

Introduction to Ephesians
Week 1 – MidWeek Bible Study
15 November 2023

“Satan’s greatest weapon is man’s ignorance of God’s Word” -A.W. Tozer

Welcome & Intro Ephesians

- **Upcoming Dates**
 - November 15th – Intro to Ephesians Study
 - November 22nd – No MidWeek (Thanksgiving)
 - November 29th – Ephesians 1
 - December 6th – Ephesians 2
 - December 13th – Ephesians 3
 - December 20th – All Church Family MidWeek Christmas Celebration
 - December 27th – No MidWeek (Christmas)
 - January 3rd – Ephesians 4
 - January 10th – Ephesians 5
 - January 17th – Ephesians 6

- **Heart of Study**

- **Plan each week**
 - Study Ahead (outline & printout will go home)
 - Bring your study back and read / share at your table
 - Verse-by-verse studying together
 - Lots of table discussion time

GROUP QUESTION: What is your experience with Bible Study? How would you answer if someone asked you the difference between Bible Study and Reading the Bible?

Listen to Ephesians Aloud in its Entirety

NOTES

Inductive Bible Study Method Basics

- The basics
 - o Spiritual Needs:
 - o Basic Needs:
 - o Detailed Needs:

THE INDUCTIVE METHOD FOR BEGINNERS... AND NOVICES... AND “EXPERTS”

STEP 1: OBSERVE “What does it say?”	STEP 2: INTERPRET “What did it mean?”	STEP 3: APPLY “What does it mean?”
<p>Read slowly and with curiosity as you look at just the text. This is your time to begin asking thoughtful questions of what you have read.</p>	<p>Time to research and do some digging to answer some of your questions from your observations! We want to know: what did this mean to the original audience? You will need some research tools (study Bible, commentary, online resources, etc.)</p>	<p>After getting a general handle on what the text meant to its original audience, now we want to connect some dots and ask: “What does this mean for us? What does it mean for me?”</p> <p>Prayer for encouragement, conviction, honesty, and so on is essential in this step.</p>
<p>What do you notice? Repeated themes, words, phrases, etc? Words and concepts you don’t know the definitions or meaning of? Ask: Who is the speaker, audience, main figures? What is happening or being described? When is this all happening (any time markers in the text?). Where is the text taking place? Why is the author writing?</p>	<p>Look up the definitions of repeated words, look in your footnotes for cross-references (and read them), look into the historical context, the social world of Ephesians, etc.</p> <p><i>**Andy will have a resource page available online very soon and will show some tools each week moving forward.</i></p>	<p>This is no longer an academic exercise, but a spiritual one: pray that God would reveal to you how the Scripture you’ve studied can inform your heart and mind, that you would follow Him closer.</p> <p>There is no “copying the smartest person’s answer” here; many of the conclusions you reach with God will be unique to your heart and your situation.</p>

- Other Details

- Resource Page Coming Soon

- o <http://www.bridgeorange.org/midweekresources>

GROUP QUESTION: What part of studying Ephesians this way is the most intimidating or confusing to you? What part is the most exciting?

Basics & Overview of Ephesians

Author: The Apostle Paul

- Paul likely wrote Ephesians from a Roman Jail Cell
- Paul had planted a church in Ephesus at some time likely in the mid 50s AD and spent 2-3 years there (Acts 18:19, 19:8-10)

Genre: Epistle (Letter)

- Ephesians is considered by many to be an “encyclical” or “circular” letter →. This means it was a regional letter with the recipient's name left blank. When copies were made of the letter, the deliverer would write in the church's name and deliver a regional letter with a personal greeting
 - o “to the Ephesians” (1:1) is missing from the earliest manuscripts of the letter
- As a regional letter, this was delivered to Ephesus and others in what is modern Western Turkey

Date: Most scholars place Ephesians as written somewhere in the mid 60's AD

Purpose: Unlike other letters that address individuals by name and describe specific instances of conflict, Ephesians is more of a theological treatise designed to instruct, encourage, and guide believers who heard it read aloud. It is to “deepen their understanding of and commitment to the implications of the Christian Gospel” (Dr. George Lyons)

- It is possible that the body of Ephesians was written as a type of sermon or homily

Structure: Ephesians has a very simple and easy-to-follow 2-part structure: Part 1 (Chapters 1-3) focuses on Gospel Doctrine and the theological realities of Christ's supremacy and grace for His people, and Part 2 (Chapters 4-6) focuses on church practice and the ethics of the believer.

Deliverer: Tychicus, Paul's “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” (6:21)

Ephesus the City: A highly commercial epicenter in the Roman Empire and one of the main cities for the worship of Greek and Roman gods and goddesses (many temples).

- There is A LOT OF INFO HERE, so enjoy the process of researching, and we're excited to see what we all bring back to the table together next week!
- Acts 19 might have some clues for you as well

Interesting Notes:

- Ephesians has a distinct “high” style with a high-level, diverse vocabulary, highly nuanced persuasive style, and complex sentence structure. Many scholars have pointed out that this area (Western Turkey) had a developed sense of “high philosophy” and would require such writing to take it seriously
 - o There are 35 *hapax legomena* (words that only appear 1 time in the entire Bible) in Ephesians
 - “I have become all things to all people” (1 Cor. 9)
- As early as 175AD, the Church Father Irenaeus was already writing with absolute clarity and conviction that Ephesians was a legitimate letter written by the true Apostle Paul (there had been many fakes and the Council of Rome finalized canon in 380AD)
- The great Theologian John Calvin was said to “treasure the Letter to the Ephesians above all others in his personal reading.”

GROUP PRAYER: Go around your table and share any prayer requests you might have. Pray for the person on your right. Choose a person who will close your prayer time; that person can also pray for each person's connection, curiosity, and breakthrough as they study Ephesians 1 this week.

Ephesians 1, ESV

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful^[a] in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us^[b] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, **8** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known^[c] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee^[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,^[e] to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love^[f] toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Footnotes

- a. [Ephesians 1:1](#) Some manuscripts *saints who are also faithful* (omitting *in Ephesus*)
- b. [Ephesians 1:5](#) Or *before him in love, ⁵having predestined us*
- c. [Ephesians 1:9](#) Or *he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known...*
- d. [Ephesians 1:14](#) Or *down payment*
- e. [Ephesians 1:14](#) Or *until God redeems his possession*
- f. [Ephesians 1:15](#) Some manuscripts omit *your love*