

Wednesday in the Word

serious Bible study applied to real life

Ephesians

An Inductive Study

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Chronology of the Apostle Paul

Approx. Date	Reference	Description	Epistle (approx date)	Emperor
32 AD	Acts 7:58; 8:1	Present at Stephen's stoning		
33-34 AD	Acts 8:1-3 Phil 3:6	Persecutor of the church		
34 AD	Acts 9:1-19	Paul converted		Tiberius (14-37)
34-37 AD	Acts 9:20-22 Gal. 1:15-17	Preached in Damascus & Arabia (receives gospel by revelation)		Caligula (37-41)
37 AD (NIV 35; Bruce 38)	Acts 9:26-29 Acts 9:30 Acts 11:19-26	Paul introduced to Jerusalem church by Barnabas Returns to Tarsus in Celicia Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch in Syria (disciples first called Christians)		
46 AD (NIV 43; Bruce 46)	Acts 11:27-29	Barnabas & Paul take famine relief to Jerusalem		Claudius (41-54) Famine in Rome (42)
46-48 AD	Acts 13 & 14	First Journey	Galatians (48 after journey)	
49 AD	Acts 15:1-35	Jerusalem council		Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)
49-52 AD	Acts 15:36-18:22	Second Journey	1 & 2 Thess (50)	Rise of the Zealots (50)
53-57 AD	Acts 18:23- 21:16	Third Journey	1 Cor (55) 2 Cor (56) Romans (57)	Nero (54-68)
57-59 AD	Acts 21:17- 26:32	Roman arrest in Jerusalem & Caesarea		
59 AD	Acts 27:1-28:16	Journey to Rome		
60-62 AD	Acts 28:17-31	1st Roman imprisonment	Colossians Philemon Ephesians Philippians (early 60s)	
63 AD		Released from prison	1 Tim. (63) Titus (63)	
65-67 AD		2nd Roman imprisonment & execution (66?)	2 Tim (64)	Fire at Rome (64)

Ephesians 1:1-2

The first lesson in your study of Ephesians will be explore the historical context of the book, which basically answers the questions: Who? What? Where? When? and Why? You will also outline the book to get a good handle on how the book flows and its main themes. This lesson is designed to study the big picture, so you can accurately understand the parts or particulars of each section.

Optional: Read the Preface, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 in *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth*, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart.

Place of Writing

1. What do the following verses indicate were the conditions Paul was living under when he wrote this letter? Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:19-20.
2. Read Acts 28:16,30 to make the likely assumption of where Paul was located when he experienced the above conditions. Also add any insight to the nature of his living conditions.
3. Using the chart of the "Chronology of Paul" determine the a) date of writing; b) Other epistles written at the same time.
4. **Destination:** To whom is this epistle directed according to Ephesians 1:1?
5. **Geography of Ephesus** Find the city of Ephesus on a map of the 1st Century Mediterranean world. Write a brief description of where Ephesus was located.

6. **History of Ephesus:** Do a little research on the history of Ephesus. What kind of city was Ephesus? How many people lived in Ephesus when the gospel was being spread throughout the Mediterranean world? What were the political, religious, social and economic influences that characterized Ephesus in the first century A.D.?

7. **Paul's relationship with the Ephesians:** Paul spent more time with the Ephesians than any other group during his three missionary journeys. Use the record of Paul's visits to Ephesus found in the Book of Acts to explore Paul's relationship with the Ephesians.
Second Journey (A.D. 49-52), Acts 18:18-21 (about A.D. 52):

Third Journey (A.D. 53-57), Acts 18-25-28 (about A.D. 52 or 53)

Note: the events here are prior to Paul's second visit.

Acts 19:1-20:1 (about A.D. 53-55 or 56)

Acts 20:17-36 (about A.D. 57)

8. **Principal Personalities:** Tychicus is the only personal reference in the letter. His name means "fortunate". Who was Tychicus? Where was Tychicus from? What relationship did he have with Paul and the Ephesians? Acts 20:1-6 (about A.D. 55 or 56)

9. Besides Tychicus, who else accompanied Paul on this leg of his third missionary journey? Ephesians 6:21-22; Colossians 4:7-9 (between A.D. 60-62)

10. How does Paul describe Tychicus? What responsibility did Paul give Tychicus? Titus 3:12; cf. 1:5 (between A.D. 62-65)

11. Where was Tychicus sent? 2 Timothy 4:19-23 (about A.D. 65 or 67)

Note: Paul's second letter to Timothy was the last known letter penned by the apostle Paul. He wrote this letter from prison in Rome (see 2 Timothy 1:8; 2:8-10) and was about to be executed (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8). His son in the faith, Timothy, was the recipient of the letter who was leading the church in Ephesus (see 2 Timothy 1:18; 4:12; cf. Acts 18:18-19).

Letter Outline

Read through Ephesians several times and identify the major breaks and divisions of the book. You'll fill in the details of each sections later as you study it.

Ephesians 1:3-6

As you may have noticed, in his opening paragraph, the apostle Paul identifies the author, destination, and initial greeting (in typical Greek fashion); then he launches into an informed, passionate praise section that shows us not only many of the specific things God has done for believers, but also the sense of awe and thanksgiving Paul had toward "the One who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing." Paul summarizes the extent of the spiritual blessings for God's children in verses 3 through 14 and expresses his prayer in verses 15 through 23 that the lives of his readers would be richly empowered as they come to a fuller understanding of their spiritual blessings in Christ.

Look at how Paul describes each of the blessings. Use a Bible dictionary or some other Bible study resource to better understand the richness of the terms Paul uses to describe each blessing. Then determine from the context what Paul means.

chosen (v. 4-6) - selected; specifically, singling out or selecting for a purpose.
predestined us to be adopted as sons (v. 5); predestine - to mark off, set beforehand.

1. Note the recurring phrase "in Him" and consider why Paul repeats it. Record your observations below.
2. When did God choose us? Why did God choose us?
3. What did God choose us for?
4. When did God predestine us? Why? What was his purpose?
5. What does it mean to be adopted as a son?

Ephesians 1:11-14

Note the shift in pronouns between verses 1-12 and 13-14.

1. made known the mystery of His will (v. 9-11). What was revealed? To whom was it revealed?
2. How and why was it made known? What is the result
3. marked with a seal (v. 13-14). When were we marked? On what basis?
4. What is the significance of the seal? Why is the Holy Spirit described as "promised"?
5. Summarize the main points and sub-points of your observations about Ephesians 1:1-14. What are the implications of those points?

Ephesians 1:15-23

Having just described God's incredible work on our behalf, Paul now describes both his thanksgiving for the spiritual lives of the Ephesians and his prayer for them: that they would be able to fully comprehend all that is true of them as Christians. Paul's confidence in God's ability to work rests on nothing less than His demonstration of strength in raising His son.

1. What is theme of the prayer (v. 15-19)?
2. How does Paul pray for that theme in the lives of the Ephesians?
3. What is Paul thankful for? What does he pray for specifically?
4. How is that theme demonstrated in what God did in the life of Christ? (v. 20-23)
5. Summarize the main points and subpoints of your observations about chapter 1. What are the implications of those points?

Ephesians 2:1-10

Having stressed the importance of the blessings of God for all those chosen in Him, Paul now emphasizes the pre-saved condition of man. This passage is one of tremendous contrast as the Apostle Paul, against the bleak backdrop of the pre-saved condition of the Ephesians, describes in vivid color the incredible God who nonetheless effected their salvation.

In answering the following questions, you may also want to look at also Colossians 1:21-22, Colossians 2:13, Romans 1:18-31, and Romans 3:9-27.

1. What is pre-saved condition of the Ephesians, and by extension all mankind? (vs. 1-3)
Note what influenced the Ephesians and what direction they were headed.
2. How did God respond to that condition? (vs. 4-7) What were God's motives? What were His actions? What was God's purpose? (Note the similarity between Paul's description of what God did for Christ 1:19-21 and his description of what God did for us in this passage.)
3. What is the nature of salvation? (vs. 8-10) How does it come about? From whom does it originate?
4. What are the implications of this passage?

Ephesians 2:11-22

In the remainder of Chapter 2, Paul contrasts for us Gentiles the almost-incomprehensibly huge difference between what our lives were like before Christ and what is true now. He emphasizes the facts that now in Jesus Christ the former distinction between Jew & Gentile has passed away; the He has now brought about one new body through the cross; and that the resulting good news is that now we Gentiles need no longer live as outsiders, but as fellow-citizens and members of the household of God.

Read verses 11-22 several times and record your conclusions under the categories below regarding the relationship between Gentiles and Jews.

1. Our state as Gentiles before Christ (vs. 11-12)
2. Our present condition as Gentiles after Christ (vs. 13-18)
3. The practical consequences of our new relationship (vs. 19-22)
4. Summarize the main points and subpoints of your observations about chapter 2. What are the implications of those points?

Ephesians 3:1-13

In this passage, Paul elaborates on the mystery that was made known through him, and how the effects of its being known ripple even to spheres far beyond what we would normally imagine.

1. How was the mystery disclosed? (vs. 1-5) When? To whom?
2. What is the content of the mystery? (vs. 6-7) What is now true of the Gentiles? How was it made true? (See also Acts 10:34-48; Acts 11:1-18; Gal. 3:14)
3. What is the result of this mystery being revealed? (vs. 8-11) What was God's purpose in revealing it? How is His purpose accomplished? Why?
4. How does this mystery effect us? (vs. 12-13) What perspective should it give us?

Ephesians 3:14-21

Having just given a detailed explanation of what God has done for all believers, Paul prays for the Ephesians, asking the Father to work in such a way that they might be able to fully comprehend and experience all God has for them.

1. Who does Paul pray to? (vs. 14-15) How does Paul describe God? What is the significance of his description? What should motivate us?
2. What is the content of Paul's prayer? (vs. 16-19) How is that accomplished? What is necessary for its accomplishment?
3. Why pray at all? (vs. 20-21) What is our confidence?
4. What are the implications of Paul's prayer for our prayers?

Figurative Uses of "walk" (peripateo)

Chapter 4 is a major transition in the book of Ephesians as is evident from verse 1: to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." Having just finished his extensive treatment of the calling we have as believers, Paul now turns to the practical implications such truth should have in our everyday lives. He begins here the second major element of Ephesians, which is how to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Though most of the second half is devoted to one's own individual walk with the Lord, this first passage takes up the area of relating to one another within the body of Christ.

Chapter 4 verse 1 gives the first command of the book: "walk in a manner worthy ..." Paul uses the term "walk" 7 times in Ephesians. Using the "concordance" below look more closely at this word's figurative uses. Pay particular attention how it is modified (e.g. walk by, with, according to, etc.) Summarize your work below.

In Ephesians:

Eph. 2:2

Eph 2:10

Eph 4:1

Eph 4:17

Eph 5:2

Eph 5:8

Eph 5:15

In Paul's Other Epistles:

Rom. 6:4

Rom 8:4

Rom 13:13

Rom 14:15

1 Cor. 3:3

1 Cor 7:17

2 Cor 4:2

2 Cor 5:7

2Cor 10:2,3

2 Cor 12:18

Ga. 5:16

Phl. 3:17,18

Col. 1:10

Col 2:6

Col 3:7

Col 4:5

1 Thes. 2:12

1 Thes 4:1

1 Thes. 4:12

2 Thes. 3:6

2 Thes 3:11

In Rest of NT:

Mk. 7:5

John 8:12

John 12:35

Acts 21:21

Heb. 13:9

1 Pe. 5:8

1 Jo. 1:6,7

1 Jo 2:6

1 Jo 2:11

2 Jo. 4

Ephesians 4:1-16

1. Assuming "unity of the Spirit" is the unity of Jew and Gentile Paul just described in Chapter 3, how do we begin to walk in a manner worthy of that unity? (vs. 1-3) What should characterize our attitude? Our reactions?
2. What is the basis of our unity (vs. 4-6)?
3. How is our unity enriched by the diversity of the body of Christ? (vs. 7-10) Who gave the gifts? Who receives them? Who gives the grace to empower them?
4. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 in verse 8, a psalm about God going to Egypt to lead his people out of slavery to the Pharaoh. What does that verse mean in the context of the Psalm? Why does Paul quote it here? How does it explain/clarify his point in Ephesians?
5. If the body is to grow, what is its foundation (vs. 11-12) What is the "job description"? Who does what?
6. What is the goal of our growth? (vs. 13-14) How long does it last?
7. What is the means of growth? (vs. 15-16) What characterizes it? What does it promote?
8. What are the implications of this passage for us as individuals and as a body?

Ephesians 4:17-32

Having begun the application half of the letter with a section about functioning correctly together as a body of believers, the apostle Paul now turns to individual walks with God. He encourages his fellow-believers to turn from their former lifestyle to a new quality of lifestyle that rejects fleshly desires, is informed by the Scriptures, and lives in dependence on God.

1. How does Paul describe the walk of the Gentiles? (v. 17-19) What is the condition of their lives? What is the nature of their experience? Was this walk natural or learned?
2. How does Paul describe the walk of those in Christ? (v. 20-24) What is the source of truth? How does the truth require change? Is this change natural or learned?
3. Compare the kind of honesty of speech and of emotions which we should put on with what we should put off (vs. 25-27). Organize your thoughts below.
4. Compare how we should contribute to needs with our hands and with our speech (vs. 28-30)
5. Compare the attitudes we should put on and off (vs. 31-32).
6. What is the key to putting these things on or off (i.e. walking uprightly)? (v. 5:1-2) Is this something we can do out of our own resources? What is our motivation? Who is our example?

Ephesians 5:1-21

1. The Greek words translated "immorality" and "impurity" together cover every kind of sexual sin. To them Paul adds "greed" or covetousness. Why does he juxtapose them? So what are we to avoid? (vs. 3).
2. Look more closely at "filthiness" (obscenity), "silly talk" and "coarse jesting." What kind of speech are we to avoid (vs. 4)?
3. Based on what you found in vs. 3-4, what is our standard as Christians for sexuality? How far-reaching is it? How would this standard have affected the Ephesians in their culture? (Look at how the Artemis cult viewed sexuality.) How does this view of sexuality affect us in our culture?
4. What are we to do instead? (vs. 4) Why is this a valid "alternative" for immorality, impurity, and coarse jesting? What does it imply about a Christian view of sexuality?
5. What is God's response to immorality, impurity & coveting? (vs. 5-6) How certain is this response? Who or what would have deceived the Ephesians? Could that also deceive us?
6. Given God's response to this lifestyle, what should our response be? (7-14) Paul uses the metaphor of light and dark. What does he mean by it? Look at the other times he uses light and dark in Ephesians. What do light and dark represent? What does that mean in practice? What should our attitude be toward darkness and its lifestyle?

7. How are Christians to walk? (vs. 15-18) What characterizes wise people? "Making the most of your time" is literally "redeeming" or "buying back" your time. Why would Paul pick that word for how we should spend our time? What does that say about walking wisely?

8. What are the results of walking wisely? (vs. 18-21) What should our speech be centered around? What attitude should we have? Consider the juxtaposition of "giving thanks" in this section. How do "giving thanks" and "being subject" fit in? Note: Several pagan cults of the day regarded intoxication as a means to inspiration from their god(s).

Ephesians 5:21-24

1. First examine the context of this passage. What has Paul told us in Chapters 1-3 about our identity in Christ, our calling, and the barriers between people?
2. In Chapter 4, what did he write about the church, how the body functions and individual calling?
3. In Chapter 4-5, what did he write about how we are to walk wisely?
4. What does this imply about Paul's view of people under someone else's authority?
5. What can you conclude about role and identity?
6. How is the wife to relate to her husband? (vs. 22-24) In what way? Why?
7. How is the husband to relate to his wife? (vs. 25-31) In what way? Why?
8. How does Christ's relationship to the church relate here? (vs. 32-33) What does Christ's example teach us?

Ephesians 6:1-9

1. How are children to relate to their parents? (vs. 6:1-3)
2. What two commands does Paul give them? What is their motivation? (See also Col. 3:20-21.)
3. How are parents to relate to children? (vs. 4) What is the problem they face? What is the solution?
4. How are slaves to relate to their masters? (vs. 5-8) What are they to do and how are they to do it? (See also Col. 3:22-4:1.)
5. How are masters to relate to slaves? (vs. 9) What are they to do and how are they to do it?
6. Whether you're married, single, a parent, a "child" or both, think about the relationships you have in which you have the authority. What implications does 5:22-6:9 have for you?
7. Now think about the relationship you have in which you are under someone's authority. What implications does 5:22-6:9 have for you?

Ephesians 6:10-24

Paul has just been outlining the kind of relationships God wants throughout various facets of everyday life. Now he turns to the invisible battle that lies behind what we can see with our eyes.

1. What is the command in verses 10-13? What is our motivation for it?

2. What is the nature of the battle? Who is the enemy? (vs. 11-12)

3. Investigate the following passages concerning this battle and write your conclusions about the nature of our enemy and the kind of war our soul is engaged in below.
 - 2 Kings 6:8-23

 - Psalm 91 (particularly 11-13)

 - Daniel 10:10-14; 12:1; Jude 5:10

 - Mark 5:1-20

 - Luke 22:31-32

 - John 8:43-44

 - 1 Peter 5:8-10

 - 1 John 4:1-4

What is the significance of each piece of armor that Paul tells the Ephesians they need to put on? Using a concordance find other references in the Scriptures that speak of the *spiritual* quality attached to each piece of armor and then summarize the significant quality being identified with that armor piece.

4. belt of TRUTH (vs. 14) Historically the belt was 6-8 inches wide and other pieces of armor were fastened to it. "Truth" elsewhere in Ephesians: 1:13; 4:21,24,25; 5:9. See also Is. 11:5

5. breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS (vs. 14) Historically, this was a vest-like sleeveless piece of metal backed by leather that protected all the vital organs from both front and back. "Righteousness" in Eph: 4:24; 5:9. See also Is. 59:17.

6. feet fitted with the gospel of PEACE (vs. 15) Historically, these were sandals with cleats or nails on the bottom to provide sure footing. "Peace" in Eph: 1:2; 2:14,15,17; 4:3. See also Is. 52:7.

7. shield of FAITH (vs. 16) Historically this was a 2'x4' shield, big enough for a man to completely hide himself behind during a flurry of arrows, etc. "Faith" in Eph: 1:15; 2:8; 3:12,17; 4:5, 13. See Ps. 5:12, Ps. 91:2-4.

8. helmet of SALVATION (vs 17) Historically, this was a metal helmet with a point on top, to protect the head in battle. "Salvation" in Eph: only here. Synonym used in 1:13. See 1 Thes. 5:8.

9. sword of the SPIRIT, which is the WORD of God (vs. 17) Historically, the sword was 2' long, sharp on both sides and pointed on the end. "Spirit" in Eph: 1:13,17; 2:2,18,22; 3:5,16; 4:3,4,23,20; 5:18. See Is. 49:1-2, Heb. 4:12. "Word" in Greek is "rhema" (a specific word or saying of God), not "logos" (God's word or truth as a whole)

10. Once "armed," what should we do? (vs. 18-20)

11. How does Paul want the Ephesians to pray for him? (vs. 18-20) Given Paul's current situation, notice what Paul does not ask them to pray about for him?

Ephesians Summary

Summary: Paul is writing to:

CHAPTER	MAIN POINT/THEME	KEY VERSE
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Congratulations! You've completed your current study. Thank God for all He has taught you through it and ask Him to write its truths upon your heart.