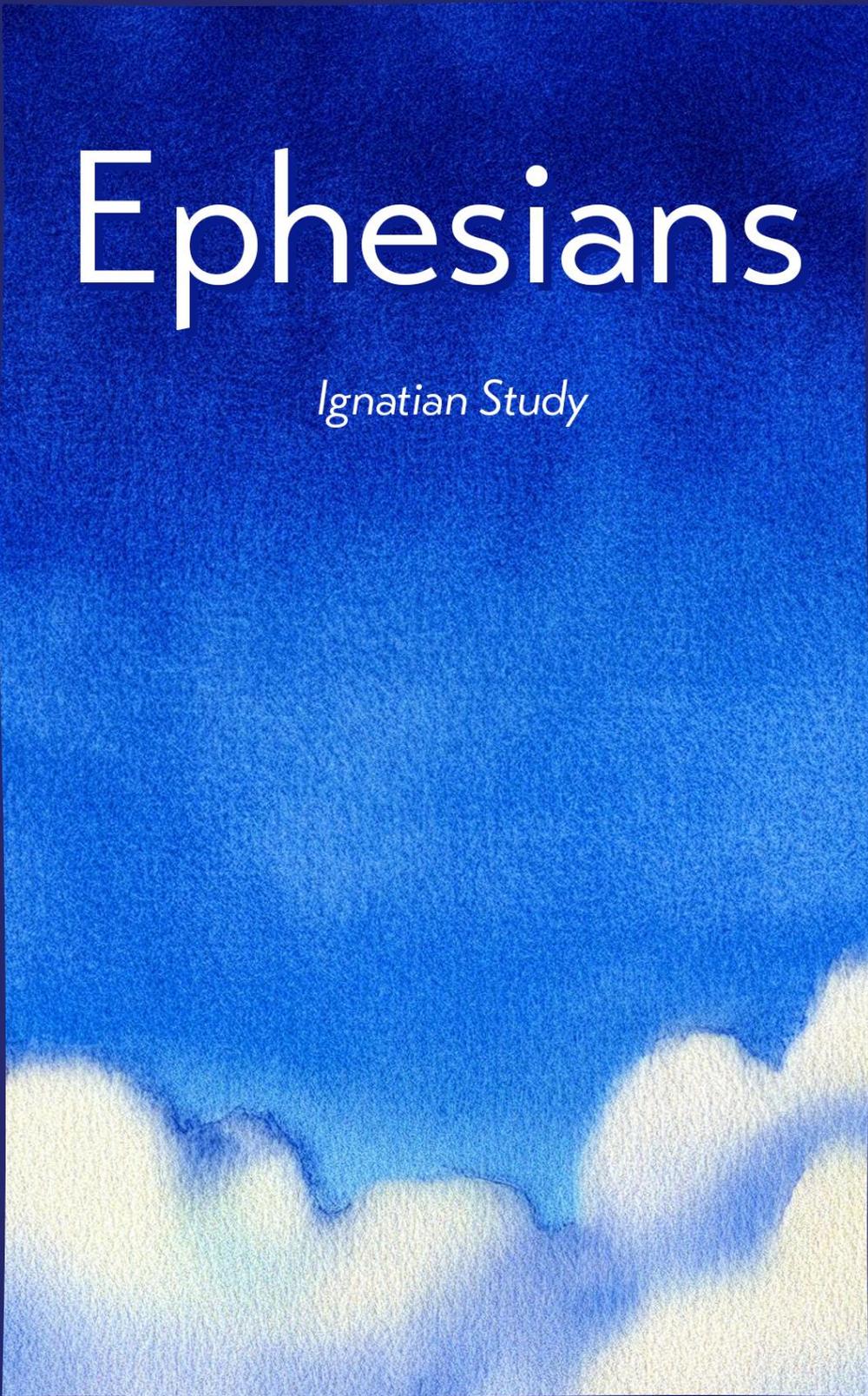


Ephesians

Ignatian Study



Ephesians Ignatian Study

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All Scripture passages taken from the NIV

Created by Rasha at <https://annamu-fi-almassih.com/>

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Background on Ephesians

Taken from BibleProject Guide: The Book of Ephesians¹

About

The story of how Paul came to the city of Ephesus is really fascinating, and you can read all about it in Acts chapter 19. Ephesus was a huge city, acting as the epicenter for worship of most of the Greek and Roman gods. For over two years, Paul had an effective missionary presence there and converted many people to Christianity. Years later, after being imprisoned by the Romans, he wrote an important letter to the church there.

The movement of thought in the letter divides it into two distinct halves. In the first half (Eph. 1-3), Paul explores the story of the Gospel, how all history came to its climax in Jesus, and his creation of a multiethnic community of followers. The second half (Eph. 4-6) is linked to the first part by the word “therefore.” Paul explores how the Gospel should affect the way we live our lives, personally, in our community, and within our families.

The Big Idea

The Gospel should affect the way we live our lives personally, in our communities, and with our families.

Who Wrote the Book of Ephesians?

Christian tradition holds that the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Ephesians.

Context

The events described in Ephesians take place in the city of Ephesus. Ephesians was likely composed while Paul was in custody in Rome between 60 and 64 C.E.

Key Themes

- The generous gift of God
- How to walk in a way worthy of God’s gift
- Standing firm in the face of spiritual evil

Structure

Ephesians can be divided into two parts. Chapters 1-3 introduce God’s lavish grace and divine purpose for the new humanity. And chapters 4-6 exhort readers to live according to God’s gift and offer a challenge for unity in the new humanity.

¹ <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-ephesians/>

Ephesians 1-3: God's Grace Creating a New Humanity

Chapter 1 opens with a beautiful, Jewish-style poem, in which Paul praises God the Father for the amazing things that he's done through Christ Jesus. From eternity past, the Father planned to choose and bless a covenant people, which started with Abraham's family in Genesis 12:1-3. Through Jesus, anyone can now be adopted into that family. His death covers our worst sins and failures, and in him, we can find God's grace. In fact, that grace has opened up a whole new way to understand life and our entire world. Paul says that God's purpose has always been "to unify all things in Heaven and Earth under Christ" (Eph. 1:10). In other words, God's plan was always to have a huge family of restored humans who are unified in Jesus.

This divine purpose first became clear when "we" were first made into that family, referring to ethnic Jews from the family of Abraham. Paul then says that "you," or non-Jews, heard about Jesus and the salvation through him and were also brought into the family. Paul is referring here to stories recorded in the book of Acts, which tell how the work of God's Spirit brought Jews and non-Jews together as one family in Jesus, just as God had promised Abraham. In this poem, Paul talks about the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Spirit working together as he tells the story of the Gospel.

After the poem, Paul prays that these Christians would not just know about but truly experience the power of the Gospel. He prays that they would be energized by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and placed him as the exalted head of the whole world.

In chapter 2, Paul elaborates on key ideas from the poem, beginning with God's grace. He retells the story of these non-Jewish Christians who came to know Jesus. Before hearing about him, they were physically alive but spiritually dead. They were trapped in a purposeless life of selfishness and sin, deceived by dark spiritual forces of evil. But God, in his great love and mercy, saved them, forgiving all their sins and joining their lives to Jesus' resurrection life. Now, having been recreated as new human beings through Jesus, they have the joy of discovering the new purpose and tasks God has for them.

In Paul's story, these new Christians have not only been shown God's grace but they've also been invited into a new family. Before hearing about Jesus, non-Jews were cut off from God as well as his covenant people, the family of Abraham. This was for a practical reason, as the commands of the Sinai covenant formed a boundary line around Israel, like a barrier that kept most non-Jews away. In Jesus, however, the laws of the Torah have been fulfilled and the barrier removed. The two

ethnic groups can now become, as Paul puts it, “a new, unified humanity” (Eph. 2:15) that lives together in peace.

In chapter 3, Paul goes on to marvel at the unique role he has had in spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles. Even though he has been imprisoned for it, Paul thanks God for the chance to see the covenant family grow. He closes this first half of the letter with another prayer, this time asking that the people be strengthened by God’s Spirit and grasp the love of Christ.

Ephesians 4-6: Living in Unity as the New Humanity

In the second half of the letter, Paul shifts gears and begins to challenge the Ephesians to respond to the Gospel with how they live out their own life stories. In chapter 4, he begins by focusing on the everyday life of the church, which is actually a big family made up of lots of different kinds of people. He emphasizes that, even with their differences, they are one. This is a key word in this chapter. They are one body, unified by one Spirit, with one Lord and one faith, one baptism to one God. That’s a lot of unity.

But unity does not mean uniformity! Paul explores how Jesus’ unified family consists of lots of different kinds of people, all empowered by the one Spirit to use their unique talents and passions to serve and love one another and build up the Church. Paul develops two related metaphors here. The Church is the new temple, and these communities form a new humanity, a body of people with Jesus as their head. This new human body is the main theme that Paul develops through the rest of the letter.

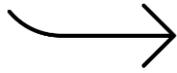
Paul challenges every Christian to “take off their old humanity” like a set of clothes and “put on their new humanity,” restoring the image of God. Paul continues with a long section that compares the sins of the old to the actions of this new humanity. Instead of lying, these new humans speak the truth. Rather than harboring anger, they peacefully resolve conflicts. They generously give instead of stealing. They encourage others instead of gossiping, and they forgive instead of getting revenge. Rather than continuing in the actions of the old humanity, believers can come under the influence of God’s Spirit. They express this new influence in a few ways, like singing alone or together with Jesus’ followers. The third sign is being grateful for everything, and the fourth is putting themselves under others so as to elevate them as more important.

Paul expands on this fourth sign of the Spirit by describing how it works in a Christian marriage. A Christian wife is to respect and allow her husband to be responsible for her, while the Christian husband is to love his wife and use his responsibility to lay down his life and prioritize his wife’s well-being above his own.

Paul says that this kind of marriage is a reenactment of the Gospel story. The husband's actions mimic Jesus' loving self-sacrifice, while the wife's actions represent the Church allowing Jesus to love her and make her new. The same idea applies to the relationship between children and parents as well as slaves and masters.

Paul closes the letter by reminding these Christians of the reality of spiritual evil. There are beings and forces that will try to undermine their unity and new humanity in Jesus. He challenges them to stand firm and put on a metaphorical set of armor, alluding to pieces of body armor that, in the book of Isaiah, describe the Messiah. In other words, Christians need to embody the same values and strengths of Jesus himself; they are his body after all. In a practical sense, this means forming habits, proactively praying and pondering the Scriptures, and depending on one another as we continue to grow as followers of Jesus.

The letter of the Ephesians is Paul's call to allow the Gospel story about Jesus to reshape every part of our own life stories.



The entire "Background to Ephesians" section above was taken from BibleProject Guide: The Book of Ephesians²

² <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-ephesians/>

Day 1

Ephesians 1

Background

Ephesians Historical Background | Why Was Ephesians Written?

by The Bible Effect



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FfIE2jS7-k>

Review

Close your eyes and sit in a relaxed position. Take a few deep breaths.

Review the past 24 hours. Think through:

- What is something that gave you joy?
- What is something that caused you pain?

Sit with God with those moments of joy, then pain.

What do you want to ask God for?

Word

Today's Bible passage is on pages 8-9.

Say a short prayer asking God to guide your reading and open your heart to what he wants to say.

Read the passage, taking your time to read it thoroughly.

Connect

Choose a verse that stood out to you based on your current circumstances. Spend some time "chewing" on that verse.

In what way does it speak to what you are going through?

What would you like to do about this?

Respond

Ephesians 1 contains a beautiful poem expressing praise to God. Take some time and write a poem of praise to God. It does not have to be perfect, rhyming, or "good." The goal is to practice express feelings of praise and adoration in a (potentially) new way.

Seal

Finish your time by reading your poem aloud to God as a gift to him.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To God's holy people in Ephesus,³ the faithful in Christ Jesus:
² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he⁴ predestined us for adoption to sonship⁵ through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he⁶ made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen,⁷ having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in

³ 1:1 Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus*.

⁴ 1:5 Or *sight in love*. ⁵ *He*

⁵ 1:5 The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.

⁶ 1:9 Or *us with all wisdom and understanding*. ⁹ *And he*

⁷ 1:11 Or *were made heirs*

my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit⁸ of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

⁸ 1:17 Or *a spirit*

Day 2

Ephesians 2

Background

Background to the Book of Ephesians

by The Beat



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONyfvZG-U0>

Reflection

Choose a peaceful spot where you won't be disturbed. This is a time for quiet communion, being present with God and allowing him to speak to your heart. Take a few deep breaths. Inhale slowly, filling your lungs, and exhale slowly, releasing tension.

Close your eyes. Allow your senses to settle, focusing inward.

Spend a minute simply listening. Notice the sounds around you, the rhythm of your breath, the stillness. Focus on the *now* around and in you.

Think of three things you are grateful for—big or small, tangible or intangible.

Express your gratitude silently. Thank God for each blessing, acknowledging his provision.

Surrender. Acknowledge your limitations. Recognize areas where you need God's strength and support.

Listen for His voice. Still your heart, then pay attention to any thoughts, feelings, or images that arise.

Rest in his presence. Spend the remaining time simply being with God, basking in his love and peace.

Word

Today's Bible passage is on pages 12-13.

Pray this prayer:

Father God,
I open my heart to you;
I want to be changed
By reading your Word today.
Help me to set aside my worries and fears;
Speak to me through your Word today.
Amen.

Read the passage once to get a general idea of what it says.

The second time you read it, highlight or circle the words that can give a visual description (i.e. "dead" from vs 1, "following" from verse 2, "rich" from verse 5, "made alive" from verse 5, "raised up" from verse 6, etc.)

Read the passage aloud a third time, use these circled words to visualize the passage with images in your mind.

Next, highlight all the present tense verbs in one color and the past tense verbs in a different color.

How does this help you understand the passage in a new light?

How does this help you see your situation before God in a new light?

How would you summarize this passage in one sentence?

Connect

How does today's passage make you feel towards God?

Whether these feelings are positive or negative, express them to God.

After expressing these feelings, sit in silence for a few minutes, eyes closed and in a comfortable position. Ask God to respond.

Seal

Close your time by telling God some things you are grateful for from your time together today.

Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh⁹ and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came

⁹ In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Day 3

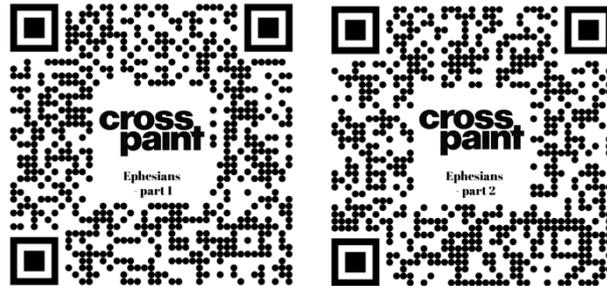
Ephesians 3

Background

Ephesians 1-3 | What is the church? Who is the bride?

Ephesians 4-6 | Not of this world! The Heavenly Lifestyle

by Crosspaint



Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EDfZnRGzAM>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh8fr5HHKK0>

Prayer Labyrinth

Today we will use the Harbor Prayer Labyrinth located on page 30. There are four “harbors” (the octagons in the corners) where you will pause on your way to the center. You will say a phrase as your finger is moving around the labyrinth, stop and do something in each harbor, then finish with one more activity in the center. We will do this two times.

Take a minute to breath slowly, breathing in God’s peace and breathing out any anxiety and tension.

Once you have become still, take a finger and begin to trace the prayer labyrinth.

The first time:

- *As your finger moves from harbor to harbor:* repeat the phrase “be still”
- *In Harbor #1:* Tell God of your fears and worries
- *In Harbor #2:* Tell God about someone you know who is frightened or anxious
- *In Harbor #3:* Tell God about those who are facing illness
- *In Harbor #4:* Tell God about those facing violence and war
- *At the center:* Slowly repeat “Do not fear; for I am with you”¹⁰

The second time:

- *As your finger moves from harbor to harbor:* repeat the word “peace”
- *In Harbor #1:* Thank God for the times you have been helped
- *In Harbor #2:* Thank God for those who have helped you
- *In Harbor #3:* Thank God for those who help others and help keep them safe
- *In Harbor #4:* Thank God for those who maintain peace

¹⁰ Isaiah 41:10

- *At the center:* Slowly repeat “The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace”¹¹

Review

Take a minute in quiet, closing your eyes if needed.

Ask God to illuminate the previous day, then let your mind wander over the last 24 hours.

As your mind pauses on a certain emotion, event, or conversation, sit with God with that event.

- What does he want to remind you in that situation?
- Is there something to confess from that situation?
- Was there a moment of special connection with God or someone else that you can rejoice in?

When you feel you’ve finished your review, open your eyes and move on.

Word

Today’s Bible passage is on pages 16-17.

Say a short prayer asking God to guide your reading and open your heart to what he wants to say.

Read the passage once, slowly enjoying God’s words to us.

- What stood out to you or caught your interest?
- What questions do you have about this passage?
- What are three words that you think are big ideas in this passage (i.e. mystery, gospel, prayer)?
- Divide a blank page into three sections and write your three big-idea words at the top of each section. In each section, write or draw some of the ideas the passage says about this topic. Try to understand each one in depth from the passage.

Respond

Looking at what you wrote/drew about your three big ideas, sit with God for a moment and ponder what you might like to change in your life in response to this passage.

Seal

To close your time, choose a worship song that speaks to your heart and listen attentively to the lyrics. Let the music wash over you, inviting you to praise and worship God.

¹¹ Numbers 6:26

God's Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family¹² in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and

¹² The Greek for *family* (*patria*) is derived from the Greek for *father* (*pater*).

long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Day 4

Ephesians 4

Background

New Testament Letters: Literary Context

by BibleProject



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPZ2uABVMKA>

Review

Before you reflect on the previous 24 hours, find a spot in the sunshine. (If you can't access sunshine, sit with a lamp, candle, or light.) As you sit in the warmth of the sun, meditate on the Holy Spirit's warm love for you, and how he also gently shines light on every part of your heart.

When you feel ready, move on.

- Think about a conversation you had. Did you listen actively and respond with kindness and understanding, or did you dominate the discussion or become defensive, or something else? How can you improve your communication skills?
- Who did you interact with, and how did those (both positive and negative) interactions make you feel? How do you think it could have made the other person feel?
- "The essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less."¹³ What was a moment you were focused on *yourself*, whether to make much of yourself (take pride in yourself) or to make little of yourself (criticize yourself)? How can you take that moment now and think about God or others?
- Thank God for this time of reflection and how he gently shines light on our lives.

¹³ Tim Keller, from his book *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*

Word

Today's Bible passage is on pages 20-21.

Pray this prayer:

Holy Spirit,
Open my ears to hear,
Open my eyes to see,
Soften my heart to obey
All that you show me in your Word today.
Amen.

Read the passage, then create a diagram or outline of each paragraph.

After you complete this, look at the diagram for a minute. What is the big picture? Compare your diagram and the text. What new things do you notice, or what stands out?

List out or highlight in one color the things this passage gives as instructions for or markers of believers.

List out or highlight in another color the things this passage gives as markers of unbelievers.

What do you notice about the difference between believers and unbelievers?

Respond

What are ways that God has gifted you to equip, build up, and bless other believers?

How have you been using your gifts recently for that purpose?

How can you look for opportunities to use your gifts for that?

Connect

Choose a word, phrase, or verse from today's passage that stood out to you. Open to the Harbor Prayer Labyrinth on page 30. Using a finger from your nondominant hand, begin to trace the path of the labyrinth. Repeat the verse, phrase, or word as you are tracing. Once you reach the center, pause and have a conversation with God. What struck you about the verse? Listen to God's response. Once you are ready, repeat the verse, phrase, or word as you trace your way out of the labyrinth.

Seal

Say the following prayer:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
I seek communion with you.
I want to enjoy your presence throughout my day.
Keep my heart tuned to you,
Keep my steps from evil,
Make me a peacemaker who seeks unity.
Amen.

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it¹⁴ says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”¹⁵

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions¹⁶? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

¹⁴ 4:8 Or *God*

¹⁵ 4:8 Psalm 68:18

¹⁶ 4:9 Or *the depths of the earth*

Instructions for Christian Living

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”¹⁷: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

¹⁷ 4:26 Psalm 4:4 (see Septuagint)

Day 5

Ephesians 5

Background

Ephesians: The Bible Explained

by Spoken Gospel



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJUVc_fpA14

Review

Think over the past 24 hours.

In what moments did you feel God's presence most strongly? How did you respond? We often think of black and white sin, but today review your day not in this light but in light of what actions pointed your heart and life *towards* or *away* from God.

- What were the things that drew you closer to God?
- What were the things that led you farther from God?
- What was happening just before you came into the spaces of being led closer to or further from God?
- What can you learn from this?

Word

Today's Bible passage is on pages 24-25.

Say a short prayer asking God to guide your reading and open your heart to what he wants to say.

Before you read, reflect for a minute on the summary of what you've read in Ephesians up until now.

Read the passage once, with thought towards how this connects back towards the previous chapters.

This chapter has many commands, but also gives reasons for many of them.

- Divide a blank page into two columns. In one column write the command, then in the other column write the reason for this command.
- Reflect on this list for a minute.
- What does this list reveal about God's heart?
- What does this list reveal about the characteristics of God's people?

Connect

Peruse the text one last time, this time looking for descriptions of God's relationship to you. As you get to each one, pause and enjoy the description of how God views you.

Respond

As an act of worship, perform a small act of service, such as writing an encouraging note, doing a chore, or speaking kindness to someone. Reflect on how this connects you to God's love.

Seal

The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
The Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.¹⁸

¹⁸ Numbers 6:25-27

5 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.¹⁹ ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁹ 5:5 Or *kingdom of the Messiah and God*

Instructions for Christian Households

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing²⁰ her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”²¹ ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

²⁰ 5:26 Or *having cleansed*

²¹ 5:31 Gen. 2:24

Day 6

Ephesians 6

Background

Book of Ephesians Summary: A Complete Animated Overview

by BibleProject



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q>

Review

This review of the past 24 hours is meant to draw you closer to God, recognizing both His blessings and your need for his ongoing grace and transformation. We will use the Harbor Prayer Labyrinth located on page 30. Use your finger to trace the path, pausing at each of the four “harbors” (the octagons in the corners) on your way to the center.

- *On the way to Harbor #1:* Recall ways you have let *others* down
- *In Harbor #1:*
Pause and say “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you”²²
- *On the way to Harbor #2:* Recall ways you have let *yourself* down
- *In Harbor #2:*
Pause and say “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you”²³
- *On the way to Harbor #3:* Recall ways you have let *God* down
- *In Harbor #3:*
Pause and say “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you”²⁴
- *On the way to Harbor #4:*
Meditate on Jesus’ painful death on the cross as atonement for these sins
- *In Harbor #4:*
Repeat Jesus’ words: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”²⁵
- *On the way to the center:*
Meditate on Jesus’ willing and loving forgiveness of these sins
- *At the center:* Rejoice in the victory over sin you have through Jesus
- *As your finger moves from the center all the way out to the starting point:*
Enjoy a contemplative and thankful heart towards your Forgiving Redeemer

²² Luke 15:21

²³ Luke 15:21

²⁴ Luke 15:21

²⁵ Luke 23:34

Word

Today's Bible passage is on pages 28-29.

Pray this prayer:

Lord,
Open my heart to your Word.
Grant me wisdom to understand
And strength to stand firm in your power.
May your glory be revealed through this reading.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Read the passage once through, letting your eyes pause on things that catch your interest.

As you read a second time, mark up the text by:

- Circling all the nouns (persons, places, or things) in one color
- Underlining all commands
- Highlight the *reasons* given in another color (these will often be phrases following "so that" or "because")

What can you learn from taking a quick glance at all the nouns mentioned here?

What can you learn from the connections between the commands and the reasons?

Connect

Take a pen and a blank piece of paper, and have the passage open next to you. You will write words or draw images in response to this text. Set a 3-5 minute timer and don't let your pen leave the page during this time; keep drawing. Let your hand move freely across the page, expressing emotion or journaling a prayer or reflecting on a specific verse or theme. Don't worry about making it beautiful; just allow your thoughts to flow.

After you finish, spend a minute in quiet with God, looking at the passage and what you drew or wrote.

Seal

Visualize your close circle (your family, church, or close friend group) together with yourself putting on each piece of the armor of God. As you visualize, say aloud:

"Together we put on the belt of truth.

Together we put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Together we put on the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Together we take up the shield of faith.

Together we put on the helmet of salvation.

Together we take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

We pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

We are able to stand our ground in the day of evil."

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”²⁶

⁴Fathers,²⁷ do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

²⁶ 6:3 Deut. 5:16

²⁷ 6:4 Or *Parents*

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Final Greetings

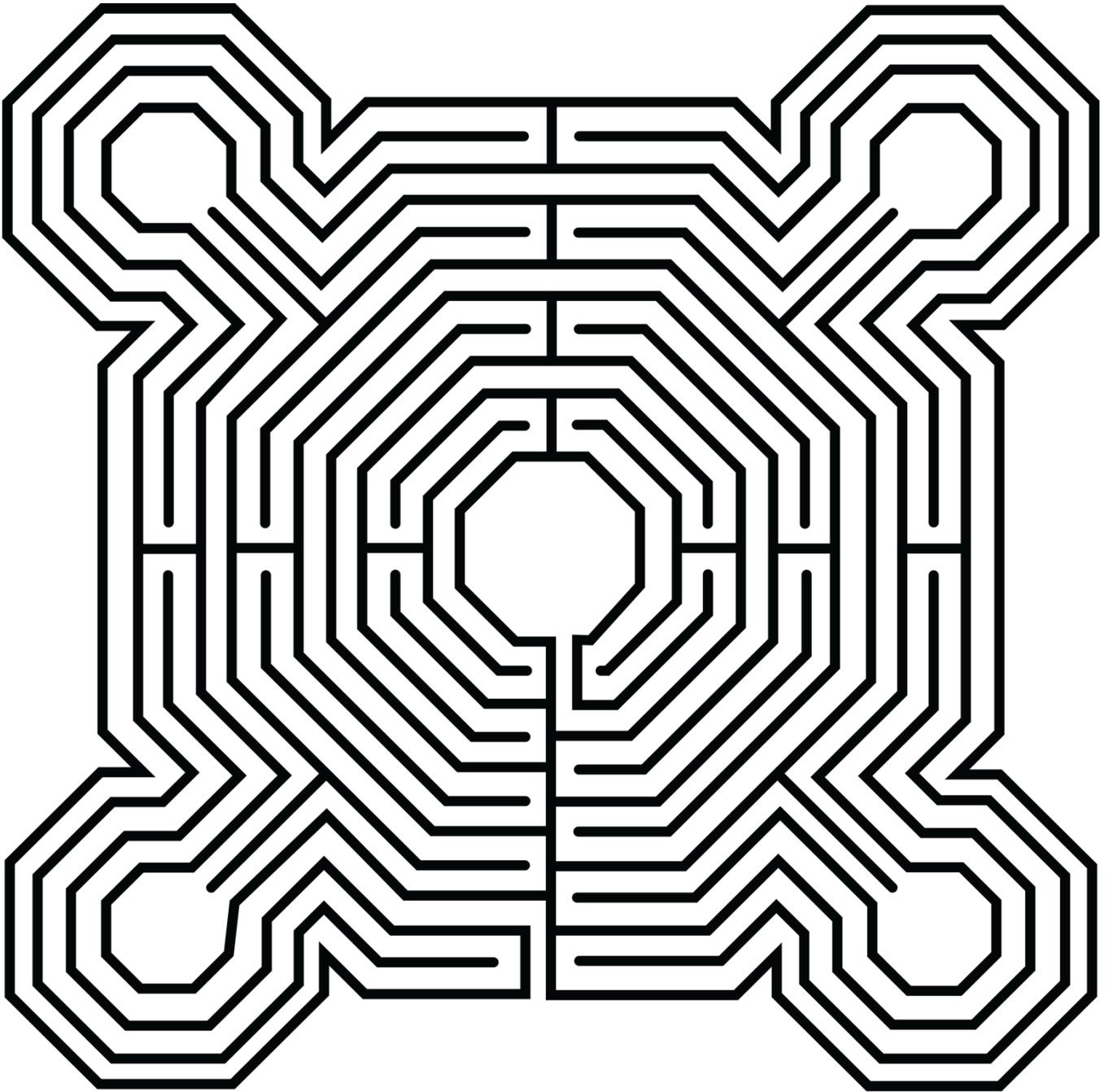
²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³ Peace to the brothers and sisters,²⁸ and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.²⁹

²⁸ 6:23 The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

²⁹ 6:24 Or *Grace and immortality to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Harbor Prayer Labyrinth



(To make the maze more tactile and easier to follow, trace the black lines in white Elmer's glue a couple hours before using.)