

# Kingdom of God Ephesians Bible Study Manual

To understand God's intended meaning in Paul's letter to the Ephesians we need to discover the context and situation at the time it was written.

## Context or Situation

What do we know about the situation in Ephesus? Read **Acts 18:18–21**

Paul's (second missionary journey, left Priscilla (a woman) and Aquila (a man) to continue the ministry there.

Upon Paul's return to Ephesus what was the situation there? Read **Acts 19:5–10**

People were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon them. They spoke in tongues and prophesied. Paul reasoned and persuaded the Jews concerning the Kingdom of God and many believed. However, there were some who became stubborn, continued in their unbelief and actively opposed the gospel of Jesus Christ speaking out against Him in the synagogue.

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

A vast number believed and came confessing their deeds. Many of those who practised magic burnt their magic books as a public declaration of their belief in the Lord Jesus.

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

People worshipped man-made idols. There was a temple for worship of the goddess Diana/Artemis. Demetrius claimed that all of Asia worshipped her. It was a highly-charged spiritual environment.

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

Paul was concerned that savage wolves (false teachers) would come and speak perverse things, to draw away the disciples of Jesus to themselves.

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

Who is talking? Read **Revelation 1:18–20**

They had rejected evil, tested some apostles as liars, persevered, had patience, laboured for Jesus and not become weary. They were doing good works in His name, yet lost their first love. Their first love is their intimacy and knowledge of Jesus' love for them and for one another.

At the beginning of this letter Jesus said His presence is with them. His essence, His Spirit, walking amongst them. In His love He is holding them with all His might and power, sustaining them.

Yet their intimate relationship with Jesus has been lost. Not by Jesus as His love never changes. They have lost their revelation of Jesus and His love for them, which as a result they have lost their love of others. In fact the church had lost its effectiveness as a witness of His love.

They no longer have a revelation of His presence in their midst, even though He is there. Nor do they have a reality of how much Jesus loves them. Instead of their relationship with Jesus having first place in their life, the works for Jesus have taken first place. The works for Jesus have in fact replaced Jesus. Yes they left their first love.

Love to be perfected needs to be received and reciprocated. Christ's love for us is complete when we know God's love for us, receive His love and as a result of His work and love in us and through us, we love others in Christ's love. As we love others Christ's love is then complete.

## Themes

To understand the amazing love of God and how He communicates to the first listeners according to their belief and culture, we need to identify the key themes of the letter. Remembering the spiritual environment in which the first listeners lived (Acts 19:26–28). What are two main themes in the letter of Ephesians? Read **Ephesians 1:19-21**, **2:1-2**, **3:20-21** and **6:10**

Theme 1: Power

Who has the power over all things and who does He give it to? Read **Ephesians 1:19-21**

God the Father who has given it all to Jesus.

Who works the power of evil in this world? Read **Ephesians 2:1-2** and **Ephesians 6:12**

The prince of the power of the air (satan) and his spiritual hosts of wickedness located in the spiritual realm.

To which powers does the church display God's wisdom and plan? Read **Ephesians 3:9-11**

The principalities and powers in the heavenly places. (The spiritual realm).

Who does Jesus strengthen and give power to? **Ephesians 6:10**

Brethren (Disciples of Jesus).

Theme 2: Relationships in the Kingdom of God - Established in God's love

In whose love are relationships of love possible? **Ephesians 6:23**

Love from God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 1:3-4**

God the Father and Jesus, God the Father and us, Jesus and us.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 2:4**

God the Father and us.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 3:19**

Love of Christ Jesus.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 5:2**

Christ Jesus love for us.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 1:15, 4:2, 4:15-16 and 5:2**

Disciples of Jesus' love for one another.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 2:11-14**

Jesus bringing together in one the believing Gentile and believing Jew (disciples of Jesus).

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 5:25, 5:28 and 5:33**

Jesus' gave of Himself to us because He so loves. Disciples of Jesus who are husbands, in knowing and receiving the love of Christ Jesus, through His love within them, they ought to love for their wives with the sacrificial love of Christ.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 6:1-4**

Disciples of Jesus - 1: children knowing and receiving God's love should obey their parents.

2: Father's are not to provoke their children to anger as they know and have received the received the love of Christ.

What relationship is in this passage of scripture? Read **Ephesians 6:5-9**

Disciples of Jesus whether slave or master out of knowing and receiving God's love treat each other equal in love. In the time of writing there was a social hierarchy that included slaves and masters. God does not approve of such hierarchical structures, however when they receive God's love and with a surrendered heart treat each other equally. As a result hierarchical structures no longer have any significance.

Relationships - God Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Christ Jesus and the Church, 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** The Apostle Paul.

Who was the letter written to? Read **Ephesians 1:1** Saints in Ephesus.

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

1: Some manuscripts lack the words in Ephesus.

2: The Apostle Paul does not mention personal references, specific to his time in Ephesus.

3: The Apostle Paul uses general phrases such as referring to the church as the body of Christ as a whole, and not to a specific local church situation.

## 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. The letter has a construction to it. The introduction of the letter is Paul's greeting.

What does Paul say is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? Read **Ephesians 1:1–2**

Grace (undeserved, unlearned favour) and peace (perfect peace body, soul, spirit emotions).

Read **Ephesians 1:9–10**

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

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

In the fullness of time all things are one, bringing together with no separation in Christ, both which is in the heavenly realm and in the earthly realm and under the earth.

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

Jesus.

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

Heaven and earth.

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

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

A place of abundant blessing.

Read **Ephesians 1:10**

In Christ all things which are in heaven, the place of blessing will be one with all things on earth. This reaffirms that heaven, the place of abundant blessing, which we have access now in Christ as believers, to know that we live in the fullness of that reality when heaven and earth are united.

Read **Ephesians 1:20**

A place where God the Father and the risen Christ Jesus are. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father in the position of the highest power and authority.

Read **Ephesians 2:6**

A place where we are in Christ Jesus and seated with Him in a position of power and authority.

Read **Ephesians 3:14–15** (NKJV)

Where there is a family named after Jesus.

Read **Ephesians 4:10**

Where Jesus ascended to after His resurrection.

Read **Ephesians 6:9**

Jesus is in heaven.

What does Ephesians say about the heavenlies? Read **Ephesians 3:10**

A place where the church makes known the wisdom of God.

Read **Ephesians 6:12**

A place where the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual hosts of wickedness are. We are seated with Christ in power and authority.

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

All things on earth will be gathered together under the authority of Christ with all things in heaven.

Read **Ephesians 3:14–15** (NKJV)

Where there is a family named after Jesus.

Read **Ephesians 4:9**

Jesus descended into the earth when He died.

Who is the supreme power and authority over both places?

Jesus

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?

## Identity in Christ Jesus – Accepted as I Am

Read **Ephesians 1:3–14**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss the things listed in this Bible passage verse by verse.

What in time now do we already possess as a result of God the Father giving us Jesus Christ?

Read **verse 3**

Christ Jesus our Lord so that we can receive every spiritual blessing.

Where is this blessing?

In the heavenly places.

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

Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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Who are we in Christ (in time now)? Make it personal and write 'I am' before your answer.

Read **verses 4–5**

I am chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

I am holy and without blame before Him in love.

I am predestined, adopted as first born sons (as Jesus), according to the good pleasure of the Father's will.

Who are we in Christ in time now? Make it personal and write 'I am' before your answer.

Read **verse 6**

I am accepted in the beloved. That is the most loved. As the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased.

Who are we in Christ in time now? Make it personal and write 'I am' before your answer.

Read **verse 7**

I am in Him.

I am redeemed through His blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Who are we in Christ in time now? Make it personal and write 'I have' and 'I am' before your answer. Read **verse 11**

I have an inheritance.

I am predestined according to His purpose.

Who are we in Christ in time now? Make it personal and write 'I am' before your answer.

Read **verses 13–14**

I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

I am guaranteed of my inheritance.

I am the purchased possession.

I am to the praise of His glory.

It is like when someone creates something beautiful that causes us to praise the creator. So we bring praise to God because of what He has done. What is the one thing you have learnt about God from this session?

What is your practical response/prayer?

## Prayer for the Saints

Remember the Apostle Paul has already affirmed what Jesus has done and who we are in Him. However, Paul prays for them in a powerful way that builds on the foundation of Jesus and is relevant for every disciple in their daily walk with Him.

Read **Ephesians 1:15–20**

Who does the Apostle Paul pray to? Read **verse 17**

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

What does the Apostle Paul pray for the saints? Read **verse 17**

Spiritual wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

Read **verse 18**

The eyes of their understanding are enlightened (that is the deepest thoughts including imagination); that they know the hope of their calling (we are the hope of His calling); the riches of His glory inheritance in the saints (how greatly prized they are as his treasured possession).

That we may live in the spirit of wisdom and revelation. This is from the Father, through Jesus our Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read **verse 19–20**

That they will understand the incredible greatness of His power of the Father toward us who believe, which raised Christ Jesus from the dead. What does the content of Paul's prayer mean to you?

That Paul didn't pray for their circumstances to change but that he prayed for their revelation and understanding to be transformed to fully know Him and live in His victory. The Father's power which is exceedingly great. His power toward us.

## Power and Authority

Read **Ephesians 1:21–23**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss your observations.

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

Highest power and authority. Above all principality, power, might, dominion and everything that is named.

God's power is seen in Christ: (1) Christ's resurrection, (2) Christ's exaltation (3) the subjection of the powers to Him, and (4) and Christ's being given as a gift by God to be head of the church.

Together with Christ all things will be in Him, united and equal under Him, that is satan, the evil powers and our flesh we have power over not other people. We are all equal before God.

Who having all power and authority is gifted to the church? Read **verse 22–23**

Jesus.

Who is the body of Jesus Christ?

We are the church.



Who are the feet of Christ? Read **verse 22-23**

We the church.

Who is the head of the body?

Jesus.

The head can never be separated from the body and the body can never be separated from the head. The two are one.

What happened in time past? Read **verse 20-21**

Christ was raised from the dead and seated in the heavenly places, exalted in the highest place of honour and authority far above principalities and powers.

Who in time now has been transferred into Christ's domain of power and authority over the flesh and the powers? Read **verse 22-23**

We the church, that is all disciples of Jesus (the body of Christ) have been transferred into His domain where He is the head. Living in and from His place of authority position and power, to rule and reign in this life.

For whose benefit has all God's power been working? Read **verse 19**

Us the church.

What does all this mean for us today?

God's power in Him is available for all His disciples (v. 19). Christ's rule over the universe is for our benefit (v. 22), He is God's gift of Himself to us. We are seated with Him in His position of power and authority over the flesh and powers of this age. All things are under our feet in Him.

Write a summary and make it personal of what God's power has done for us according to **Ephesians 1**

## Made Alive in Christ

Read **Ephesians 2:1-10**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss your observations.

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

We have life now and the joy and hope of eternal life and salvation. Made alive together with Christ. We have God's grace (underserved favour). Raised us up to sit together in the heavenly places. United with Him in Christ's power and authority over our flesh and satan and all the principalities and powers that elevate themselves above God.

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**

It is all about God's great love and amazing grace towards us. Through all this God can reveal His never ending love, kindness, over abundance of favour and riches of blessing towards us.

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

Pride is like a coin. It has two sides. Heads and tails. The head of pride is to elevate self above others and even God. It is destructive of others. The tails of pride is to lower self down below others. It is self destructive. By making salvation a gift, it is not something that we can earn. It is Himself as a gift because of His grace.

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

God's workmanship, God's masterpiece.

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

What is your practical response/prayer?

## 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.

Discuss your observations.

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

Jews and Gentiles who believe and receive Jesus' flesh and blood sacrifice of Himself.

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

Through Jesus' reconciliatory work on the cross. It is in His flesh and blood sacrifice for both Jew and Gentile He broke down the divisions between them, including the separating wall of the Jewish law and commandments, bringing the two into one in Jesus, making peace. As a result all by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit can come near to Father God.

Who are being built together in Christ Jesus into one family? Read **Ephesians 2:19–22**

Both Jews and Gentiles who believe and receive Him.

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

Read **Ephesians 2:20**

The Apostles were eye witnesses to the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus in human form. God who became flesh and lived amongst us. The Apostles eyewitness testimony and the writings (the New Testament) of Jesus and the writings of the prophets (the Old Testament) who prophesied about Him together form the foundation of the truth of Jesus and who we are in Him.

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

Read **Ephesians 2:20**

Jesus

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

All disciples of Jesus throughout the ages, the body of Christ.

## The Mystery of Christ's Body

Read **Ephesians 3:1-12**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss your observations.

What is God's intention for the church now in this world according to **verses 10-11**?

By our very existence the church (body of Christ - individually and collectively) make known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, God's great wisdom according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remembering **Ephesians 1:9-10** Where in the fullness of time, all things become one in Him.

1: In heavenly places where we are seated with Him, we testify and take possession of the Kingdom of God in Jesus power and authority, here on earth in this world damaged by evil.

2: We are a reminder to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places that are not of God, that they have been decisively defeated and that all things are subject to Christ.

3: The powers cannot stop Jesus by His Spirit building His church with all peoples, all tribes, into one body.

When did God decide to bring all things in one in Christ Jesus? Read **verse 11**

In eternity, always forever it was and is His plan.

What do we have in Christ Jesus according to **verse 12**?

Boldness (free and fearless, confidence, cheerful, courage, boldness, assurance) and confidence (trust and reliance) in Him. That is total assurance of who He is and what He has done and as a result who we are in Him.

We are always welcome and have no need to fear going to Him at any time, no matter how we are feeling, whatever we have done, or whatever we are thinking, and whatever we want to say. It is out of the assurance of His love and the truth of His word. It is His love that gives us the confidence and it is in what He has done and who we are as His children that gives us the boldness.

What does that mean for us today?

In Jesus we have victory over all the powers that oppose God, all the yuck of the world.

Our access to God cannot be hindered by the hostile powers and authorities or our own weaknesses or our flesh. We can be real with Him and have total confidence in who He is, what He has done and will do and who we are in Him.

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**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss your observations.

What reason does the Apostle Paul give as to why he bows His knees to the Father and prays for the saints? (The saints of Ephesus are both the Jews and Gentiles who have received Jesus).

Read **2:19–22**

The first readers of the letter have together become the temple of God, the place where God dwells in the Spirit. They are members of God's family, a new humanity in Christ, equal - equal.

It is for this reason he now prays a prayer for their journey with Jesus and the Father. Discipleship starts with receiving Jesus but is a daily journey to grow and live in the fullness of Him. Praying from a caring heart which He has in Jesus.

What does the Apostle Paul pray for all the saints? Read **verse 16**

With all the abundance of who He is, He will give us His strength inside. That they be strengthened with His might in their inner man. Praying a prayer according to the Father's heart.

Read **verse 17**

That Christ Jesus may dwell (make His home) in their hearts and our foundation is God's love and that is what gives us strength.

Remember the Apostle Paul is talking to those who have received Jesus. As a result of receiving Him they have His Spirit within. The Apostle Paul is not praying that the Holy Spirit will not leave them, nor is he praying they would receive His Spirit again. He is praying in the context of God's plan, that they may 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 their (and 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 that are outlined the next chapters.

Read **verse 18–19**

That they may be empowered to understand that it is not through their trying but through the power of God and the greatness of His love. So that they may be filled with the fullness of God.

His love is greater than knowledge, more powerful than our flesh, our weaknesses, our amount of faith, our understanding, our emotions, our doubts, our fears, greater than anything.

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?

His love. His love in us (a fruit of His Spirit within) is the fruit of our revelation of His love for us and others. (Remember this revelation is the one thing the church at Ephesus loses, that is their first love, the revelation of His great love. As a result they lost their love of God, they lost their love for others.)

Who is the only one who is able to do this work in us? Read **verses 20–21**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Father.

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

Jesus - His body the church.

Glory is given to God in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations as we allow Him to do this transforming work in us. He is doing the work, He gets the glory.

## 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**

Lowliness (humility treating each one with respect and honour), gentleness, with long-suffering (patience waiting with an attitude of rest), bearing with one another in love (acceptance of others just as they are), endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

All this is a work of the Holy Spirit, the transforming power of God working in and through us, if we let Him. When we are in a continual state of surrender to our Father's will, spending time with Him, in His presence, in His Word, in worship, in prayer, in fellowship, He will change us into the character of His Son. However this is a daily journey and continual renewing and transformation.

## Remember the Secret of Success

Do the secret of success practical once again with the handout.

[https://jesuslovestheworld.info/wp-content/uploads/Vine\\_Disciplineship\\_English.pdf](https://jesuslovestheworld.info/wp-content/uploads/Vine_Disciplineship_English.pdf)

The Jesus tree produces Jesus fruit.

## The Old Man and New Man

### **Read 4:7–16**

Why did Jesus give gifts of apostles (those who are sent), prophets (those who speak God's truth), evangelists (those who declare the Good News of Jesus), pastors (those who shepherd) and teachers (those who instruct on God's truth) to the disciples of Jesus? **Read verses 12,15–16**

Equip every disciple of Jesus throughout the ages to do His work of ministry/mission and build each other up in His love, His truth and His power, speaking the truth in love, so we all may grow up in Him. Edifying the whole body in love.

Part of operating in the gift/s of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is to empower others to train others in these gifts as well as themselves operating in these gifts.

Each gift two parts. Example, someone with a teaching gift trains others in teaching others at whatever opportunity the Holy Spirit opens up for them as well as operating in that gift all the time.

Who is God doing His work through?

Every disciple, each is a part of His body.

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

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Anything that causes disunity, inequality, domination and oppression of others brings sorrow to the Holy Spirit. For example, holding onto unforgiveness in our heart towards someone else causes separation from another and gives the unforgiveness the power to control and bring destruction. By not surrendering to the Father's will and therefore not being transformed into His character by His Spirit, the flesh will dominate and see others as either better than or less than. God will not interfere with our free will. If we do not give over our will to dominate and have power over others to His will, we will not be living in the victory that Jesus died, rose and ascended on high to give us.

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**

Let go, surrender all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking and malice. These things can become a stronghold in a disciples' life and become a root of bitterness instead of a root of His love.

God's heart desire is that we know His love, truth and power and live in His victory. He made a way for us to let go of our excess baggage. This guards our hearts and minds against destruction. That is to be free of all the junk and issues of today. Shake the dust off your feet each night by surrender the day to God and take a moment to be immersed in His grace and love.

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

He given us gifts to help build up His body in His love, truth and power.

What is your practical response/prayer?

## Relationships

Read **Ephesians 5:1–14**, Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

Discuss your observations.

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

Read **verse 2**

Living in His love. Remember the vine, Jesus tree produces Jesus fruit of His character...we are imitators of Christ. We cannot change ourselves. Our role is surrendering or giving over our desire to control others and dominate others.

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

Read **verse 3**

Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness.

Read **verse 4**

Filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting. We are no longer owned by such things, free from the feeling of it controlling us and being identified with it, partaken of it.

Who are the sons of disobedience? Read **verse 6**

In the context of the letter and the New Testament and God's eternal plan of salvation, the sons of disobedience (they have identified themselves with it as sons) are those who reject Jesus and His sacrifice and remain in darkness. They have chosen to identify with it. Those not 'in Christ'.

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

We are not one with them, we no longer have our identity with them and do not partake of the evil.

Read **Ephesians 5:15–21**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times.

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**

Buy back the value of the time we have here on earth by understanding the Father's will (outlined in the first half of the letter), each day spending time with Him immersed in His presence receiving all His goodness.

What are the practical outworkings of living in this reality? Read **verses 19–21**

We speak in words of praise, having a song in our heart, with a continual state of thanksgiving to God for all things. Surrendering our desire to control others to get what we want and seeing them as equal.

Read **Ephesians 5:22–33**



To give correct meaning to this text we need to understand the situation and the main themes of the letter. These are identity, power, relationships where we are one in Christ, each one equal. We need to read this text not through our flesh but through His eyes of love.

How can we see the Kingdom of God outwork in our relationships in this world damaged by evil? The solution is submitting, surrendering or letting go of the desire for power to control and dominate others.

Women are to give up their desire for power to control men or others to get what they want and men are to give up their desire for power to dominate others to get what they want. When a man has a revelation of Jesus' love and gives over his power to dominate women or others, he will be able to love as Jesus does.

When both give up their desire for power over the other they then will be able to live in the equality of God's Kingdom of love and respect.

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**

It was very good.

Read **Genesis 1:27-28**

In whose image did God create man?

In God's own image.

In whose image did God create woman?

In God's own image.

Who did God bless equally?

Man and woman.

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

Man and woman.

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?

Yes, equal - equal.

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?

No.

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**

Life and death.

Before the end of the third chapter in Genesis, the first man and first woman chose to partake of the evil one's deception and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of God's wisdom and the tree of life. 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. Man and woman allowed death and evil to enter into this perfect world.

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?

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 desire in this context as in Genesis 3:16-17 means to run after and attempt to control and manipulate.

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

The word rule in this context as in Genesis 3:16-17 means to dominate and oppress.

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

To run after and attempt to control and manipulate.

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

Dominate and oppress.

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?

Know who they are in Christ and for man to love His wife as Himself.

If a man loves His wife, gives her His love as Christ gave His love, the man will surrender or give over his fleshly desire to dominate. He will be as the church, ruling and reigning over his flesh and the powers.

Equal equal.

If a woman gives over her fleshly desire to control the man, she will be as the church ruling and reigning over her flesh and the powers.

Equal equal.

Instead of putting each other down, they will build one another up in the revelation of His love, truth and power. Living in the Kingdom of God, in this world damaged by evil, equal-equal.

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

The relationship of marriage, equal, equal. Christ and the church in love Christ gives us His power and authority and we are one in Him male and female equal equal.

But the story still does not end there. God in His great love gives us His power and authority to condemn the lies of the evil one, to know the truth as to not be deceived, and to live in victory over our self-centred desires, the evil one and evil itself in a world damaged by evil.

When we give over our desire to control and dominate and are in a continual state of surrender to the will of our Father, receiving all that Jesus came as flesh and blood, died, rose and ascended on high to give us, our old self dies and we truly live in time now, in a world damaged by evil.

God in His great love gives us a part in His plan of restoration and healing mission. Man and woman are SENT TO HEAL...equal–equal

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

Paul is addressing the issue of abuse of power with the hierarchy social structure of the world. Man's way is to dominate over another. If we are in Christ and by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit see each other equal, surrender the desire to control another the hierarchy structure of the world actually no longer exists.

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

What is your practical response/prayer?

## Put on God's Full Armour

Read **Ephesians 6:10–13**. Meditate on this Bible passage and re-read it several times. Discuss your observations.

In the context of Ephesians the purpose of being clothed in God's armour is so that every disciple will be able to stand in the confidence and hope in the One who has overcome it all.

Stand in this context is in direct relationship with God's exceedingly great power and His armour.

It is, to cause or make to stand, abide, to make firm, fix, establish, to set in balance and be safe.

It is God who gives us of Himself and empowers us to stand.

To put on the whole armour means to literally sink into, in other words be immersed in God Himself, having been identified with Him.

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

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, remember what the Apostle Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:16.

Be strong or strengthened has already been used in relation to God's all-powerful strength which raised Christ from the dead and exalted him to the place of honour, far above all rule and authority Ephesians 1:19-20.

Who is the source of this strength?

The Lord

How are we able to stand?

Jesus is the one whom we have been brought into union with and it is in His realm and power and authority we now live and receive our strength. For this reason we are 'strengthened in Him' as He supplies all we need to stand against the lies of the evil one and the powers of darkness in the heavenly places.

What is the first piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 14** (NKJV)

Truth - Only God, the creator of heaven and earth and all things good can determine what is truth. Truth is not some relative thing that we can decide to be true. Truth is defined by God.

Who is the truth? Read **John 14:6**

Jesus

What does the truth do? Read **John 8:32**

Sets you free.

The truth of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not only the truth of who God is and what He has done and will do, but the truth of who we are in Him.

Jesus is the truth and the very essence of who He is, becomes who we are. Truth in Jesus envelopes us and supports everything we do.

What does knowing the truth about God and ourselves in Him enable us to do?

With the truth of God revealed in Jesus fastened around our waist, we are free, know who we are in Him and stand against the destructive lies and deceptions of evil and self.

What is the second piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 14** (NKJV)

Righteousness - is equality, justice, rightness, correctness and in the context of identity innocent, equal, morally upright.

Only God is just, fair, right, correct and true, delivering true justice of equality. He is the only one who is innocent, totally pure and has perfect character.

What area of the body does the breastplate protect?

His breastplate of righteousness protects the heart and lungs the very breath of life.

The heart is the place where motives are formed and dwell.

With His righteousness covering or guarding our heart, our emotions, our motives are protected from the power and control of evil and the selfishness of our flesh nature.

This righteousness of God guards our heart and becomes our identity in Him. We wear and live in His righteousness and are identified with Him.

What is the third piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 15** (NKJV)

Gospel of Peace - Is a quietness and rest, regardless of circumstances. This peace is also prosperity in possessing every spiritual blessing and living in dominion over evil and selfishness or the flesh. As we are one in Christ, He is our peace.

What area of the body does the Gospel of peace protect?

Feet - being shod with the gospel of peace means we carry His truth of the good news of Jesus into every situation.

What is the fourth piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 16**

Faith - Faith in this context can mean the faith of Jesus the Messiah. He completely and totally trusted in the Father and was surrendered to His will.

What does the shield of faith protect us from?

His faithfulness becomes the shield against the fiery darts of the evil one. Taking is to receive, raise up, to action. To receive His gift of Himself and raise up to action His faithfulness, is to be protected from the clutches of the evil one. The fiery darts are every kind of attack from the evil one, whose sole motive is to steal, rob, kill and destroy. Fuelled by hate for God and all things good, the evil one uses lies and deception about God and self.

Praise God in Jesus' faithfulness we can be protected from the destructive forces of evil.

What is the fifth piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 17**

Salvation - God's free gift of Himself provides our salvation. We cannot earn our salvation and we certainly don't deserve it. Yet He provided the way and paid the cost for every offence done and thought against God and each other. In Christ Jesus we are passed from judgement and assured of our salvation.

What area of the body does the helmet of salvation protect?

His helmet of salvation protects our mind from being trapped in strongholds of lies, uncertainty, fear and doubt.

What is the sixth piece of God's armour that we are clothed in, in order to live in victory in this world damaged by evil? Read **verse 17**

Sword of Spirit - Word of God

What is the full meaning of the word of God in this context?

That is the spoken or proclaimed word of God, led by His Spirit. We tear down the lies of satan by proclaiming the truth of His word. This is an audible proclamation of God's word, speaking light into the darkness.

It is an appointed, anointed word of the truth of who God is, what He has done and how we can receive and live in the victory of Him. We are appointed and anointed tear down all thoughts and arguments that come against the truth. With His spoken truth we set the captives free and herald in His Kingdom.

## Paul's Salutation of Grace

What does Paul declare over the brethren to conclude the letter? Read **Ephesians 6:23-24**

Peace and love with faith from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you.

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

What is your practical response/prayer?

