

Ephesians

A CHURCH ALIVE IN CHRIST

A verse by verse bible study
through the book of Ephesians.

Brought to you by
Pastor Carl Dennis
of
LifeSpring Bible Church



INTRODUCTION

When I was a young Pastor in my early twenties, an evangelist came to preach a week of meetings at our church. While we were talking in my office one morning, he asked me what had filled up my trash can. I unashamedly confessed that I just threw my sermon notes away after I finished preaching what was in the notes. The evangelist, David Briggs, asked me if there was a Christian bookstore in town that we could visit.

The next morning, I had the privilege of escorting him to the largest Christian bookstore in America at that time. He took me straight to a very large aisle with nothing but commentaries from floor to ceiling. He wryly stated to me that these were nothing more than sermon notes that some preachers just discard in a trash can when they are finished with them. This was one of those small moments in life that bring about great change.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Ephesians is one of the most concentrated doctrinal letters in the New Testament. It is a book for people who understand the basics of the Word of God and who desire to grow in the Word and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ABOUT LIFESPING BIBLE CHURCH

We aren't a huge mega-church and we make mistakes like any other church. In fact, we are a mess! That is because people (just like us) and life are messy. But it is ALL ABOUT JESUS. We don't have to be perfect for Jesus, in fact, perfect people are not allowed at LifeSpring!

Our mission is to build relationships that cultivate a Life in Christ. We are called to Love God, Love Others, and make Disciples.

Our story is a testimony of redemption. We have experienced joy, pain, victory, defeat, laughter and heartache, but in the midst of the deepest trials we have always found that God is faithful and there is freedom in Him!

We are a community of broken people discovering what it means to enjoy God together. We are about being transformed by the person of Jesus. We are committed to demonstrating the heart of Jesus to Alaska and the world beyond. We are about professing redemption, not perfection. We are about making disciples and being disciples.

Ultimately, we are about the gospel woven into our lives and changing who we are, because we are about Jesus.

The best way to truly find out about us is to join us and hear firsthand how the transformational power of Jesus is continually changing us.

You can find more at www.lifespringak.com

ABOUT PASTOR CARL DENNIS

After 40 plus years of ministry and numerous mentors over the course of my life, to me, servitude is one of the most important words in the English language. Ruth, my wife of over forty years, and I are humbled to be asked to serve the people of LifeSpring Bible Church along with the rest of the leadership team.

I was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, but moved our family of five to Alaska in 1989. I have been a Christian since I was eighteen and I as of this writing will be over sixty years old. Ruth and I are very excited about what God wants to accomplish in our city.

It is our most sincere prayer that God will continue to reveal himself in a special way in our services, and that he will grow the fellowship as he sees fit.

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THE PLAN OF GOD

Greetings

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

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

The name Paul means small.

However, he also called himself an apostle.

Reference - Galatians 1:1 ESV Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

In [Acts 1:15-26](#), we have a direct reference to activities that took place in Jerusalem that were not a part of the original instructions given by two individuals dressed in white after Christ ascended into heaven.

What we know from reading the scripture is that impetuous Peter stood up and steered the activities to replacing Judas as an apostle.

It says that lots were cast for two men and that Mathias was chosen.

However, this is the last time we ever hear the name of Mathias mentioned in the Bible.

I think it is ironic that in [Galatians 1:1](#), Paul refers to himself as an apostle, not of men, (possibly those that voted for Mathias), or man, (possibly a reference to Peter).

When the disciples were given instructions on what to do while waiting in Jerusalem, picking a replacement apostle was not included.

One might ask, if this true, why is the account of Mathias included in the word of God?

I believe the story is there to show the fallacy of man and the faithfulness of God.

Apostles are chosen by God, not by man.

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

This is a familiar salutation that is repeated in much of the New Testament.

[Romans 1:7](#), [1 Corinthians 1:3](#), [2 Corinthians 1:2](#), [Galatians 1:3](#), [Philippians 1:2](#), and [Colossians 1:2](#).

Notice that the word grace always comes before peace.

I believe that there is a reason for this.

Before someone can truly have peace, they must have some understanding of the grace of God.

God's Plan Laid Out. Verses 3-14

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

11In 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, 12so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13In 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, 14who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. 15In him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

The reason why I wanted us to take a good look at verses 3-14 in total, is that in the original Greek, you can see that these verses are one long thought in the mind of God with only one period at the end of verse 12, added by the translators.

All the things discussed in these verses involves the plan of God for mankind.

Also note that this plan was masterminded by God, before the foundation of the world.

So, this plan was in the heart and mind of God before the physical realm we now live in, was even created.

We could neither help with the plan or mess it up.

The plan was as strong and eternal as God Himself.

Let's take the time to break down the verses one at a time.

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,

Verse 3 is praise to God the Father.

Notice that we bless Him because He first blessed us.

God takes the initiative and we respond.

Praise acclaims God for what He has done.

Worship acclaims Him for who He is.

This verse also tells us that our blessings are spiritual and in heavenly places.

There are two reasons for this.

First, the physical realm had not yet been created.

Secondly, all physical blessings have their roots in spiritual blessings.

For example, the natural world most likely has a similar look to that of heaven, a physical place that has its roots in the spiritual realm.

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

Notice again that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world.

This shows the immensity of God, who has always existed.

We are bound by time, but God is not.

Isn't it amazing that God designed a solution for our lives when the problem did not yet exist?

It is close to blasphemy to think that we are going to face a problem tomorrow or next week, that God has not already made a way of escape.

The word "chose" in the Greek is kalleo, which means to call out.

There was a time before the foundation of the world when God called out your name as, "holy and blameless."

5 He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will,

Notice that the words, "In love," from verse 4, should be included in this verse.

The Greek word for predestined is proorizo.

It means to predesign.

Predestination does not mean, foreordination.

In other words, it does not mean that God has your life planned for you, and you have no say in it.

Your will is precious to God because He made you in His image and He has a will.

Verse 5 is telling us that God had a plan for us to be His children.

Reference - Romans 8:29 ESV For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be con-

formed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Now on to Ephesians 1:6

6 to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

The motivation for God is always grace,

In the **Beloved**, notice that this word is capitalized,

That's because it is a formal name for Christ.

This goes along with the teaching that includes words such as, "In Christ", "through Christ", "in the Beloved."

This is known as the, "In Christ," message.

These phrases show up in the bible several hundred times.

That means that it is important to come into the knowledge that we have everything we have, "in Christ."

Know this, there is only one place of acceptance and that is in the Son.

We are accepted, in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

Again, it is only in Him that we have any blessings at all, including redemption and forgiveness.

The word redemption means to buy back.

We were owned by the Lord at one time and, through sin, we were lost to Him after Adam's transgression.

When Adam sinned, he lost his position with God and threw the rest of mankind into slavery.

Every man and woman born into this world through natural parents is a slave.

Why, because slaves beget slaves.

Slaves do not give birth to free people.

Freedom must be purchased.

Slaves receive no wages and therefore have no ransom money to free themselves.

8 which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

This is, in my opinion, the best description of God's grace that I can imagine.

Terms I have used in the past:

Unmerited favor.

God's riches at Christ's expense.

However, in its simplest form, God's grace is lavished upon us.

It is literally applied in a liberal fashion.

In the KJV, *He has abounded toward us with His grace.*

Also, in the KJV, it tells us that He gives us wisdom and prudence, (good sense) or as it is in the ESV, wisdom and insight.

I will settle for any way that God wants to give it to me.

So not only does He give us natural and spiritual blessings, He gives us the ability to flow supernaturally in our everyday situations.

Both attributes are the product of a Spirit filled and Word filled life.

Here's what this looks like; wisdom is the correct application of knowledge.

Or another way of putting it, knowledge is input, wisdom is output.

Or still another, knowledge is being a hearer of the word, wisdom is being a doer of the word.

Knowledge is gained by us being diligent.

Reference - KJV 2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

ESV 2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Notice that God will not do this for us.

Once we have done our part and studied, God will help us to put what we have learned to work in the form of wisdom.

Reference - ESV James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Notice that it doesn't say, if any man lacks knowledge, because that is your responsibility.

This type of effort is honored and expected by God, and the Holy Spirit helps our understanding of the Word we go after.

Furthermore, God not only gives us wisdom, He gives us good sense and prudence or insight.

Believers full of the word should come up with such commonsense decisions that that the world would stand in awe as to why they could not see the simplicity of the answer.

VS 8 should be a daily confession of every believer: *"My God is lavishing wisdom and insight upon me, in me and through me for every circumstance and problem that I will face today."*

There is no weapon formed against me that can prosper when I am armed with the word of God

and the Holy Spirit.

9 making known to us the mystery of His will, according to his purpose, which He set forth in Christ

The Greek here is more accurately translated, “having already made known.”

So, what God refers to in this verse as, “the mystery of his will,” is discussed in more detail in chapter three, about God’s love for the gentiles.

In this case, the word “mystery”, deals with a subject that was hidden in the past, but is now revealed.

Many of the blessings we have in the church age were largely unknown in the Old Testament.

People were not saved in the Old Testament as we know it today.

Look at it this way; people who died during the dispensation covered by the Old Testament were afforded their place in heaven by looking forward to the event of Christ’s death, while we look back at it.

Both are going to have their place in heaven by faith, because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Right now, heaven is in divine order under the reign of God Himself.

On earth, we have a different story.

There are two kingdoms on this earth headed by two leaders, Jesus Christ and Satan.

Jesus is the Head of the Church, and Satan is the god of this world.

We the believers, are in it not of it.

The bible tells us that there is coming a day when Satan’s kingdom will be destroyed by the coming of Jesus Christ to take His rightful throne.

Jesus will rule on this earth as He has in Heaven.

Heaven and earth will function as one kingdom, and we will be ruling with Him.

This will be the result of God’s plan throughout all the ages.

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,

An inheritance is the possession of an heir.

Heirship is not something that is worked for or earned.

If it is worked for, then you call it something else, like a j-o-b.

No, it is more like something which is the rightful possession through birth.

Heirship is based on family ties, not on self-effort.

Reference - Romans 8:16-17 ESV 17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

VS 11 also tells us our inheritance was planned by God as a part of the package of our redemption.

Notice again that God planned the inheritance before the children were ever born.

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,

Reference - KJV 12 That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

The translators of the KJV in these verses, may have missed the mark.

The word trusted, in the KJV is better translated as hope, as it is in the ESV.

Hope is a much-misunderstood word in today's world.

We can pray for the sick and ask them afterwards, are you healed.

Many times, I have had people respond by saying, "I hope so."

It's not that this answer is completely wrong, it's just not a good reference for the type of hope spoken of in this passage.

The type of hope referred to by folks answering the question of their healing is more like a wish than anything near the type of hope that is referred to in this scripture.

In other words, most people think of hope as wishful thinking.

The type of hope referred to here is more like a steadfast confidence.

Hope like this comes from the same place faith does: the word of God.

Notice that Hope comes before faith.

Faith is what makes hope a reality.

Reference - KJV Hebrews 11: 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of

things not seen

Faith has the power to obtain the goal set by hope.

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

When a person buys a piece of property, he may put earnest money down as a guarantee that the rest of the money is coming.

When we were born again, God gave us a down payment on our inheritance which is in heaven.

That down payment is a guarantee that God will come through on the rest of our inheritance.

The down payment on our inheritance is the Holy Spirit.

Just think, if the down payment is this good, what must the balance of the inheritance look like.

In most transactions, the down payment is usually a small portion of the purchase price.

The Holy Spirit brings us new life, His infilling presence, comfort, communication with Father, and a supernatural love for those around us.

All of this is just the down payment on the life to come.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE SAINTS

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,

16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

Having written the preceding section of this letter describing what God did for us before the foundation of the world, Paul then expressed a prayer for the saints at Ephesus.

Notice for the purposes of this bible study that there is no difference between saints then and saints now.

When it comes to this prayer, there is no early church and a late church.

We are all part of one church, the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What was the event that caused Paul to start praying this prayer?

I think that it is interesting that Paul didn't really begin to pray this prayer until he had heard of their faith and love.

That's unusual, because that's when most people stop praying.

We hear about good things happening in someone's life and we will stop praying and move on to someone else.

I can't help but believe that when we hear a good report about someone operating in faith and love, instead of pulling up our tent stakes and moving on, we need to increase our prayers for these folks.

We need to follow Paul's example in our own lives and put greater effort into our prayers when someone comes into God's will for their life.

When someone starts coming into faith and love, maybe that's when we need to pray for them the way that Jesus prayed for Peter because Satan was going to try to sift him like wheat.

Most of the attacks on our lives are because of what we are doing right, not because we are doing wrong.

Paul also said in this verse that he not only prayed for them but that he did not cease to give thanks for them.

Thanksgiving should be a part of our everyday lives as priests before God.

17 that 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,

18 having 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,

These verses open with the subject that will be dealt with for the rest of this chapter.

Paul introduces three things:

1. The hope of our calling
2. The riches of our inheritance
3. The power of God that raised Jesus from the dead.

Remember, God Himself wants us to have, “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

*Isaiah 33:6 ESV and He will be the stability of your times,
abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;
the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.*

If we are students of the word and people of prayer, God will bring illumination, revelation and wisdom when we ask Him.

Now, what are we told?

We are told that our eyes must be enlightened.

Here's how it works; revelation occurs when the wisdom of God, which resides in our spirit, explodes across our conscious minds.

Illumination occurs when your spirit and your mind line up with each other.

Have you ever had something come into your consciousness that you were at least smart enough to realize that it didn't originate with your present IQ?

Suddenly, you say, I see it.

That doesn't mean that you see it with your natural eyes, it means that you see it with the *eyes of your heart*.

So, if the word of God in Ephesians is piercing the void, we are beginning to see the vividness of the plan.

This is again, another example of how wisdom is the correct application of knowledge.

This teaches us that God will bring illumination, revelation and wisdom when we ask Him.

I think that the first thing we see in Ephesians, if God is illuminating our eyes, is the hope of our calling.

Where have we seen this reference to the word, calling, in the previous verses that we have studied?

Verse 4 even as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

Verse 18 is important because of what we learned about what hope means.

Hope comes before faith, then faith becomes the substance of the thing that is hoped for.

In this case, this verse is telling me that there is coming a day that is called, “*the hope of our calling.*”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV 13But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Why is this called a hope?

Because it is still in the future!

However, while the world has nothing to look forward to in the days to come, we can lift our heads up because our redemption draws near.

The manifestation of our blessed hope is one day closer.

We talk about how wonderful heaven will be, and how great things used to be.

Remember, God knows no time, today is as important to Him as yesterday and tomorrow.

So, all our present and future blessings are based on the past tense work on the cross and this brings us to *verses 19 and 20.*

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might

20 that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Five Greek words translated as, “power”, look like this:

Dunimus, where we get the word dynamite from, it means inherent power, or more accurately, “*power stored within something.*”

Energia, means outward or overt power, where we get the word energy from. This word is a outward display of the first word.

Kratos, or “*ruling power.*” Our word democratic, or rule of the people comes from this word.

Ischus, means endowed power. Power that is given to someone because of their office, a crowned king or elected official.

Exeusia, never should have been translated as power, should have been, authority.

So, get ready to be blown away by verses 19 and 20.

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power (dunimus)toward us who believe, according to the working (energia)of His great (kratos) might (ischus)

20 that He worked in Christ when He raised him from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

This means that there was a day when all of God’s ruling power, and all of God’s inherent power, was put into the form of energy.

That was the day that Jesus was raised from the dead.

More power was displayed that day than had ever been displayed to that point in time.

22 And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

What exactly, is under the feet of Jesus?

If Christ is the head of the church, and we are the body of Christ, then that’s why you can believe that you have been given authority over Satan and his kingdom.

In Chapter 1, we looked at the plan of God the Father to redeem us from our sins.

Remember that God the Father is the author of the plan, Jesus Christ executed the plan, and the Holy Spirit is the revealer of the plan.

The theme of Chapter 2 is the work of Jesus on the cross to put the plan of God into effect.

For God to have implemented such an awesome plan, we must have been in quiet a mess.

Remember the triple curse, first we were under the curse of sin and its penalty.

Secondly, we were under the world's system ruled by Satan and his forces.

Thirdly, we were under the rule of the unrenewed mind, the nature of the flesh.

We needed help!

HOW GOD FOUND US

In Chapter 1, we looked at the plan of God the Father to redeem us from our sins.

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Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

The Greek word for *trespasses*, is *paraptoma*. This is better translated into the English word as *blunder*.

In other words, *unknown sin*.

The Greek word for sins, is *harmartia*, or *known sin*.

The sinner today is not only lost in sin he knows about, but also in those that he does not know to be sin.

God made us alive from both types of sin and raised us up through the work of the cross.

2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

This verse says that when you were unsaved that you walked according to the organized course of this world.

Sinners today, (and some Christians) think that they are doing their own thing.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

They are being manipulated and led by the god of this world.

They are not doing their own thing; they are doing the devil's thing.

Sinners are citizens of Satan's world.

God has given his children the assignment to break the power of Satan and his demons to set the unbelievers free to become citizens of heaven.

3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

This verse says that before you were born again, you were controlled by the flesh and the unrenewed mind.

Reference - Romans 8:6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit it is life and peace.

When your mind is in line with your spirit, there is peace.

When your mind is in line with your flesh, only things of death can be produced from your life.

God calls these two conditions, gold silver and precious stones, (spiritual), or wood, hay and stubble, (carnal).

The unbelievers need is not represented by what he/she does, but rather by what they are.

The sinner does not need to stop sinning as much as their need for a change of their nature.

The sinner is not a sinner because he/she sins, they sin because they are sinners.

In the first three verses of this chapter, we found out what condition we were in when God found us,

Verse 1, we were spiritually dead.

Verse 2, we were under Satan and his system.

Verse 3, we were controlled by our flesh and our unrenewed mind.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us,

Notice the first two words of this verse.

The first three verses were all about us and the terrible condition we were in.

But God, what a statement!

The Greek word for rich, is plusios, means outrageously rich.

What did God have to love so much, nothing.

That is why it is called, great love.

5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

6 and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

He loved us when we were dead.

There was nothing in us to love.

Remember, God did not love us because of us, He loved us because of himself.

In the KJV, the word “together,” was very important, (three times).

Also, Paul instructed us that it had to be Christ, in the form of a man in a substitutionary position that died for us.

Never forget that we were together with Him when good things happened.

Reference - Acts 17:28 for “In Him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed His offspring.”

Back to Ephesians 2:7

7 so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

What is the grace being referred to in this verse?

God not only has a plan for us here on earth after we are born again, but also through eternity.

Just think, if God has a plan for us throughout eternity, He must have a plan for us to make it through the problems we face in life.

If your future is this secure, surely your present is also secure.

This verse tells us that there is more grace waiting for us in heaven than we ever had here on earth.

Reference - James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore, it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Reference - Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Evidently, God has stored up for us all the grace we will need throughout eternity.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The Greek language here is unique.

In the Wuest translation the verse from the Greek reads like this; *For by the grace have you been saved in time past completely, through faith with the result that your salvation persists through present time.*

This means that you were and are saved, whether you feel like it or not.

You were saved in the past and it continues.

What if someone close to you showed you something that was priceless and told you that he had already deposited for you, everything you ever need to make the purchase happen.

Faith is the wonderful tool given to us acquire all of God's blessings.

Be careful not to fall into the trap of worshipping faith.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The Greek word for *workmanship*, is *poema*.

This is where we get the English word, poem.

This means we are God's poetic creation.

Like all beautiful poems, the glory goes to the author.

We are His masterpiece!

Remember, you do not do good works for your salvation.

We are saved so that we can produce good works.

Jesus saved us and changed our natures.

Good works do not produce a good nature.

A good nature produces good works.

JESUS REMOVED THE BARRIER

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

This verse shows us that racism only exists in the flesh, not in the spirit.

Circumcision, like water baptism does not save anyone.

But what it teaches does. (The Plan)

Circumcision was instituted by God to teach separation from the world.

The Jews believed that circumcision caused a person to be acceptable to God which isn't true, but what it teaches can.

12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Before we were born again, a barrier existed between God and us, and between Jews and Gentiles.

According to this verse, we were in bad shape.

Notice that we were not strangers to Israel, but from the commonwealth.

To understand this better, ask yourself a few questions.

What made Abraham Jewish?

Was it that he was circumcised?

Was it that he kept a covenant?

Reference - Genesis 15:6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Abraham was a Gentile and faith in God turned him into the first Jew and the father of us all.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Reference - Job 9:2-3 "Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? 3 If one wished to contend with Him, one could not answer Him once in a thousand times.

Reference - Job 9:32-33 For He is not a man, as I am, that I might answer Him, that we should come to trial together. 33 There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

Job understood that we needed a go-between, arbitrator, an intercessor.

If there was one man capable of laying one hand on man while getting away with laying another hand on God, we could be united.

Christ could satisfy the claims of man because He was man,

Jesus did all the heavy lifting; we merely accept the gift provided for us.

This means all the glory goes to Jesus who executed the plan and God the Father who originated it.

We can receive no glory at all.

14 For He himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

Reference - 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

We are guilty of relegating this verse to meaning old things that includes cigarettes, beer, chewing tobacco, etc.

The important list includes our old position verses our new position.

We had no life because we were in Satan's kingdom.

Now after salvation, all things are new.

We have a position in Christ, seated at God's right hand.

We once were in the kingdom of darkness, now we are in the kingdom of light.

We were once in Adam, now we are in Christ.

It is true that we should have our lives clean before God, and unclean habits must be dealt with.

It should be because we are in Christ, in the family, and we should desire to walk as children of light.

We do not give up old habits to be saved.

We become saved and now can put away the hindrances of the devil.

We have the Word of God to feed the inner man, the ability to fellowship with God through prayer and personal times of praise and worship.

True equality between races only truly exists in the body of Christ.

Only the Holy Spirit can remove the prejudice placed in the heart by Satan.

It can't be legislated away or removed by man's own will or desire, but only by the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

Reference - KJV Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Enmity means barrier.

This verse says He destroyed it.

He did not build a bridge over it, He totally wiped it out.

Before Joshua took the children of Israel into the promised land, he took them to a mountain called Ebal and read to them the curses associated with disobeying the law.

He then took them to the mountain called Gerizim and read to them the blessings associated with obeying the law.

For each reading the people responded by saying amen at the end of the reading and this became what the two readings had in common.

What was different was that Joshua built an altar at Ebal because sacrifices were made for the sin of disobedience for the children of Israel.

This account is recorded in [Deuteronomy 28](#).

[Ephesians 2:15](#) makes this null and void.

God's purpose in destroying the barrier was to make one new man, the body of Christ for all believers.

That believer can be Jew or Gentile, white, black, red, yellow, male, female, bond or free.

True unity exists nowhere but in Christ.

16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

The cross was the finale fulfillment of the law.

Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial part of the law when He went to the cross.

He was the perfect sacrifice.

He fulfilled all the other ordinances when He walked a perfect life here on earth before Father.

This is exactly what Christ was referring to when on the cross, He declared, "It is finished."

The law ended at the cross.

Reference - Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

The law only lasted from Moses to Jesus.

On the cross, Jesus removed the law by fulfilling it.

He nailed it to the cross and abolished it.

Reference - Colossians 2:14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

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

Those who were far off were the Gentiles.

Those who were near were the Jews.

One group was a distance away and one was near.

However, whether you are close or far away, doesn't mean you are In.

The new birth will save a Jew or a Gentile.

We both come in the same way, by one Spirit, unto the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Jews and Gentiles are now fellow citizens.

We are all from one city, whose builder and maker is God.

Reference - Hebrews 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Reference - Hebrews 11:14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

Reference - Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Remember, a cornerstone is what brings two walls together.

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

We are living stones put together by God.

In the old testament book of I Kings Chapter 6, the temple that was being built had its cedar carved out in Lebanon and its stones cut outside of Jerusalem.

Yet the work was so precise that no sounds were made while the temple was erected.

No hammers were needed.

Even though we all have different personalities, natural origins, social positions, we are joined together by the Holy Spirit.

A LOOK AT THE MYSTERY

The central character of chapter 3 is the Holy Spirit.

This chapter also defines part of the plan that was reserved for this age, the church age.

God had a plan in His heart that was not revealed until the time of the Church that makes our day the most exciting to be in that has ever existed.

1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

“For this reason,” is a reference to the end of the previous chapter where Paul is discussing the building up of the church.

Because of the Church and Paul’s part in it, he is now a prisoner of the Lord.

Notice that even though he is a prisoner in Rome, he does not call himself a prisoner of Nero or Caesar, but the “prisoner of Jesus Christ.”

Even though he is in prison, the Lord is using him to bring this gospel to the believers in Ephesus.

The apostle may be bound, but the gospel never is.

2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you,

The Bible is divided into seven dispensations.

The Old Testament is divided into five and the New Testament is in two.

The first is from the time that Adam and Eve were created until the fall, known as the, “*Age of Innocence*.”

It appears that each age in the Old Testament began with God’s grace and ends with man’s failure.

The second age is called the, “*Age of Conscience*,” that ended at the flood of Noah’s time.

The third is called the, “*Age of Human Government*,” which ended at the Tower of Babel.

The fourth age began with Abraham, called the, “*Age of Promise*,” that lasted until the Egyptian captivity, when God raised up a deliverer named Moses.

This ushered in the last dispensation of the Old Testament called the, “*Age of the Law*.”

The age we now live in was birthed on the Day of Pentecost, when the, “*Church Age*,” began, or maybe better known as the, “*Age of Grace*.”

The final age is known as the, “*Millennial Age.*”

3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

Reference - Galatians 1:11-12

11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The word mystery comes from the Greek word, “*mysterion.*”

This word is used throughout the New Testament.

Jesus used it quite often in the parables to introduce the church age, called the, “*mysteries of the kingdom.*”

When this word is used it means something that “*was,*” unknown to us.

5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

This revelation includes the fact that Gentiles can be born again and enjoy the blessings of the covenant.

Here are the main points of this dispensation that did not exist in the Old Testament;

1. The individual priesthood of each believer. (I Peter 2:9)
2. The infilling of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:15)
3. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 3:16)
4. The Church. (Matthew 16:18)
5. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:31)
6. The rapture of the church. (I Corinthians 15: 51-52)

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

We know that the name Paul, means small.

When Paul was an unbeliever, he considered himself to be, “the chief of sinners.”

In other words, he was at the top of the ladder.

As a believer, he considers himself to be, the least of the least.

I want you to know that you could have been the richest, most powerful and famous sinner in the world and now become the lowest member of the Body of Christ, but you still took a giant step up.

If you want to be used by God, don't attempt to promote yourself.

Men may not know who or where you are, but God knows.

If you try to exalt yourself, God Himself will humble you.

9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,

Before all dispensations began, God knew the mystery.

It may have been hidden from men in the Old Testament, but nothing is hidden from God.

The church age, or mystery, was revealed to Paul by God to preach and reveal to men for an important reason.

10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

This verse excites me to no end.

God doesn't come down and tell the devil how smart he is.

He shows him how smart he is through us, the church.

God hid the mystery of the plan in Christ.

That begs the question, who all was he hiding it from?

When Jesus rose from the dead, He gave all authority to the Church in His name.

When a believer, that knows what he is doing, uses the name of Jesus, all hell comes to a halt.

God is glorified and the devil is humiliated.

The word of tells us that we were created inferior to angels.

Psalms 8:5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Hebrews 2:7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor

We are inferior by creation, but through new birth we are superior by position.

What humiliates the devil so, is to be stopped through the authority in an inferior creature called man.

We cannot stop Satan in our own name, but we can in the name of Jesus.

In the name of Jesus, we can;

- Cast out devils.
- Speak with new tongues.
- Lay hands on the sick and see them recover.

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

Notice that verse 12 says we have boldness and confidence in Christ to approach the throne of God.

We do this through faith in Him.

It is the faith that He gave us to approach Him in the Throne Room of Grace.

We went from being creatures that would drop dead in the presence of God to being children that kneel at His throne and make our petitions known to Him.

AGAIN, PAUL PRAYS

13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

This is Paul's second prayer in this letter.

Paul prayed his first prayer after telling us of all that God did for us in Christ in eternity past.

Now he prays again after telling us of God's foreknowledge in separating us as a special people to show forth His wisdom to the devil and his demons.

The mystery was God's plan to give the Church something that had not been given to believers before: individual authority over Satan for every member of the Body of Christ.

Paul's first concern was for the Ephesians not to get their eyes on his personal circumstances and lose heart.

The KJV used the word, "faint."

Fainting occurs in the mind when we get our eyes off of the Lord and onto other things in life or in other people.

Paul did not want them, or us to feel sorry for him and question God's wisdom in this matter.

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

What reason?

What is the subject?

We are!

Why is this important?

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

Now understand this, I don't have any claim on understanding everything in the bible, however, I will share with you some thoughts I have in this portion of scripture.

Keep in mind that, like all the children of God, I have much to learn.

Children are not named after the oldest child but after their father.

So this scripture tells me that all of the family on earth and all the family in Heaven are named after our Father.

When we die, we leave the Church, but we don't leave the family.

Things change when we get to heaven.

Here, as the Body of Christ, we fit in the Body with a purpose.

We may be the hand, the feet, etc.

When we get to heaven, this all changes.

We are no longer needed to serve in those capacities.

We may leave this earth, but we do not leave the family.

The family exists on earth and in Heaven!

Look at...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (family in heaven) 17 Then we who are alive, (family on earth) who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

The word, *strengthened*, is the Greek word, *kratos*, which is ruling power.

So what is this saying?

God wants you to have ruling power in your inner man.

This is the ability to direct your life through the pressures and obstacles that Satan and the world brings against us.

We are kings in life, but often we don't even know how to properly rule our own life, let alone give anyone else help with theirs.

The word, *power*, was translated as, *might*, in the King James Version.

It comes from the Greek word, *dunamus*.

It means, inherent power. (Remember dynamite?)

This is a direct reference to your faith.

Your faith is the power by which rule.

By using the faith that God has given you, you should become stabilized in life.

Circumstances should no longer dictate to you.

You should dictate to them.

We should become the master over the affairs of our lives.

17 so that Christ may dwell (be at home) in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

I can't help but believe that it's one thing for Christ to dwell in our hearts, and it's another thing for Him to feel at home.

When we begin to rule in life through the faith that He has given us, then Christ begins to feel at home in us.

This verse also tells us that we need to have our lives rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Love is the foundation of our lives because faith is useless without love.

Look at *Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*

What nullifies faith is fear.

Fear is an opposition force to faith.

What keeps fear away is love.

Look at *I John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

If I told you that this is why faith and love go hand in hand, could you believe me?

Love keeps fear away and lets faith operate!

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

Once you have been rooted and grounded, the Lord's desire for you is to grow by understanding (learning) His word.

This is what this scripture means.

The word, *breadth*, in the Greek means, *storage space*.

It refers to all the categories of the word of God.

Tangents are not healthy.

In other words, don't get over focused on just one subject.

Go for the entire width of the word of God.

People are always looking for a key.

Jesus did not say, "I give you the key of the kingdom," but the, *keys*.

It is a wise person that knows the right key to use for the proper door.

Prayer is important, but it is not, “the,” key.

Praise, worship, study, deliverance, confession of God’s promises, and speaking with other tongues are all important.

But known of them alone will sustain you and give you victory.

These are all keys that God has given us to use at the proper time.

This the breadth we are to comprehend.

Some scholars believe that word Length, has to do with time.

Height has to do with our attitude towards God.

Depth, our attitude towards our fellow man.

One is vertical and one horizontal.

Look at *Luke 10:27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God (height) with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor (depth) as yourself.”*

In review:

After you become rooted and grounded in love, operating in faith, God wants us to mature in;

1. All areas of Christian life.
2. Your love relationship with God the Father.
3. Your love relationship with your fellow believers in the Body of Christ.

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

God always sets high goals.

1 Peter 1:16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

These sound like tall demands, and they are.

But thank God that He has given us the Holy Spirit to live in us and to live out His life through us.

If God says I can know the love of Christ, then I can.

Like Mary, I want to say, *“Be it unto me according to thy word.” (Luke 1:38 KJV)*

This verse tells me that the love of Christ, passes knowledge.

The Greek word for, *knowledge*, is *gnosis*.

This is a reference to man's knowledge.

God's love surpasses anything man knows.

People may be able to argue your doctrine, but they will stand speechless in the face of divine love.

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

The word for power again in this scripture is our old friend, *dunamus*.

The word, *work*, refers to the use or exercise of our faith.

Think of it this way, when your faith is being used in prayer, God is not only able to answer your prayer, but He is able, "to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think."

If God does more than I ask, that is monumental.

But to do more than I can think, that's staggering.

This includes my imagination.

Staggering indeed.

21 to Him (God) be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

God wants the whole Church to glorify Him, forever!

More so in the past than lately, I have known many people who didn't want anything to do with praise and worship.

They were embarrassed to raise their hands in church.

These people better get used to it before they get to heaven, because there is going to be a whole lot of that stuff going on.

Why wait to get to Heaven to please God.

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

In chapter 4 of Ephesians, we reach a pivotal transition.

If we were to end our study now, we would have discovered some tremendous truths, but no practical wisdom for living it out in our everyday lives.

Some of the transitional part of this letter has to do with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given to us to help us bring our natural lives into place to show others the Lord in us.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit was given to us to help us be a witness.

The Holy Spirit is not just to help us speak in tongues, but to be a witness on the job, in the home, school, or anywhere we might be.

The first three chapters give strength to the inner man.

Now, the Holy Spirit will teach us how to apply that knowledge to the outward man, namely, how to live our lives.

Now the inner man is going to be given something on which to use this strength.

Sanctification is the subject of the first half of chapter 4.

In the first three chapters we have been gaining knowledge.

Wisdom is the correct application of knowledge.

We have been hearers, now we will continue on to being doers.

The things that Paul will tell us to do in the second half of this letter are impossible for the natural man to do.

Only when the power of the Lord is used can the Christian life become a reality.

Through the Word and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we can live the life of Christ in the devil's world.

4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

The word, “walk,” is the first indicator that we have moved from positional truth to temporal truth.

Positionally, we were *seated* with the Lord.

Temporally, we are *walking*.

The New Testament teaches us that there are at least eight areas in which we are to walk.

Each of these requires that we are to put our full knowledge of the Word of God into daily operation in our lives.

The first area of our walk is in the Word of God.

[3 John 1:3](#) tells us to walk in the truth.

The second area of our walk is in the Holy Spirit in order to overcome the temptations of this world and the flesh.

[Galatians 5:16](#) tells us to walk in the Spirit, and [Romans 8:4](#) tells us to walk not after the flesh.

The third area of our walk is in faith.

[2 Corinthians 5:7](#) tells us to walk by faith, not by sight.

The fourth area is our love walk before the Lord.

[Ephesians 5:2](#) tells us to walk in love.

The fifth area is our walk of integrity before the world.

Christians should be the most dependable people in the world.

[Romans 8:13](#) tells us to walk honestly.

The sixth area is in our production, or fruit bearing.

This is found in [Ephesians 2:10](#) where it is stated that we are to walk in good works.

The seventh area involves our walk before the unbeliever in the world.

[Colossians 4:5](#) tells us to walk in wisdom toward them that are without.

To cap this off, always remember that [Psalms 37:23](#) tells us that the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Gentleness comes from the same Greek word in the KJV that was translated into the word, *meekness*.

At any rate, it does not mean doormat, or a weak person.

It means, *teachable*.

[James 1:21](#) teaches us that we are to receive with meekness the engrafted word.

Don't forget that [Matthew 5:5](#) teaches us that the meek, or teachable people will inherit the earth.

Where patience was the same word used in the KJV, longsuffering.

In [Hebrews 6:12](#) it is stated that we are to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The word *bearing*, means to stand one's ground.

You can be teachable, patient, and yet stand your ground with other people.

Verse 3 teaches us that we do this in love to keep the bond of peace.

Verses 4 through 6 tell us everything we have in common, seven factors which should unify us all.

4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

The one body is the Body of Christ.

[2 Corinthians 12:13](#), For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

The word hope refers to the hope of the church that Christ will someday come back for us, meaning the rapture of the church in [1 Thess. 4:13](#).

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

There is only one Lord and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We all look to the one Head of the Church Who earned that position by His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and seating at the right hand of God the Father.

There is only one faith which makes us all members of one body and gives us all one Lord.

This the measure of faith by which we are born again. ([Ephesians 2:8](#))

This faith can grow through the knowledge of God's Word. ([Romans 10:17](#))

The one baptism referenced here is not water baptism.

It is This is the baptism of the new birth found in [1 Corinthians 12:13](#).

There is only one baptism which makes us members of one body, gives one Spirit, gives us one hope of our calling, gives us one Lord, and delivers us one faith.

6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

There are religions in the world that have many gods.

We have one God.

He is the Father of all who have made Jesus their Lord and Savior.

He is the highest in rank because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus.

He is said to be the Father of all.

All majesty, power, dominion, praise, and worship goes to Him.

7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Now we have come into what each believer has an individual.

Each one of us has been given grace by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace, in this verse, is a reference to the ministry gifts listed in verse 11.

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are not an all-inclusive list of ministry offices in the Church.

These five are important, because I call them the pulpit offices.

They exist for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.

There are at least twelve found in the New Testament.

8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

Remember that what is being laid out for us in these scriptures is leading up to a discussion about the five-fold ministry gifts listed in verse 11.

It almost feels like Paul is addressing some after thoughts about other topics and takes off on a side trail.

Notice that He gave gifts to men.

He was not specific, this is why you can safely assume in this case, that He meant all men, and this of course includes women.

The original tense refers to those that are the children of God.

Just a side note, who do you think the host of captives were that He led?

Look at *Matthew 27:52–53. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?)

See [Leviticus 16:20-22](#) and read about the purpose for the scapegoat who was led off into the wilderness.

You also need to spend some time in the book of [Jonah](#) and discover that what Jonah experienced in the belly of the big fish was a type of what Jesus experienced in the lower regions of the earth.

10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Jesus went to heaven that He might complete all things.

The plan of redemption was not completed until Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus sat down because the plan was over.

He had completed His work.

God rested on the seventh day of creation not because He was tired but because He was done.

11 And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

Who is He, that is mentioned here?

He is the one who died, rose, ascended and was seated that we just finished talking about.

Are these people, the five-fold ministry, still around today?

Well the Church that He gave the gifts to is still around, so these gifts must also be here.

The body offices are listed in [Romans 12:3-8](#).

We all fit in one of these offices.

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

If I am doing my part to equip you as a disciple of Christ then the work of the ministry will be done.

If I come to your house, can you introduce me to your neighbor so that I can share Christ with them.

The answer is yes, but should I have to do that?

I should be equipping you to do this part of the ministry.

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

So, how long should I have a job?

Read the first part of Verse 13 again for the answer.

14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

This verse says it's time to grow up.

No more excuses.

The Greek word for *children* here is, *nopios*.

It means *one who cannot speak*.

This is one who is too young to talk.

It also shows up when people no longer want to make a commitment to one church and just float from church to church.

These kinds of people will be at the mercy of the circumstances of life and the false doctrines of man.

When these people get into trouble, that's when they complain that the local church is not standing with them.

It is not up to the church to join you, but up to you to join the church.

Commitment begins with individual.

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

The baby who could not speak should grow up to learn to speak the truth in love.

Speaking the truth is speaking the word.

Speaking the Word of God is one of the greatest keys in the Christian life to answered prayers, effective confessions, and mastering the thoughts.

16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Verse 16 told us that speaking the truth in love, would cause us to grow up and to mature.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Beginning with verse 17 in chapter 4, deals with using what we have learned to put away sin in our lives.

Walking in the Word is the only way we have power to put away sin and walk in the righteousness that God has given us through the new birth.

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

In verse one of this chapter we were told how to walk.

In this verse we are told how not to walk.

Stop walking like unbelievers.

Paul is starting to explain something that has confused Christians for a long time.

At times, Christians can look and act a lot like the world.

However, there should be distinct separation between the outward life of a Christian and a sinner.

When the Word is in you in abundance, our excuses for sinning run very thin.

Sadly enough, it comes down to the truth that churches are filled with carnal Christians.

The truth is that you have never been hurt as bad as you can be hurt until you have been hurt by someone in the Church.

Have you been to the point where you would rather hang around with a happy-go-lucky sinner than a miserable carnal Christian.

18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Verses 18 and 19 describe what being an unbeliever is like.

Once you find this out, you realize you have no business acting like someone who doesn't have eternal life.

The Greek word for understanding is *dianoia* meaning “the faculty of understanding.”

It, their understanding, has been darkened by the fact that they are unsaved.

20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

The believer has at his/her disposal the power that the unbeliever does not have.

Now that we are born again, we need to look and act like Christ in this world.

Tall order indeed.

However, look ahead at *Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.*

So the purpose of taking in the Word of God is to imitate God.

This can only be done as we take in “the mind of Christ,” or the Word of God.

As we think like Him, we act like Him.

21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

Bear with me for a minute while I attempt to explain some hidden truth in this scripture.

Whenever I see something has changed in the scriptures I am studying, no matter how subtle it appears to be, I need to pay attention to it.

Notice in verse 20, our savior was referred to as Christ, and in verse 21 He is referred to as Jesus.

This follows along with the truth that this letter is filled with positional and temporal truth.

Would it make more sense to you if I stated it this way, when you realize that you can have the mind of Christ, you can then learn to live your life the way Jesus lived His.

If you have the mind of Christ, we know we are in Him, and have the rights and privileges of the kingdom.

If you have the mind of Jesus you know all of the ancient routes and road systems in the middle east that Jesus traveled.

Which one of these do you believe is more important?

When we look at the life of Jesus, we think of all the things that He did as impossible, but not if you have the mind of Christ.

When the Truth breaks through, that's when a scripture like *John 14:12*, comes to life. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

Mark 16:17-18 And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Again, if we are going to live like Jesus, we have to have the mind of Christ!

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

To put off means to remove like clothing.

Notice that God does not do this for you.

It works like this; God gives you the information with which to gain strength, but you take God's gifts and use them yourself.

When it comes to imitating God in this earth, and walking as Jesus would, you do it.

It is all about quality decision making processes that God will give you help with, but a lot of this rests with what we do with the battlefield of the mind.

Never discount the fact that our major purpose in life is growing up.

Also, you have the old man on the outside warring with the new man on the inside.

There comes a time when we step up in faith and tell the senses, "Shut up, I am going to believe God's Word anyway!"

There more you do it, the easier it gets.

We do this using what God has provided, His eternal Word!

24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

When you become renewed in your mind, put away lying.

The Word gives you the power to do this.

26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

What is this saying?

Anger is not always sinful.

If anger is directed at people or God, it is sinful.

Anger is never wrong if it is directed at sin or Satan!

Jesus was furious with what religious leaders were doing.

He loved the religious people, but He hated religion.

He loved sinners but He hated sin.

He loved the demon possessed, but He hated demons.

You can be angry over what a person does, and not sin.

Hate sin, but love people.

Don't carry your anger to bed with you because of what verse 27 says.

27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

The Greek word for opportunity is *topos*. It means *ground*.

We get the English word, topography from this.

If you give up a piece of property to the devil unnecessarily, you give a place to plant a crop of other problems in your life.

It's not worth it.

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Corrupt communication tears down, it is any communication that does not encourage or uplift the hearer.

Grace builds up and edifies the hearer.

Look at *Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

What grieves the Holy Spirit?

The words that are coming out of your mouth.

Corrupt communication is sin, and sin grieves the Holy Spirit.

How about words of judgement?

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Notice again that this verse of scripture is speaking to believers.

Even Christians can be bitter, full of wrath, anger, and can speak evil of others.

Bitterness here is indicative of hatred for others.

Wrath is the display of bitterness.

Anger can be an inward hostility toward someone.

Clamor is another word for outward sin or display of anger.

I think we all know what slander is.

Malice means “malicious or evil intentions.”

This verse is telling us that we need work on our intentions and mental sins as well as to forsake the outward sin.

32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Verse 31 told us what we shouldn't do and verse 32 told us what we should do.

Tenderhearted is an interesting word in the Greek, *eusplagnos*.

Eu means good and *slagnos* means guts.

In the Old Testament, coming from the Hebrew, it was expressed as bowels of compassion found in the KJV.

We are to have such a deep compassion for others that forgiveness is never a question.

FOLLOW AFTER GOD

Chapter 4 taught us more so, what we are to turn away from.

Chapter 5 will tell more of what we are to follow.

We are to follow Jesus, not sin.

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Mimites is the Greek word for, “imitators.”

Of course, it’s where we get our English word, “mimic.”

We were told in the previous chapter verse that we imitate God by walking in forgiveness.

If He forgives you, then act like Him and forgive others.

This type of action is a key to successful Christian living.

Remember, God also has infinite patience and mercy.

A very important objective to pursue.

2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Not only are we to imitate our Father, this scripture reminds us that we are to imitate our older brother, Jesus Christ.

Many scriptures reveal that God was satisfied with the work of Christ.

Satisfying God should be another one of those life-long desires in our list of goals.

3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

This verse, and every verse from here to verse 13, tells us not to imitate the unbeliever.

These are actions of the old man.

This entire verse deals specifically with sins pertaining sexual immorality, even using the word covetousness, meaning always thinking about sex and always wanting more.

4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

“Filthiness” here means obscenity.

Foolish talk may not necessarily be filthy, but it can include racial remarks, sexual overtones and a long list of other things.

All our conversation should be seasoned with thanksgiving for all that God has done for us.

This has nothing to do with being a stick in the mud.

You can still talk about football, world events, fashions and children without displeasing God.

Even [Ecclesiastes 3:1-17](#) tells us that there is a time everything.

Jesus even went to social gatherings and quit often turned to out to the life of the party.

5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

I cannot say this with more emphasis, DO NOT IMITATE THESE PEOPLE!

No one should forget that whether you are a stone cold sinner or a Christian, imitating or acting like these people when you know better, is seriously dangerous.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Why would we want to act like people who are going to face the wrath of God?

Let there be a clean mark of distinction between the Church and the world.

7 Therefore do not become partners with them;

Partners means participants.

Remember, God does not warn of things that don't exist.

This is a warning that even Christians can sometimes act like unsaved people.

However, it lacks any form of wisdom.

Do not participate with sinners in sinning, participate with God.

Let God, not sin, fill your speech and actions.

8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

In *Colossians 1:13* it says, *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,*

What a conundrum, once again this scripture is warning us to stop acting like unsaved people.

There are many analogies that describe this problem, so let's look at the list;

If you are out of fellowship, you are in the flesh.

If you are in fellowship, you are in the Spirit.

If you are out of fellowship, you are walking in darkness.

If you are in fellowship, you are walking in the light.

If you are out of fellowship, you are asleep.

If you are in fellowship, you are awake.

9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),

In the KJV, the word light was translated spirit. (little “s”)

The ESV is more accurate here.

This is because the fruit of the Spirit is not what this is referencing.

This is talking about the fruit produced by walking in the light.

When we as Christians walk in darkness, or out of fellowship with God, we can still produce works until we are blue in the face, but they will not be acceptable to God.

They become products of the energy of the flesh.

The flesh cannot counterfeit the true fruit of divine origin.

This the kind of work that the bible refers to as wood, hay and stubble that easily burns away.

We cannot fail if we walk in the light that God has given to us.

10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

How do we do this?

Look at *Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

Light reveals what is acceptable.

The word is light that reveals where my feet need to go.

It is a light that reveals objects in the road that must be avoided that can hurt and trap us.

So, light has two functions, to instruct in truth and to reveal error.

The Word reveals what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Walk in the light, light exposes darkness.

When you walk in the light, people know it.

12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

We should not be afraid to discuss sin, but it is a shame that we have to.

If there is a shame in speaking of these things, think of the shame in doing them.

13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,

If sinners are convicted when they are around you, that is likely a very good sign.

Look at *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

This passage is still the cure for carnality in our lives.

14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

You might think that this scripture is a reference to unsaved people, but it isn't.

You might ask, doesn't this scripture say that the person referred to is dead?

What it says is he is asleep among the dead.

The problem is that if there are 100 dead people on the ground in front of you but one of them is sleeping, could you tell the difference.

You would have to examine each one for signs of life.

Carnal Christians are asleep among the dead.

It is still dangerous.

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

If you are out of fellowship, repent, then walk!

How do I do this correctly?

Wise people are filled with the knowledge of God's Word and they use it.

In other words, accuracy comes from consistency of study and prayer.

It is about relationship.

Like Martha, you can attempt to prepare a meal for Christ, or you can trust Him to feed you.

16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

If all this talk about sin frightens you, it is for good reason.

However, don't get buried in it.

Remember that some of the greatest people in the bible fell into sin at one time or another, Abraham, Noah, Elijah, and David are just a few.

Look at *Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The word “foolish,” means stupid or ignorant.

Two things are involved in knowing the will of God.

1. Knowing the Word of God.
2. The leading of the Holy Spirit.

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

Ephesians tells us to be filled with Spirit and Colossians tells us to be filled with Word.

You absolutely must have both, because if you only have the Word without the Spirit you run the risk of suffering from simple academia, which becomes dry.

If you have a group of people who only want the Spirit and His gifts, then you run the risk of being overpowered by emotion alone and will surely end up imbalanced.

You end up like a washer that is out of balance, you are ineffective, and you make a lot of useless noise in the process.

Once again, notice that the thing in this scripture that is bad, is made worse by excessive use, but you evidently can load up with the Spirit with no negative effect.

As a matter of fact, being filled to overflowing with the Spirit just makes you more spiritual.

19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Ever notice that a portion of the conversations between Christians is about worship music.

That's because worship is so important to you and your brothers and sisters.

20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Praise should continually be coming forth from us.

Submission to Him puts our lives in perspective.

THE MARRAIGE ANALOGY

The coming scriptures we will amplify the principle of submission and authority to each other as well as to God, in all areas of life.

God loves you because it is His nature to love you.

He doesn't love you based on what you do or don't do.

God's love is based on His nature and His nature is always to give.

The Lord's love for us is supposed to be seen in the husband and wife relationship.

The husband represents Jesus Christ and the wife represents the Church.

As Jesus Christ loves the Church, He is glorified when the Church responds.

In the beginning of a marriage, it's almost as if we are saying that I will love you if you love me.

Treat me right, and I will treat you right,

But what happens when one fails the other?

The whole basis for that type of marriage crumbles.

Too many marriages are built on what the bible calls phileo love.

A love based on the benefits alone.

A "what have done for me lately," kind of love.

God has promised believers a supernatural marriage in *Ephesians Chapter 5*, a marriage that will not fall apart when facing the challenges that life in this world will surely bring, if we will follow the teachings.

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Submission is a greatly misunderstood word.

It's been such a misused word that most people today shy away from it.

The problem comes from misunderstanding the difference between submission and obedience, because they are not the same.

Submission is an attitude; obedience is an action.

When a husband makes the mistake of demanding that his wife submit, he is usually telling her to

obey.

The husband then becomes a dictator.

Even Jesus, who could have conducted Himself any way He wanted to, never conducted Himself like a dictator.

However, a wife does not always have to obey but the bible says she must submit.

Here's how this works, rebellion is not the absence of obedience, rebellion is an unsubmitive attitude.

Pay attention to this, the reason why it is easier to be both submissive and obedient to the Lord is because He is always right.

A man may demand that his wife NOT go to church, however, in love she could conceivably respectfully decline his demand.

The best marriage exists when the husband does not violate God's Word in his headship to the home.

Many husbands do not give their wives anything to respect.

I remember a friend of mine who told me that he reminded his wife that Sarah called Abraham lord, to which she reminded him that when he became half the man Abraham was, she would call him lord.

Men, if we treat our wives the way Jesus treats the Church, it would be much easier for her to respond to us scripturally.

Men let's give our wives something Godly to submit to.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

This is an extremely powerful analogy.

The Greek word for savior in this scripture means the provider of everything.

The husband should provide love, protection, finances, comfort, companionship, and conversation.

Isn't that what Jesus provides for the Church in some form or manner on a regular basis.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Again, though submission is commanded in the Word, husbands should never use this verse to abuse their wives.

This verse is not teaching obedience in everything, but submission.

Wives need to strive to maintain a correct attitude of submission while their husbands strive to maintain a Christ-like relationship with their wives.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

The Greek word for love in this scripture is of course, agape.

Jesus Christ gave Himself for the Church and there should be such an undying love in the husband-wife relationship that the husband gives himself for the wife.

When you give yourself, you give everything that belongs to you.

It belongs to the whole family.

Jesus does not hoard His belongings.

Everything that belongs to the husband belongs to the wife and family.

26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

The Greek word for word is rhema.

Rhema is the spoken word of God.

So, we are cleansed by the spoken word of God.

The communicating of the Word of God produces faith, for faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. ([Romans 10:17](#))

When you make it a practice to speak the Word of God, you are cleansed by it.

The husband should speak words to edify or uplift his wife.

I can't help but believe that anyone can take correction better if there is little need for it because the relationship is bathed in the Word of God.

Any woman can love her husband if he is constantly encouraging her strengths.

27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Evidently, rhema takes out spots and wrinkles.

Marriage breaks down when communication breaks down.

Fellowship breaks down when communication is cut off.

If husbands and wives can talk out their problems and differences and keep love as a motivating factor, they can work out all their spots and wrinkles.

Afterall, it is the little foxes that spoils the vine.

28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

We guys, for the most part, are pretty fond of ourselves.

That's why, when we do not allow the Spirit of God to lead our lives, we are extremely selfish, and it shows.

The Bible teaches us that if we will place that kind of value on our wives instead of ourselves, we will become more self-less in lieu of more selfish.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

30 because we are members of his body.

Remember that we have been created in the image of the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit.

Now, consider that we have been joined together in marriage, do you think that the one of the members of the trinity wakes up one morning in total disagreement with the other members of the Trinity and declares that I want a divorce?

31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

Just think, marriage was about the first teaching given in the Bible.

God gave instructions to Adam and Eve that Adam was to leave (the authority of) his father and mother and cleave to his wife.

Isn't it interesting that in-laws were encouraged not to over interfere in their child's marriage before in-laws even existed?

This verse, by the way is a direct reference to sex.

Sexual relationship is the physical expression of being one flesh.

You and I have communion with the Lord because we are one spirit with Him.

The daily intake of the Word of God and praying in the Spirit is an expression that we are born again.

Sex is designed by God for marriage, just as praying in the Spirit, worship and praise are for believers only.

32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

This still does not mean that it is some kind of mystical thing that is impossible to understand.

It only means that it is a dynamic mystery.

Marriage aids us in understanding a tremendous spiritual revelation.

When marriage exists in our lives the way that God intends for it to be, God's infinite love can be

more easily understood through the relationship with your spouse.

So, if we take the Word of God at face value, and so we should, if this isn't happening for us, then we must painfully conclude that we ain't doing it right.

Hey guys, what if Jesus started treating the Church the way we treat our wives?

In the same alley of questioning, wives, what if we treated Jesus in our lives the way you treat your husbands?

I'm just saying.....

When we do things God's way, we cannot fail.

When we think of marriage like we think of the Church, then ***Matthew 16:18*** becomes more real to us. ***I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

With that kind of marriage relationship, no devil can stop your marriage.

33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Husbands start loving your wife as Jesus loves the Church.

She is part of you.

Wives, look at your Husbands in faith, you know you can have what you believe Father for.

CHILDREN AND PARENTS / PLEASE THE LORD

In the last Chapter of this letter, we now take this message from the heart of God to the world.

The Pastor cannot be in all places at one time.

God saves students to witness to students, factory workers to witness to factory workers, businessmen and businesswomen to witness to businessmen and businesswomen and housewives to witness to housewives.

He has born-again believers in all levels of society, to witness for the Lord on their level.

This is a major contributing factor that causes great revival in a nation and strengthens the country from the inside out.

1 Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Wives are to submit according to [Ephesians 5:22](#).

But here we read that Children are to obey.

Submission demands knowledge.

Children apparently don't know enough to submit, so they are commanded to obey.

Understanding comes through maturity.

However, the obligation is on the parents to properly train a child, according to [Proverbs 22:6](#), "in the Lord."

2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),

Children are not always going to understand the decisions that parents make, but they are to honor their parents.

Honoring parents brings a two-fold blessing found in [Exodus 20:12](#) and is quoted in verse three.

3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

The Greek word for "well" is means good and prosperous.

This applies to every area of your life.

This includes divine health, and financial wisdom can begin to be instilled in the lives of our chil-

dren at an early age.

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

Proverbs 3:16, Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

Rebellion against parents is rebellion against authority.

Rebellion against authority is rebellion against the Lord.

You may not agree with them, but you must respect them.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Of course, this verse is talking to parents.

Do not provoke your children to wrath, translated more appropriately means to resist aggravating them just because you like to do that sort of thing

I can't help but feel that this tells us not to be mean spirited towards our children.

Children can become angry when they feel they are being disciplined without knowing why.

This is better known as discipline without instruction.

Ruth was always better at telling our children that we loved them far too much to allow them to act out.

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

Today servants and masters would be employees and bosses, labor and management.

How hard we work on the job is a witness to the Lord.

Spirit-filled workers should be better workers than their unsaved co-workers.

Christians should be known for being punctual, if not early for their workday.

Remember, we are in a section the Bible that is telling us that this is how we are to live our lives if we want to please Him.

You are doing your job as unto the Lord.

If Jesus was standing next to you at work, wouldn't you try harder.

Well, for all intent and purposes, He is and you should.

If you do your job as unto the Lord, you will not only get a paycheck, you will build up treasures in Heaven.

A paycheck is for a moment.

Rewards in Heaven are eternal.

Now, here's the clencher!

6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

You know what eye-service is, right?

Have you ever heard anyone use the phrase, look busy the boss is coming?

Remember, even when your boss isn't there, Jesus is.

If you cannot please your boss by working to please Jesus, then maybe you should look for a different job, because they don't deserve you.

If you need a raise or a promotion, there is no need to butter-up to the boss or strive to be a man-pleaser.

Go to your greater Boss, the One who is higher than men, and pray to Him.

True and correct promotion comes from Him.

7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

The words translated, "good will," eunoia, means "loyal enthusiasm."

You might be able to fake occasional enthusiasm, but loyal enthusiasm is a different challenge all together.

This means that your mind is on the job.

Master this, and you will not struggle with being a man-pleaser and working with eye-service.

8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Today, the words bond or free would mean whether you are the boss or the employee.

Always remember *Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

In verse 9, Paul speaks to the boss.

Don't you think that Spirit-filled bosses should be the best people to work for.

What this verse is really saying is that we are to treat employees equally.

Don't play favorites.

Treat your employees as Jesus treats you.

There is no need to bully employees.

If employees are not doing their job, correct and encourage them.

WEAPONS FOR WAR

Next, we will begin to teach on witnessing through the weapons of our warfare, and prayer.

Watch this, it is beautiful how this letter has brought us through the revelation of God the Father, through the Son, the Holy Spirit, all of the ministry gifts and offices, and then into the Body.

Now is where we find out that the Body can take the message out to the world and win others to the Lord.

This, Brothers and Sisters is where we do combat.

We come against the devil head-on because he has blinded the minds of sinners.

We can win them, but not without a fight.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

The word finally, means “in closing.”

Always be suspicious when a preacher uses anything like this phrase.

The Greek words in this verse should be old friends by now.

Strength means kratos, or ruling power.

The word might is ischus, or endowed power.

In the form of a refresher, ruling power and endowed power refers to our ability to live our lives in a stable manner.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Whole means, complete.

This scripture is not a suggestion, it is a command.

The words, “to stand,” is more perfectly translated into, continue standing, always, spiritually speaking.

In ancient warfare, falling in a battle meant almost certain death.

Standing means literally, to hold your ground.

Against what?

The schemes of the devil.

Paul is using military terms.

Put on the whole armor of God so that once you have taken the high ground, you hold onto it, plant your flag, and don't budge.

It is true that this world belongs to the devil for now, but the Church is supposed to be conquering and occupying new ground each day.

Pay attention to this truth, we are marching to victory from a victory.

Jesus conquered Satan at the cross, and we are supposed to be enforcing the victory after the cross.

12 For (Because) we do not wrestle (combat) against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The word, "For," is the same as the word, "Because."

Wrestle means combat.

We are to take the offensive.

Flesh and blood refers to human beings.

We do not fight people.

We fight demon powers that back them.

Our weapons are Spiritual weapons to defeat spiritual enemies.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ

So, what do we have to do to get this right?

In prayer, we are not praying so much for the kings as we are praying against the demonic influences over them and for the angels to surround and protect them.

Our prayer is binding and loosing; binding the forces of the devil and loosing the power of God.

We want our world leaders to be influenced by the Holy Spirit instead of evil spirits.

The devil's military regime is well organized, and demons have ranks.

Know your enemy.

Satan has his forces organized.

The Word itself, warns us not to be ignorant of the devil's devices.

Verse 12, begins with the lowest of demons and moves up to the most powerful.

First, you have principalities, which is the Greek word, “*arche*.”

These demons are better known as, “*familiar spirits*”, who possess unbelievers and oppress believers.

The demons above this control the lower ranks.

These are the, “*powers*,” or, “*exousia*,” authorities.

These are ones that are like sergeants, for lack of a better term.

Next are the, “*rulers of the darkness of this world*.”

The “world” here is, “*kosmos*,” which means, “world’s system.”

So, the rulers of the darkness of this world are the demonic forces that influence kings.

The last ones mentioned are, “*spiritual wickedness in heavenly places*.”

These are demons that control nations.

These are just under Satan himself.

How is it that Satan is so organized?

He is organized because his example came from the Lord.

He is a counterfeiter, he can only pervert what he learned from God.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

The weapons God has given us are lying in front of us.

They are not hidden from us.

Pick them up.

Do this so that you can stand in the evil day.

The evil day is any day that you are under attack and facing temptation.

“And having done *all*,” is the Greek word *katergazomai*, which means, “something on the inside working itself out.”

Inward power becomes outward endurance to stand and win every battle.

See now, why it is so important to pick up the armor and put it on.

How many people have been hearers of the word and not doers?

Some are very aware of these passages of scriptures and still will not do it.

They have everything provided for them to stand without excuse, and still will dare to trust God and His Word.

14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

The word “stand” means to “oppose” or “resist”.

If the devil is coming against you; oppose or resist him.

If you will do this as you submit yourself to Christ, he must flee.

Some scholars believe that having on the belt, protected you where separate pieces of armor met.

What is truth, it is nothing less than the Word of God.

The “breastplate of righteousness,” covers your chest area, the most important part of your spiritual body.

Righteousness is attribute of your recreated spirit.

Your “breastplate” is having a righteousness conscience, always being aware of your position in Christ.

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

KJV 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Isaiah 52:7 ESV How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

The shield here is the door shaped shield that the Romans carried.

It was large enough to cover an entire body.

Soldiers simply got behind it when circumstances demanded full coverage insurance.

The shield is most important because it can be moved to the point of attack and was the most versatile piece of protection a soldier had.

Faith can handle Satan’s largest weaponry; this again is why faith is most important.

17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

1 Thessalonians 5:8 ESV But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Most people minimize the importance of the human mind when it comes to being a strong vi-

brant and healthy Christian!

Notice in these two scriptures that faith is a breastplate but hope is a helmet.

The important take-away here is that faith is of your spirit and hope is from your mind.

Why is this important?

Look at *Hebrews 11:1* again in the KJV, *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

This why It is life and death important that we never give up hope.

A LIFE OF PRAYER

18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Not only should we go out to do battle with the devil, you also back up all you do with prayer.

This is how the plan of God is maintained in our lives.

A more perfect rendering of this verse would include the word, “and,” before the word, “with”.

This then, would include praying in every way that the Bible teaches us to pray.

The Greek rendering would be more along the line of, “On every occasion, pray all kinds (or types) of prayer and at all times in the Spirit.”

Off the top of my head, I can think of praying in the Spirit, the prayer of faith, the prayer of agreement, the prayer of commitment, intercessory prayer, the prayer of consecration and dedication, the prayer of worship and thanksgiving, the prayer of agreement as well as many others.

Finally, all prayer should be accompanied with thanksgiving and praise.

19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,

Of course, Paul is not too proud to solicit the prayers of God’s people for himself.

He desires prayer that God may continue to provide revelation, and that he may boldly continue proclaiming the Gospel of the good news of Christ without reservation.

Acts 4:29-30 ESV And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Back to Ephesians

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Final Greetings

Because Paul was bold to speak the gospel, he is now in prison.

But he asked for more.

The gospel means more to Paul than being in prison.

Being asked by your country to be represent it by being an ambassador is supposed to be a great honor.

Being imprisoned did not change Paul's opinion of that truth.

The boldness that Paul spoke of had as much to with speaking at the correct time as well as having the correct words to say.

Paul here pointed out the importance of when to say the right thing.

21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.

22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

Tychicus was the mailman for this letter.

He could answer most of the questions anyone might have pertaining to Paul's life and incarceration.

23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

Paul is ending this letter in the attitude of love.

He is not bitter in prison, but still cares for the saints.

He ministers peace, love with faith, and grace to them all.

So be it.