ /4
5. Look at 3: 19-21. How would you describe the extent of God’s love, power and glory?

_____ /2

CHAPTER 4

6. Answer the following:
 - a) Read **verses 2-3** and list four of the qualities which should characterise Christians.
i) _____ ii) _____
iii) _____ iv) _____
 - b) Give a practical example of how a Christian can *“maintain the unity of the Spirit”*. (verse 3)

_____ /6
7. Since His ascension Christ has given various gifts to the church e.g. evangelists, pastors, teachers etc. In your own words explain what is the purpose of this? (see 4: 11–13)

_____ /3
8. Paul goes back to the thought of the church being *“the body of Christ.”* (4: 14-15) How will this body grow? (see verse 16) _____
_____ /3

THINK: How does Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians challenge you personally in your own prayer life?

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

C4 - Studies in the Epistles

Ephesians

Study 3 - The Christian's Walk

1. The phrase *"put off"* (4: 22) is followed by behaviours which characterise an unsaved life. Read verses 25-29 and list three aspects of the former life which a Christian should *"put off"*. _____

/3

2. Explain, as clearly as you can, why these should be *"put off"*.

/3

3. In what ways do we *"grieve the Holy Spirit"*? (4: 30)

/3

4. In what positive ways should we behave, according to Paul? (4: 32)

/3

5. Read 4: 32 and 5: 2 again:

a) What has God done for us in 4: 32? _____

b) What has Christ done for us in 5: 2? _____

c) How should these facts regulate our attitudes and behaviour? _____

/5

6. Read *chapter 4: 17; chapter 5: 2, 8, 15*.

a) What word is found in all four verses? _____

b) What does this word mean in this context or setting? _____

/3

7. This study deals with contrast - light and darkness, old self and new self.

a) Which verse deals with the subject of light and darkness? _____

b) Which verse deals with the subject of old self and new self? _____

/2

8. Write a verse from the Bible Reading, including the reference, which you think summarises how Christians ought to behave. Write a sentence justifying your choice.

/3

THINK: Does your life reflect the new self? Use the characteristics in *Ephesians 4 and 5* as a checklist. Ask God for His help to live each day to please Him.

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

C4 - Studies in the Epistles

Ephesians

Study 4 - Relationships and Warfare

1. Sum up, in your own words, how each person should behave in each of the following relationships:

- a) Wives and husbands _____
- b) Children and parents _____
- c) Slaves and masters _____

 /6

2. In giving teaching to wives and husbands, Paul uses as an example Christ and the church. (5: 22-26)

- a) In this example who is the 'husband'? _____
- b) What did this 'husband' do? _____

 /2

3. The principles of 6: 5-9 are good principles for employees and employers today. How could a Christian apply them to the workplace today? If relevant, use your own experience. _____

 /4

4. Read the short letter of Paul to his friend Philemon. Express, in your own words, how Paul asked the master, Philemon, to behave towards his former slave, Onesimus, in *Philemon 1 :15-19*. _____

 /3

5. The Christian life is a battle.

- a) According to **verse 12**, against what do we fight? _____
- b) Fill in the information about the armour in the grid below. The first one is done for you.

 /2

Piece of armour	Full name in Ephesians 6	Purpose
Breastplate	of righteousness	It protects a Christian by covering them with Christ's righteousness so that the devil cannot make them feel unworthy.
Shield		
Helmet		
Sword		

 /6

6. In your own words, express what Paul wanted the Christians at Ephesus to pray for, according to 6: 19, 20. _____

 /2

THINK: Paul instructs the Ephesians to put on "*the whole armour of God*" in **verse 11** and again in **verse 13**, with the result of being enabled to "*stand firm*." Am I implementing this important command in my Christian life?

C4 - Studies in the Epistles Ephesians

Study 3 - The Christian's Walk

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians 4: 17 – 5: 21

KEY VERSE:

**“For at one time you were darkness,
but now you are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light.”**

Ephesians 5: 8

Paul continues to describe the new standards which are expected of those belonging to **“the body of Christ.”** He writes with the authority of the Lord Jesus, as one of His apostles. See **Chapter 4: 17 “Now this I say and testify in the Lord...”**

LIVE A LIFE THAT IS DIFFERENT

(Ephesians 4: 17-32)

Verses 17-19 “you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do.” He then describes features of people’s lives who live without God. Do you recognise this lifestyle where you live? Their thoughts are worthless because their minds are dark. They have not the life which God gives; they are ignorant and stubborn and have lost all sense of shame; they give themselves over to vice and all kinds of wickedness. (Read **verses 17-19** again.) For so many people this description is simply ‘the norm’.

Christians must be different! They follow Christ’s way, for He is their Lord. All this calls for a radical change in lifestyle! Paul’s command is to **“put off your old self” (verse 22)** and **“put on the new self...” (verse 24)** The following verses explain what this means in everyday living.

- No more lying. (**verse 25**)
- Deal with your anger correctly. (**verse 26**)
- No more stealing - be honest and useful. (**verse 28**)
- Don’t grieve the Holy Spirit. (make God’s Spirit sad) (**verse 30**)
- Get rid of bitterness, passion, evil speaking, and wickedness. (**verse 31**)

Verse 32 expresses very positively how Christians should live: **“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you”.**

LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE AND HOLINESS

(Ephesians 5: 1-21)

Verses 1-2 - Love is to be the main feature of a Christian’s life. The love of the Lord Jesus is the great pattern for us. We can be sure that when God commands, (**verse 1**) He provides the strength we need.

Verses 3-7 - We are to live a life of purity. Instead of living self-indulgent and lustful lives, we are to be marked by self-sacrifice and genuine love. For a Christian, all sexual intercourse outside the context of marriage is forbidden.

Verse 4 - Obscene, profane, and vulgar talk is out of place for the Christian. All God’s gifts including sex, are subjects for thanksgiving rather than joking.

Verse 6 - Because many people get away with an immoral life on earth, it doesn’t mean they will escape detection, conviction and **“the wrath of God”.**

Verses 8-14 - Live as children of light.

Light and darkness do not mix. When conversion to Christ takes place, our thinking is illuminated and so is the way we live. When righteousness, goodness and truth are seen in a person’s life, the impact upon those we meet is considerable. Read **Philippians 2: 15**.

Verses 15-21 - Live wisely.

Verse 15 - Wisdom is available - ask for it! (**James 1: 5**)

Verse 16 - We are accountable for how we use our time.

Verse 17 - We should make it our aim to do **“the will of the Lord”** in our lives.

Verse 18 - Drunkenness was a problem in Paul’s world and is still a massive problem today. The antidote is - Be filled (controlled) with the Spirit of God, not an excess of wine.

Being filled with the Spirit will lead to:

- fellowship through repeating truth (**“addressing one another in psalms and hymns...” verse 19**)
- worship (**“singing to the Lord... with your heart” verse 19**)
- gratitude (**“giving thanks always for everything to God” verse 20**)

This Study is full of practical teaching. Paul gives equal emphasis to doctrine and practical Christian living. As James says in his letter, **“faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”.** (**James 2: 17**)



C4 - Studies in the Epistles Ephesians

Study 4 - Relationships and Warfare

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians 5: 22 - 6: 24

KEY VERSE:

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”

Ephesians 6: 18

A CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

(Ephesians 5: 22 to 6: 9)

Wives (5: 22–24, 33)

“Submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” As Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, so the man is the head of the woman. As the Church should submit to the Lord Jesus, so wives should submit to their own husbands. Christ cares for and protects His people. A man who does this for his wife fulfils God's will, and will gain his wife's respect, so that God's command to her is not burdensome. **(verse 33)**

Husbands (5: 25-33)

“Love your wives” This thought is emphasised three times! **(verses 25, 28, 33)** Five active verbs are used of Christ's commitment to the Church. He loves her, gave Himself up for her, sanctifies and cleanses her, that He might present her to Himself. The standard God sets is very high! Husbands are to love their wives in the same committed way that Christ loved the Church.

Children (6: 1-3)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” Here is God's order for the Christian home. The very opposite marks **“the last days”**. **(2 Timothy 3: 1-2)** At 12 years of age, the Lord Jesus was obedient to Mary and Joseph, setting for us the perfect example. **(Luke 2: 51)**

Parents (6: 4)

Expressed negatively the instruction is – **“Do not provoke your children.”** Hasty actions can be harmful! Positively, it is important to train, instruct and discipline them in the Lord.

Slaves (6: 5-8)

“Obey your earthly masters.” Many households had slaves in those days. A high standard was expected from

slaves who were Christians. As employees we should always seek to do our best, as if we were doing each task for the Lord Himself!

Masters (6: 9)

“Do the same things to them.” Employers should give the same consideration to their employees as they would expect if they were in their position.

A CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE:

(Ephesians 6: 10-24)

The Enemy (6: 10-12)

Paul now turns his attention to the conflict which all Christians face - a spiritual battle against God's enemy, the Devil **(verse 11)** and the associated **“spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”** **(verse 12)** The Bible uses a variety of names for this powerful enemy. The devil is also known as **“Satan”** **(Mark 1: 13)**, **“the god of this world”** **(2 Corinthians 4: 4)**, and **“the prince of the power of the air”**. **(Ephesians 2: 2)** We can only be victorious **“in the Lord, and in the strength of His might”**. **(verse 10)**

The Christian's Armour (6: 13-20)

1. The belt of truth. **(verse 14)**. Christ is the Truth **(John 14: 6)** so a Christian can have complete confidence in Him. It follows from this that a Christian should be without hypocrisy, insincerity, or compromise.
2. The breastplate of righteousness. **(verse 14)** The Christian's 'heart' or seat of love and commitment towards God, needs constant protection. The devil cannot touch those who are covered with Christ's righteousness.
3. The sandals of peace. **(verse 15)** Military sandals gave a good grip for steady walking. If we have received the good news and enjoy peace with God and others, we should also be ready to share the gospel.
4. The shield of faith. **(verse 16)** This is easily manoeuvred to combat arrows. It can protect each part of the body. Faith in God must operate in each part of our lives.
5. The helmet of salvation. **(verse 17)** An unprotected mind is a ready prey to Satan's deceptions, delusions, and defilements. (See **Philippians 4: 6-9**)
6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. **(verse 17)** This is the only offensive weapon mentioned here. The Lord Jesus used 'the sword of the Spirit' in His temptation. Three times He repelled Satan by saying, **“It is written...”**. **(Matthew 4: 4, 7, 10)**

Finally, Paul stresses the need to be **“Praying at all times in the Spirit.”** **(verse 18)**. This will ensure that use of the armour is effective in the Christian's own life. It means being prompted and guided by Him, praying at all times - regularly and constantly and **“for all the saints.”** **(verse 18)**, meaning all other Christians. Prayer keeps us on the alert and needs perseverance!

This is the first of three units on Paul's Letters to Churches.