

TEN STUDIES IN EPHESIANS



KNOW WHO YOU ARE
BE WHO YOU ARE

TEACHING AND BIBLE STUDIES

TERM 3 2020

Weekend Teaching

4-5 Jul	God's Privileged People
11-12 Jul	Know God's Blessing (1:3-14)
18-19 Jul	Know God's Power (1:14-23)
25-26 Jul	Know God's Grace (2:1-10)
1-2 Aug	Know God's Peace (2:11-22)
8-9 Aug	Know God's Plan (3:1-13)
15-16 Aug	Know God's Love (3:14-21)
22-23 Aug	Walk worthily (4:1-6)
29-30 Aug	Walk together (4:7-16)
5-6 Sep	Walk as new people (4:17-32)
12-13 Sep	Walk in love (5:1-5)
19-20 Sep	Walk in light (5:6-14)
26-27 Sep	Walk in wisdom (5:15-21)
3-4 Oct	Submit to one another (5:18-6:9)
10-11 Oct	Take your stand (6:10-20)

Bible studies for the following week

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1. Know God's Blessings (1:1-14)
2. Know God's Power and Grace (1:15-2:10)
3. Know God's Peace (2:11-22)
4. Know God's Plan (3:1-13) * drop if you had to skip one study *
5. Know God's Love (3:14-21)
6. Walk worthily together (4:1-16)
7. Walk as new people (4:17-32)
8. Walk in light, love and wisdom (5:1-21)
9. Submit to one another (5:18-6:9)
10. Take your stand (6:10-20)

KNOW GOD'S BLESSINGS

EPHESIANS 1:1-14

DISCUSSION

1. What are the greatest blessings of being a Christian? Can you come up with at least 10 big ones and 10 little ones? Which ones do we tend to forget?

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2 AND 6:23-24

2. Paul starts and finishes his book with a word about peace and grace. Why are these so important for Christian believers?

READ EPHESIANS 1:3-10

3. What blessings do all Christians have in the heavenly realms?

4. Which of these do you tend to forget? Which do you not understand?

5. What role does "God the Father" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" have in each of the blessings? (look at every one of the verses)

6. The blessings have a purpose beyond us. How are they connected to: a) praise and b) the supremacy of Jesus Christ?

READ EPHESIANS 1:11-14

7. What other blessings do Christians enjoy:

- a. as they become Christians
- b. as they grow as Christians
- c. when Christ returns

REFLECTING

8. There are so many blessings mentioned in the opening chapter. What is the affect of hearing about them all?

9. What are one or two blessings that you need to remember most at the moment? Why?

10. Is there one verse that you wish you could learn off by heart?

11. What difference would it make to our daily lives if we remembered our all blessings?

- a. to our emotions
- b. to our work and family life
- c. to our church life
- d. to our witness for Jesus
- e. to our walk with God

KNOW GOD'S POWER AND GRACE

EPHESIANS 1:15-2:10

DISCUSSION

1. What are the contenders for the most powerful forces in the universe? Think scientifically and poetically.

READ EPHESIANS 1:15-19

2. Paul's prayers for the Ephesians are deep and encouraging. What do we learn about:

a. the reason for his thanksgiving?

b. what Paul wants from God for these christian people?

3. How does Paul's prayer for these Christians match up to what we might normally pray for other believers? Why do you think there is a difference?

4. What changes should we make to the way we pray?

(Optional 1. How do you think his prayer relates to the blessings outlined in 1:3-14?)

READ EPHESIANS 1:20-23

4. The power that Paul prays for believers is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him above all things. Why do you think this is described as “the working of his vast strength” (vs 19)?

5. Why do you think it is important for Christians to know that this power is at work in us?

(Optional 2. What else do we learn about Jesus and his relationship to the church? These will become huge themes in the rest of the letter.)

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10

7. What would you say is the condition of people without Jesus? (1-3)

8. What difference has God made to this condition? (4-10)

9. We often read these verses by themselves. How do they flow immediately on from 1:15-23 in terms of:

- a. God’s power to reverse our situation?
- b. Our destiny being linked to Christ’s?

REFLECTING

10. From everything we have seen, what difference will it be to us if we really know this plan and power of God? How will it affect the way we live today and tomorrow?

KNOW GOD'S PEACE

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

DISCUSSION

1. When have you ever felt like an outsider at work, school, travel or even in your family? What contributed to you feeling like someone different?

READ EPHESIANS 2:11-12

2. Paul writes to both Jews and non-Jews (gentiles) in the Church in Ephesus. What was the experience and reality of those who were not Jews before Jesus Christ came?

3. How is this national alienation similar and different to the personal lost-ness we saw last week in 2:1-3?

READ EPHESIANS 2:13-19

4. What difference does Jesus bring for all the nations of the world?

5. How did Jesus' death, in particular, bring an end to this hostility? How do the two peoples become one?

6. Where have you seen the healing of the hostility between nations for Christian people? Jews and Gentiles? or among other nations?

7. What do we need to do at our church and in our ministries to make sure that we do not in any way alienate people from other cultures, languages and nations? What things could effectively “deny Jesus death”?

8. How is Jesus answer to racial alienation different to current popular approaches?

(Optional 1. Why do you think it is Jesus’ resurrection that is on focus in 2:-10 and his death in 2:11-19?)

(Optional 2. Read Isaiah 42:1-9. How do we see Jesus fulfil this word?)

(Optional 3. How does Ephesians 2:11-22 change the way you read the Old Testament as a Gentile believer?)

READ EPHESIANS 2:19-22

9. What hope and joy do we all have together as God’s church?

REFLECTING

10. What changes do you have to do in your thinking and behaviour to live out the reality of God’s word here? How important is it for us to live the reality of being one people of God defined by Christ rather than many defined by race or culture?

KNOW GOD'S PLAN

EPHESIANS 3:1-13

DISCUSSION

1. What are some famous plot twists at the end of movies you've seen? (Don't spoil anything released in the last five years, but older than that is fair game!)
2. Does knowing the ending of a movie change the way you watch it again?
3. What are the biggest plot twists in the Bible? How does knowing the end change the way you read the whole things?

READ EPHESIANS 3:1-2 AND EPHESIANS 4:1-3; 4:17

4. Many think that in chapter 3 is Paul taking an aside before he gets to chapter 4.
 - a. What's his aim in 4:1-3 and 4:17?
 - b. Just from 3:1-2, what do you think Paul's aside might be about and why it might be important?

(Remember "gentiles" = a Jewish word for the non-Jewish nations)

c. Most people think about prison ministry and helping out the prisoner, but here Paul is writing this letter from prison. What can we learn from Paul about ministry in hard places?

READ EPHESIANS 3:1-7

5. Biblically speaking “a mystery” is something that is secret. A revealed mystery is a secret that has been made known.

a. What are the deep mysteries now revealed in Christian era? (especially in regard to 1. God’s person and 2. God’s people)

b. How were these kept secret in the Old Testament? Were there hints along the way?

c. How are they now revealed?

d. What difference did these revealed mysteries make for Paul?

e. What about you: especially in the way you read your Bible and see others?

(Optional 1: Read Colossians 1:25-28. How does this confirm our understanding of what we’ve just read in Ephesians?)

READ EPHESIANS 3:8-11

6. What else do we learn about these once hidden and now revealed secrets:

- a. to Paul's ministry
- b. the church
- c. God's character

READ EPHESIANS 3:12-13

7. What practical difference does knowing God's now revealed mystery, Jesus to

- a. our confidence (v12)
- b. our way of seeing the world (vs13)

8. Knowing God's secret changes everything. How does knowing God's greatest plot twist:

- a. change how we read the Bible ourselves
- b. change our perspectives on i) possessions, ii) suffering, iii) our fellow humans

KNOW GOD'S LOVE

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

DISCUSSION

1. When are we most likely to doubt the love of God?
2. When are we most likely to forget God's love?
3. How important do you think it is for a Christian to know this truth?

READ EPHESIANS 3:14-21

4. What do you think are the two or three things at heart of the prayer that Paul is praying?
Everyone write something down before sharing.
5. How do think these aspects relate to each other?
6. What other supporting truths does Paul seek for the church?

7. What do we learn about prayer and ...

a. God the Father

b. God the Son

c. God the Holy Spirit

8. What do about prayer and ...

a. power

b. knowledge

c. love

9. How do our private and group prayers measure up against Paul's? What is similar and different?

10. What would be gained if we prayed more like this? How can we put this into practice?

WALK WORTHILY TOGETHER

EPHESIANS 4:1-16

DISCUSSION:

1. People can achieve a lot by themselves, but even more when they come together.
 - a. What good things have been achieved by people working together?
 - b. What evil things have people done by people working together?

2. What kinds of stresses and strains face us when we gather together:
 - a. in families
 - b. in work
 - c. in church

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-6

3. What will it look like for us to walk worthily of the calling we received? Where do you feel the biggest challenge? Why does Paul need to urge these things especially as we work together?

4. What unites us as God's people? How can you see the Trinity in verses 4-6?

5. We are not told to create unity amongst us, but instead to keep the unity of the Spirit. What difference will it make for the way we relate to each other if we know that God himself creates the unity?

(Optional 1: Read Psalm 133. How important does God see unity amongst his people?)

READ EPHESIANS 4:7-16

6. What gifts does the risen Lord Jesus Christ pour out on his church?

7. Why does he give out these gifts to his people? What is Jesus' purpose for his church?

8. What role does Jesus have for every member of his body?

(Optional 2: What does it teach us about Jesus and his shepherding that he uses "under-shepherds", pastors and teachers to care for his flock?)

REFLECTING

9. What difference will understanding Paul's teaching about the church in everything we've read today (4:1-16)

- a. on how we structure our church
- b. on what we focus on as church
- c. on our attitude toward Jesus and his body

WALK AS NEW PEOPLE

EPHESIANS 4:17-32

DISCUSSION:

1. What do you find best helps you change your bad habits and destructive lifestyle choices?
2. What do you usually say or do to help other people change? What if they are just really stuck?

READ EPHESIANS 4:17-24

3. How important is the inner-life (mind, heart, spirit) for ...
 - a. our lives before we were Christian
 - b. our transformed life in Christ
4. How do you see this transformation in your own life? How does your inner-life affect what you actually do?
5. How do these verses flow from what we've seen from the book so far? (if you are stuck re-read 1:13; 2:11-13; 3:16-17; 4:1)

(Optional 1: Read Romans 6:10-14 and 12:1-2. How does the transformation of our mind affect what we do with our bodies? How is similar to what we have just seen in Ephesians 4:17-24)

READ EPHESIANS 4:25-32

6. What is God's command to us about the following ... (pay attention to his advice, motivation and the re-direction he suggests)

- a. our speech?
- b. our anger?
- c. stealing?
- d. how he wants us to treat each other?

7. How will this new-way-of-living flow from our changed mind/heart/inner person?

(Optional 2: What do you think it means to grieve God's Spirit? The book of James describes the Spirit as also being jealous for us to live for God. James 4:4-8)

REFLECTING

8. Where do you need to change your thinking? Where are you most in danger of thinking like the world and not like someone who follows Christ? How can you change?

9. What is one thing that you know right now God is calling you to change in your behaviour? What principles will help you change? What can you put in the place of that destructive behaviour that will help lock in living for God?

WALK AS IN LIGHT, LOVE AND WISDOM

EPHESIANS 5:1-21

DISCUSSION:

1. How would you finish this statement: "If other Christians only did one thing they would be a better witness for Jesus ..."?
2. How would you finish the same statement if it was about you instead of other people?

READ EPHESIANS 5:1-14

3. What areas of Christian living are on focus in these verses?
4. Which area strikes you the most at the moment? Which would make the biggest impact on your life if it changed?
5. What place does following Jesus have in all this, especially in the following verses:
 - a. v1-2
 - b. v5
 - c. v8-10
 - d. v14

(Optional 1: What do we need to learn from the extremely strong warnings God gives us here about not living for Christ? vs 3-5, 6, 11. Why are these warnings so important for vital Christianity? and why are they so often neglected by modern Christians?)

READ EPHESIANS 5:15-21

6. What place does wisdom and the Holy Spirit have in the Christian life?

7. Why do you think drinking too much alcohol is contrasted to this Christian living?

(Optional 2: The Bible has a lot to say about drinking that is more subtle than just forbidding alcohol. Read <https://thebibleatoz.com/2018/05/20/h-heroes-at-drinking-wine-aka-intoxicated-masculinity/>)

8. How can you put into practice the Spirit-filled life outlined in verses 19-21? How can you do this even in the challenging times of COVID19?

REFLECTING

9. From what you have read what changes will lead to you being a better witness for Jesus Christ? What changes will make following Jesus more joyful and deep?

10. What is one first step you can change right now and put into practice today?

SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER

EPHESIANS 5:18-6:9

DISCUSSION

1. Which is the hardest place to consistently live out your Christian life: at work, by yourself or at home with those you live with? Why?

2. What are the particular challenges at the workplace and at home?

READ EPHESIANS 5:18-6:9

3. What are the following groups told to do:
 - a. Wives

 - b. Husbands

 - c. Children

 - d. Parents (Fathers)

d. Slaves

e. Masters

4. How does Jesus Christ feature in God's call upon each group? What profound truths do we learn about relating to God through relating to each other?

5. What difference would it make if we lived more this way

a. To our encouragement of each other

b. To our witness for Jesus Christ

c. To our growth in Christ-like character

6. "Without the context of Spirit-filled thankfulness, joy and encouragement (5:18-21) Christian submission would just like Islamic submission and leading could be domineering". Discuss how we need the context to understand how to live out these verses.

7. What do you need to apply from these verses? What questions do you still have?

TAKE YOUR STAND

EPHESIANS 6:10-24

DISCUSSION

1. What forces are most opposed to Jesus and his followers? Where do most clearly see opposition the world around us? Where does it exist, but we find it hard to see?

READ EPHESIANS 6:10-17

2. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places, and we called to walk with Christ in our new life. Here we are also called to stand.

- a. Why are we called to stand?

- b. Who are we to stand against?

- c. What difference is there in standing by yourself and standing in the Lord?

3. What difference will wearing each piece of God's armour/arms have in this stand?

4. How would this famous quote apply to our standing in the Lord. "Those who stand for nothing fall for anything."¹?

(Optional 1: How does God's call for us to stand flow from every other chapter in the book in Ephesians? Can you see any links? eg. 1:19; 2:2; 3:10,20; 4:27; 5:14-16)

READ EPHESIANS 6:18-20

5. Why are prayers so important in the spiritual battle?

6. What in particular does Paul want prayers for? How can this encourage us to pray for others and for ourselves?

READ EPHESIANS 6:21-24

7. How is Paul's last words an appropriate end to this letter?

8. Where do you need to grow in your walk with Christ?

9. Where do you need to take a stand?

¹ Alexander Hamilton