

Kingdom of God Ephesians Bible Study Workbook

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**

Upon Paul's return to Ephesus what was the situation 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 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

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:

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

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

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

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

Theme 2:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. 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**

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?

Who is the one who restores harmony and 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 **Ephesians 1:3**

Read **Ephesians 1:10**

Read **Ephesians 1:20**

Read **Ephesians 2:6**

Read **Ephesians 3:14–15** (NKJV)

Read **Ephesians 4:10**

Read **Ephesians 6:9**

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

Read **Ephesians 6:12**

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

Read **Ephesians 3:14–15** (NKJV)

Read **Ephesians 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?

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**

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 Christ we have every spiritual blessing. The next verses outline some of the details of these blessings.

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

Read **verses 4–5**

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

Read **verse 6**

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

Read **verse 7**

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

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

Read **verses 13–14**

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**

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

Read **verse 18**

Read **verse 19–20**

What does the content of Paul's prayer mean to you?

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**

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

Who is the body of Christ? Read **verse 22-23**

Who are the feet of Christ?

Who is the head of the body?

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**

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**

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

What does all this mean for us today?

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**

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 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?

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**

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

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

What does being built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets mean? Read **Ephesians 2:20**

Who is the 'chief cornerstone' or supports all the weight of the building (of the body of believers)?
Read **Ephesians 2:20**

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

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**?

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**

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

What does that mean for us today?

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**

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

Read **verse 17**

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**

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 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**

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.

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**

Who is God doing His work through?

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

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**

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?

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**

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

Read **verse 3**

Read **verse 4**

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

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 5:15–21**. 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**

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

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**

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?

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**

Who is the source of this strength?

How are we able to stand?

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)

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

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

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

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)

What area of the body does the breastplate protect?

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)

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

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**

What does the shield of faith protect us from?

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**

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

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**

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

Paul's Salutation of Grace

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

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

What is your practical response/prayer?
