

Ephesians

Session 1

To best understand and apply correct meaning to the letter of Ephesians we first need to look at the context or situation for the letter.

Context or Situation

What do we know about the situation at Ephesus? Read **Acts 18:18-21**

What do we know was happening in Ephesus at the time of Paul's missionary journey there? Read **Acts 19:5-10**

What else happened in Ephesus when they heard and saw things concerning the Kingdom of God? Read **Acts 19:18-20**

What was the spiritual situation in Ephesus? Read **Acts 19:26-28**

What was Paul concerned about that would happen after he was gone? Read **Acts 20:28-30**

What did the risen Jesus declare had happened to the saints in Ephesus? Read **Revelation 2:1-7**

Themes

What are two main themes in the letter of Ephesians?

1: _____

2: _____

What relationships - established in God's love - are in the letter of Ephesians? Read **Ephesians 1:4, 2:4, 3:19, 5:2 and 5:25**

Read **Ephesians 3:19; 5:2 and 5:25**

Read **Ephesians 1:15, 4:2, 4:15-16 and 5:2**

Read **Ephesians 2:11-14**

Read **Ephesians 5:25, 5:28 and 5:33**

Read **Ephesians 6:1-4**

Read **Ephesians 6:1-9**

Read **Ephesians 3:17 and 6:23**

Relationships - God Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Christ and the Church, Christ, the church and the powers, Gentile and Jew, man and woman, children and parents, slave and master.

The Writer and Receiver

Who wrote Ephesians? Read **Ephesians 1:1** _____

Who was the letter written to? Read **Ephesians 1:1**

Why do most agree that Ephesians is a letter to churches in the region where Ephesus is the capital?

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

Outline

The letter to the Saints in Ephesus can be divided into two halves..Chapters 1—3 and 4—6. In the first half the writer reveals the identity of those in Christ Jesus - revealing time past, time now and time future inheritance. In the second half the writer reveals the practical outworking of the inheritance for those in Christ Jesus and what it is to live in the Kingdom of God in time now, in this world damaged by evil.

Paul's greeting of grace **1:1-2**

Identity in Christ Jesus

God's plan and will in Christ Jesus**1:3–14**

Prayer for the Saints**1:15–19**

Power and authority with Christ **1:20-22**

Made alive in Christ **2:1–10**

Brought near, by His blood, one in Christ**2:11–22**

The mystery of Christ's body **3:1–13**

Prayer for the Saints **3:14-21**

Living in the Kingdom of God (In a world damaged by evil)

To live in the Kingdom of God, in time now, in this world damaged by evil **4:1–6**

The old man and new man **4:7- 5:21**

Relationships **5:22–6:9**

Put on God's full armour **6:10–20**

Paul's salutation of grace **6:21–24**

Read **1:9-10**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

What is God's will and plan that He has revealed to us?

Who is the one who restores harmony, shalom (perfect peace) to all the universe, both in heaven and on earth?

What are the two areas or domains that are gathered together in one in Christ?

Who created the heavens and the earth? Read **Genesis 1:1** _____

What does Ephesians say about things in heaven? Read **1:3**

Read **1:10**

Read **1:20**

Read **2:6**

Read **3:10**

Read **3:15**

Read **4:10**

Read **6:9**

Read **6:12**

What does Ephesians say about the things on earth? Read **1:10**

Read **3:15**

Read **4:9**

Who is the supreme power and authority over both places?

Ephesians teaches much about the Kingdom of God and the power and authority given to all the saints living on earth in time now, in this world damaged by evil.

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Session 2

Identity in Christ Jesus - Accepted as I Am

Read **Ephesians 1:3-14**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss the things listed in this Bible passage verse by verse.

What has God the Father given us (time past), so in time now we already possess? Read **verse 3**

Where is this blessing?

Who are we in and one with, to receive all this?

In time now, as Christ is seated in a place of authority in the heavenly places, so are we. In time now, as Christ is, we have every spiritual blessing. The next verses outline some of the details of these blessings.

Who are we in Christ (in time now), given to us by God the Father (in time past)? Make it personal and write I am before your answer. Read **verses 4-5**

Who are we in Christ(in time now), given to us by God the Father (in time past)? Make it personal and write I am before your answer. Read **verses 7-8**

Who are we in Christ (in time now), given to us by God the Father (in time past)? Make it personal and write I have before your answer. Read **verse 11**

Who are we in Christ (in time now), given to us by God the Father (in time past)? Make it personal and write I am before your answer. Read **verses 13-14**

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Prayer for the Saints

Read **Ephesians 1:15-19**

What does the Apostle Paul pray for the saints?

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Power and Authority

Read **Ephesians 1:21-23**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

How much power and authority does Jesus have in time now and time future? Read **verse 21**

How is God's power seen?

Who is the fullness of Jesus? Read **verse 23**

Who is the fullness of all believers who received Jesus' flesh and blood sacrifice of Himself?

Who is the body of Christ?

Who are Christ's feet?

What happened in time past?

Who in time now has been transferred into Christ's domain of power and authority over the flesh and the powers?

Who in time future will be perfect in the image of Christ?

For **whose** benefit has all God's power been working?

Made Alive in Christ

Read **Ephesians 2:1-10**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

What do we have in Christ Jesus in time now? Read **verses 5-6**

Why did God make us alive and raise us up to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ's power and authority? Read **verses 4-7**

How does God protect us from the pride? Read **verse 8-9**

What are we in Christ? Read **verse 10**

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Session 3

Brought Near, by His Blood One in Christ Jesus

Read **Ephesians 2:11-22**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

Who are now one in Christ Jesus? Equal, equal. Read **2:11-18**

How has God brought Gentiles and Jews together as one, equal, equal?

Who are being built together in Christ Jesus? Read **2:19-22**

What does being built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets mean?

Who is the 'chief cornerstone' or supports all the weight of the building (of the body of believers)?

Who is a holy temple, the dwelling place of God in the Spirit?

The Mystery of Christ's Body

Read **Ephesians 3:1-13**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

Ephesians 3:1-13

What is God's intention for the church? Read **verse 10**

When did God decide to bring all things in one in Jesus?

What do we have in Christ Jesus? Read **verse 12**

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Prayer for the Saints

Read **3:14-21**

What reason does the Apostle Paul bow His knees to the Father? Read **2:19-22** Read **1:9-10**

What does the Apostle Paul pray for all the saints?

Verse 16

Verse 17

Remember the Apostle Paul is talking to believers who as a result of receiving Jesus flesh and blood sacrifice of Himself have His Spirit within. The Apostle Paul is not praying that the Holy Spirit will not leave them, he is not praying they would receive His Spirit again, He is praying in the context of God's plan, that they know the love of Christ and in the revelation of who they are in Christ, they allow the Spirit within them to change them into the character of Jesus, living in victory over their flesh and the evil powers that are already defeated and under our feet.

This transforming power is linked to the Spirit of Christ dwelling in their hearts and the practical outworking of all this is revealed in relationships and outlined the next chapters.

Verse 18-19

His love is greater and more powerful than our flesh, our weaknesses, our amount of faith and understanding!

What are the saints rooted and grounded in?

Who is the only one who is able to do this work of love, truth and power in us? Read **verses 20-21**

In **whom** did God choose, in love, to reveal His glory and fullness?

Living in the Kingdom of God (in a World Damaged by Evil)

As we learnt His Spirit brings unity and peace, as both Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, equal-equal, as one body. **Ephesians 1:8-10**

What is the outworking or fruit of living in the reality of His Truth? Read **4:1-6**

Remember the vine? Jesus tree produces Jesus fruit.

The Old Man and New Man

Read **4:7-4:16**

Why did Jesus give gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to believers?

Read **verses 12 and 15 and 16**

Who is doing the work of ministry?

What brings sorrow to the Holy Spirit, in the context of Ephesians and God's plan of oneness in Christ? Read **verses 25-32**

What is the Apostle Paul's practical advice to the saints, for them to live in the reality of God's love? Read **verses 31-32**

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Session 4

Relationships

Read **Ephesians 5:1-14**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

What is the fruit of being surrendered to our Father's will, being immersed in His presence? Read **Verse 2**

What does the Apostle Paul declare over the saints that has no part of their identity anymore?

Verse 3

Verse 4

Who are the sons of disobedience?

What does the Apostle Paul mean when he writes in verse 7 'do not be partakers of with them' (the sons of disobedience)?

Read **Ephesians 5:15-20**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

What are wise and fruitful choices for the saints to make, living in this world damaged by evil? Read **verses 16-18**

What are the practical outworking of living in this reality? Read **verses 19-21**

What is the action we do?

Read **5:21-33**

To understand relationships in the Kingdom of God living in the world damaged by evil, we need to go back to the beginning.

What did God declare over His creation that included man and woman? Read **Genesis 1:31**

Read **Genesis 1:27-28**

In **whose** image did God create man?

In **whose** image did God create woman?

Who did God bless equally?

Who did God give equal dominion (power to rule) over all the earth?

Read **Genesis 2:18-20**

God refers to woman in this verse as a *helper comparable with man*. This means someone to come alongside, someone of the same kind of flesh, yet different. Someone equal with man, who together they can become one. Someone who completes man as a person created in God's image.

In the Old Testament of God's word, the word *helper* is mostly used in reference to God coming alongside man. In the New Testament of God's word, Jesus Himself refers to God's Spirit or presence as our *helper*.

Did God create man and woman equal or unequal?

Man and woman were God's masterpiece of all creation. Man (both male and female) received the breath of God, equal to each other, to complement each other and have an equal relationship with the Creator God and each other.

Man and woman were DESIGNED FOR GOOD...equal-equal.

Is today's world perfect?

Something happened to change God's perfect world. Remember God gave man and woman dominion over all the earth with the privilege to look after God's perfect world. He gave them everything to live victoriously with Him.

God created man and woman with a freedom to choose life or death, to choose to partake of God's wisdom and the tree of life, or choose to partake of the evil one's deception and partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What was the choice God gave man (both male and female)? Read **Genesis 2:8-9** and **Genesis 2:15-17**

Man and woman chose a relationship of distrust, distance and rejection of God's wisdom leading ultimately to death and ruin, rather than a relationship of trust, intimacy and receiving God's wisdom, leading ultimately to life and fruitfulness.

Read **Genesis 3:1-7** and **Genesis 3:16-17**

What is now the relationship between man and woman, equal or unequal?

Read **Genesis 4:7**

The word *desire* in this context as in **Genesis 3:16-17**

The word *rule* in this context as in **Genesis 3:16-17**

What does a woman damaged by evil now want to do to a man?

What does a man damaged by evil now want to do to a woman?

Man and woman are DAMAGED BY EVIL...unequal-unequal.

But the story does not end there. God in His great love came down into His own creation as a man of flesh and blood and, on the cross, takes upon Himself all the damage, disease, death and evil that entered this world as a result of man's offence. Jesus comes back to life, overcoming all the damage, disease, death and evil, restoring us for the better.

Man and woman are RESTORED FOR BETTER...equal-equal

Back to **Ephesians 5:21-33**

What is Paul's solution to man's flesh desire to dominate and woman's flesh desire to manipulate and control?

What relationship is Paul using to reveal God's great love and plan?

Man and woman are SENT TO HEAL...equal-equal

Why was **Ephesians 5:21-33** written?

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Session 5

Put on God's Full Armour

Read **6:10–18**

Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Group Discussion

Discuss your observations.

What does the Apostle Paul declare over the saints? Read **Verse 10**

Who is the source of this strength?

What is the armour or weaponry of God in which we are clothed to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verses 14-18**?

Paul's Salutation of Grace

Read **6:21–24**

What is the one thing you learn about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

Personal Commitment
