

Ridiculous

Love

This is How

We Live

EPHESIANS
CH 4-6

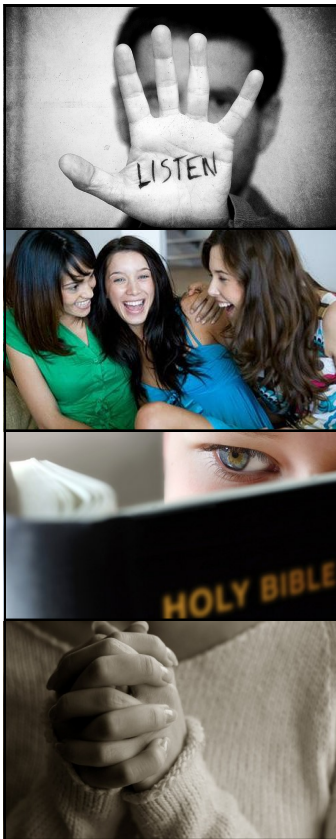


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Enjoy your group and be enjoyed in your group

Listen.

Lean in and hear what others are saying at your table. Ask questions. Silence your cell phone and even put it away unless you must be available for a child or an important call. Be sure not to dominate the sharing time. When someone shares let it be about them. Resist the urge to make it about you (i.e. “the same thing happened to me in 1998 and I . . .”). Be aware of those who are quiet and invite their input.

Protect One Another.

We’re a bit like Vegas in that what is shared at the table, stays at the table. Make this a safe place for everyone. Other than that, we’re not like Vegas at all.

No Advice or Counseling.

Resist the urge to give advice—this can often be very hurtful. We’re not here to *fix* one another but to support, care and point one another to the grace and truth of Jesus. Also resist the urge to tell someone in pain that “it will get better.” Typically, in the midst of great pain, a person wants simply to be heard. Affirm that what they are experiencing must be hard and then just listen.

Pray. Pray. Pray.

Pray for your group throughout the week and invite others to pray for you as you participate.

Prepare.

Get the most out of this study by using this study guide. Please make every effort to do the homework and come prepared for discussion. This will bless everyone, including you! Feel free to divide each lesson into smaller segments that you do 2-3 times a week rather than trying to do it all in one sitting.

Your Kids

Each week gifted and competent people care for our children across the street in our Kids’ Church facility. If your child needs you, your number will appear on the screens above the stage, or you will receive a text. If you have an infant with you during the meeting and he/she becomes restless, we have a room just for you in 2435 by the restrooms. It provides privacy but also allows you to see and hear the message. If you are in a Satellite Group we do not provide childcare—bummer.

No Child Left Behind

Pick up your kids right when the study ends. Please do not linger. This honors our childcare workers who cannot leave until every child is picked up. Please do not delay. Please. Pretty please.

Covering the Cost

An offering envelope is on your table each week (or with your local Satellite Leader). Our desire is to never charge for the Bible Study or for the childcare. This offering allows us to make sure that all women can participate. Give as you are able — a lot, a little or nothing. We trust that together we can make this study happen for all who desire to join us.



An Introduction to Ephesians

Ephesians is a grand and sweeping letter written by Paul from a prison cell. Most likely it traveled to many different churches near Ephesus. It's a letter to churches about being the church.

In this letter, Paul tells us that the church is a gathering of people who look different than they once did. They are a community transformed by the blessing, grace and power of God. And because of this transformation, they live differently — in their relationships with God, family, bosses, evil forces, and one another.

Ephesians is a book of worship and prayer. The introduction from verse 3 to verse 14 is one long sentence proclaiming the amazing work of God who has lavished his love on us. Twice Paul stops and breaks into prayers that express gratitude, truth and worship. Paul rejoices in that Christ is in us. And he rejoices in hope, glory, power, love, the fullness of God, and the beauty of Jesus. These early verses in Ephesians set the tone for the entire letter.

Ephesians 1-3 focuses on our identity as those belonging to Christ. We are blessed with *every* spiritual blessing (1:3-14). We have an inheritance in Christ that means that all that is his, is ours (1:14, 18; 2:6). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is given to us (1:18-20). We are made alive in Christ — rescued from our former way of life by his grace, not our works (2:1-10). We are united together with all other believers to be a part of God's plan to make the gospel known throughout the world and in the heavenly realms (2:11-3:13). And we are deeply loved (3:18-19).

Ephesians 4-6 encourages us to live lives worthy of the calling we received from God (to be blessed, loved, recipients of the gospel and sharers of the gospel). This is the emphasis of this session of study — to see how the Church is to live by faith and mature as imitators of God. Get ready to grow in your relationship with God and others! We'll also consider how we are to combat the schemes of the devil and the forces of evil.

Using this Study Guide

The following page will explain the structure of this study. Note that at the end of each chapter is a section called **Going Deeper**. The **Going Deeper** section is optional, but be sure to take a look at it. If you only do part of this section, do the Scripture Memory part. Each week a verse is given for you to commit to memory. Scripture memory is one of the most practical practices of the Christian life. It puts God's word in our mind and heart for easy access when we need a reminder of his truth, grace and wisdom to live life with others.

Thanks for joining us on this journey through **Ephesians 4-6**.

{How to} S.O.A.P

Scripture • Observation • Application • Prayer

S.O.A.P is a simple method of studying the Bible. We'll use this method throughout our study of Ephesians. The four key elements are: Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer. Here is a description of each step:

Scripture

- **Read it**—The first step is to read the assigned passage of Scripture (it's often helpful to read the verses before and after the passage to gain context).
- **Write it out**—Sometimes it helps to write the passage out in a way that helps us see it clearly. We'll do this each week in the study. Here's an example:

Hebrews 12:1-2a "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

Hebrews 12:1-2a Re-written to better see connections, repeated words and themes:

Therefore,
since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles.
And let us run with perseverance
the race marked out for us,
fixing our eyes on Jesus,
the pioneer and
perfecter of our faith."

- **Re-write it and personalize it** —It can also help to re-write the passage in your own words and in a way that makes it personal. Here's an example of **Hebrews 12:1-2a**:

"Because I'm surrounded by all these amazing people of faith who gave testimony to the goodness of God (ch. 11) I will throw off everything that is hindering me for following God (fear, the distraction of social media, lack of discipline) and the sin that has me tangled up (envy, unforgiveness, pride, gossip, lying). I will run with perseverance, not giving up when it feels hard, doing the right thing when the wrong thing is easier. I will fix my eyes on Jesus because he is committed to my faith and he will perfect it. I will fix my eyes on him through worship each day.

Observation

- **Ask Questions of the passage:** Who, what, where, when, why and how are great questions to ask.
- **Key Words**— Record the key words, repeating words and phrases that seem to jump off the page into your heart and mind. Be sure to look up their definitions in dictionaries, commentaries (<http://www.studylight.org/com>) and lexicons (www.biblehub.com).
- **Cross-References** — Many Bibles have cross-references that lead you to other passages of Scripture to help you better reflect on what you are reading. These usually appear as little numbers next to a word. You can also find these when you read a passage at www.biblegateway.com.

Application

- **Apply the passage to your life and heart** — ideally this is something you can do within 48 hours of your study.
- **Ask:** Is there an action I can take? Is there a change I can make? Is there a truth I can memorize?

Prayer

- **Pray the Scripture** — Use the passage as a guide for your time of prayer.
- **Write it out** — Write your prayer in your journal. Writing our prayers can help us slow down and make space to listen to God.
- **Pray** — does this passage point you to adoration of God? Confession of sin? Thanksgiving? Requests? Pray them all!



Week One: This is How We Live

Ephesians is a book about the Church—who we are and how we live. The first session of this study (**Ephesians 1-3**) focused on who we are in Christ. This second session (**Ephesians 4-6**) will focus on how we “live a life worthy of the calling we have received” from Christ. How we live is determined by what we believe about our identity. If we believe that we are unworthy we will tend to live striving and defeated lives. But if we know that we are loved, we can live lives of freedom, love and worship. All that Paul lays out in **Ephesians 4-6** must be read and lived in the context of **Ephesians 1-3**. [Find the **Book of Ephesians** on page 47].

Notes: This is How We Live

Use this page to record notes from the opening talk. [To watch or listen to this talk go to iTunes and then to the podcast page and search for Women at Christian Assembly. For easy access to the audio of this talk upload the Christian Assembly Women App at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/christian-assembly-women/id670451201?ls=1&mt=8>]



Week One Group Discussion

Before you discuss the message, take a moment to get to know one another. Use the following questions to help guide your time. First write down your answers and then share them with the group.

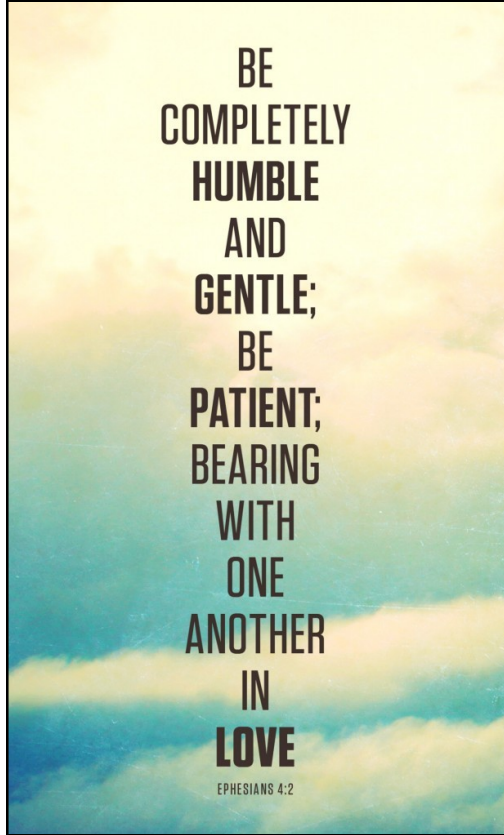
What are three things you hope to gain from this study?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What three words describe your life right now?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

After listening to the message, share what most encourages you from Ephesians.



After hearing and discussing the message what are two things you can do to apply Ephesians to your life this week?

- 1.
- 2.

"[Ephesians 4:1 marks] a transition point in Ephesians, moving from an exuberant exploration of who God is and the way he works [in Eph. 1-3] to a detailed account of who we are and the way we work [in Eph. 4-6]."

Eugene Peterson



Week Two: Grow Up Together

Paul is encouraging the Church to live lives worthy of their calling. This calling is not an occupational calling — like becoming a teacher or an engineer or a missionary — it is the calling to be with God through Jesus Christ. The gospel call is a call to all the blessings of Christ that are described in **Ephesians 1-3**. Christ calls us to transformed lives of love, hope, unity, maturity, and service. Discover today what this call looks like in your life.



S.O.A.P

S.O.A.P is a way to study the Bible that involves **Scripture, Observation, Application** and **Prayer**. This is the outline we'll use throughout this study. See **page 4** for a detailed explanation of S.O.A.P.

Scripture

Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

Observations

A Life Worthy of the Calling. Record all that Paul lists in this passage as he describes what a living a life “worthy of the calling you have received” looks like.

Key Words and Definitions: Look up the definitions for the following key words.

Key Word	Definition (dictionary.com) and Lexicon (biblehub.com)
Humble	
Gentle	
Patient	
Unity	
Mature	
Grow	



What Does it Mean He Ascended and He Descended (4:7-10)?

From Paul for Everyone by N.T. Wright, p. 45.

A first-century Jew might have understood this verse from Psalm 68 to be speaking of Moses. After the Exodus, when the Egyptians were defeated and the Israelites rescued from slavery, Moses went up Mount Sinai and came down with the stone tablets of the law, the Torah . . . Paul sees the ascension of Jesus in a sense like that of Moses. After the 'new Exodus' which had been achieved in Jesus' death and resurrection, setting the human race free from bondage to sin and death, Jesus 'went up' into the heavenly realm where he now reigns as Lord. Instead of coming down again with the law, as Moses had done, Jesus 'returned' in the person of the spirit, through whom different gifts are now showered on the church. Why does Paul say that the king 'went up' and 'came down' like this? Verse 9 is one of the most puzzling in the whole letter, but it is probably meant simply to stress that, in the gift of the spirit, it is Christ himself who is received (see 3:17 and Romans 8:9-11). This is how King Jesus makes the church into his own 'fullness' (1:23), giving us his own presence by the spirit . . . What matters is that, even with all the different gifts that Jesus has lavished on the church, it is the same Jesus, the same Lord, who is personally present, by the spirit, in each of them. He lives within each member of his body.

God's word to us is inherently a call, an invitation, a welcome into his presence and action. When we respond to the call, we live a calling. The calling gives us a destination, determines what we do, shapes our behavior, forms a coherent life.

Eugene Peterson



Unity: What do you believe Unity in the Church should look like today?

What attitudes and actions do *not* reflect Unity in the Church?



Mature Faith: How does Paul describe “mature” faith in **Ephesians 4:11-16**?



List three things that have helped you grow in maturity as a follower of Christ.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Application

Apply it to Your Everyday: What is one way God is inviting you to grow as a follower of Christ this week?

Apply it to Your Relationships: Paul describes a life lived worthy of the calling of God as humble, gentle, patient and forbearing. Choose the one attribute you desire to grow in this month. What is it?

What will you do to grow in this area?

Prayer: Much of our maturity and growth is dependent upon a right understanding of who we are in Christ. Use **Ephesians 1:3-14** (The Message Version) as a guide for your time of prayer today.

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is!

He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

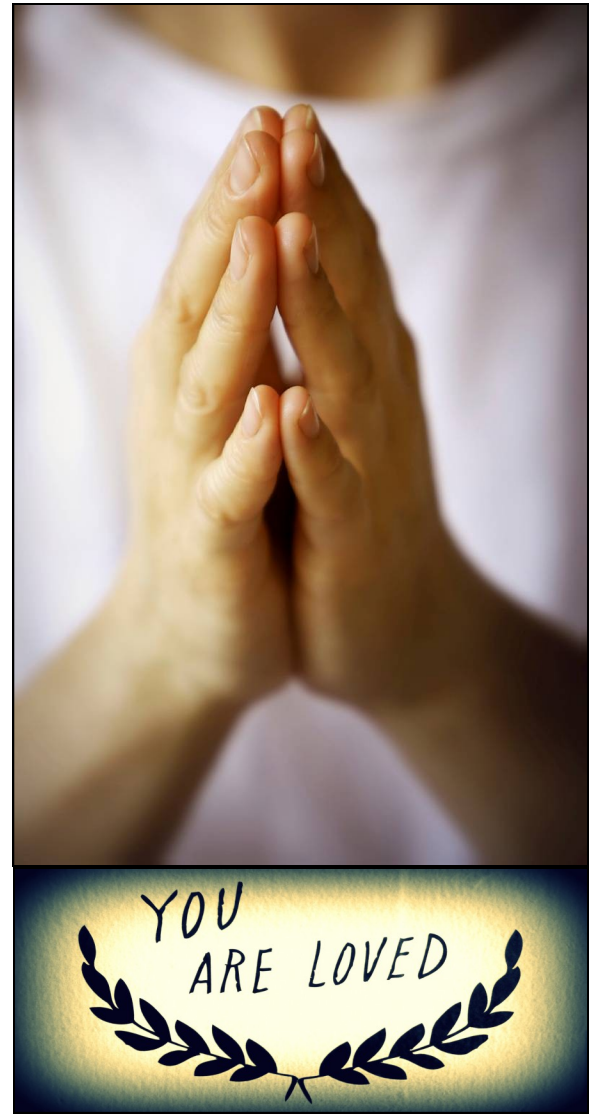
Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for.

Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

Ephesians 1:3-4



For My Group

What are three things you want to share with your group from this study?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Going Deeper: Grow Up Together

Memorize: One of the most helpful practices in the Christian life is Scripture Memory. Each week we encourage you to memorize a verses (or verses) from the passage studied. Here are the verses for this week.

Ephesians 4:1-2

. . live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Unity: In **Ephesians 4:1-16** Paul speaks of the importance of unity. We are to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (4:3). We are being equipped as the church so that we can be built up and reach “unity in the faith” (4:13). It seems that unity is the mark of a mature church. Jesus prays for our unity. Read **John 17** and record all that Jesus prays for those who follow him.

What does Jesus’ prayer reveal about unity in the church?

What does Jesus’ prayer reveal about Jesus?

Notes: Grow Up Together





Week Three: Put On a New Self

The gospel is an invitation to intimacy with Jesus that produces a changed life. Some believe that because the gospel is a gospel of grace that it doesn't matter how we live—but this is not the thinking of Paul. In **Romans 6** he responds to this thinking by saying, “why would we keep on sinning when we have been given a new life in Christ?” (my paraphrase). This new life is what Paul wants the readers of Ephesians to embrace and “put on.” This new life is the life for which we are created and the life in which we thrive.



Scripture

Read Ephesians 4:17-32 and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,
for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27

2. Cross-References: Record what the following verses reveal about putting on the “new self”.

Scripture	Putting on the New Self means . . .
<p>Ephesians 4:20-24 That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.</p>	
<p>Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.</p>	
<p>Romans 13:11-14 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.</p>	
<p>Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.</p>	
<p>Colossians 3:9-14 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.</p>	

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing.

He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to?

The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage:

but He is building a palace. And He intends to come and live in it Himself.

C.S. Lewis

On | Off

Putting On a New Self

Ephesians 4:17-32 is about transformation. It's about the life we are created to live. It speaks of attitudes and activities we need to take off and those we need to put on. Read through the passage and list all that we need to "put off" and all that we need to "put on." Then consider why these things matter to God.

Put On	Put Off	Why this Matters to God

Application

Apply It to Your Everyday: What is the one thing from this list that you want to start putting off today?

How has this attitude or activity hindered you from being all that God has created you to be?

When you take this attitude or activity off, what will you replace it with?



Prayer: Pray for the changes you desire in your life. Consider asking 2-3 trusted friends to pray with you and for you. Use **Psalm 51:10-17** to guide your prayer today.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

Psalm 51:10-17

For My Group

What three things do you want to share with your group from this study?

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

Going Deeper: Put on a New Self

Memorize: Dallas Willard said, “Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our mind with what it needs.”

Ephesians 4:24

²⁴ and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

How do I put on the new self on?

Spiritual disciplines are a great way to begin putting on the “new self” daily. In his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster says, “God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us . . . They are God’s means of grace.”

Spiritual Disciplines include prayer, fasting, solitude, silence, service, Scripture memory, etc. A helpful way to determine which discipline will best help us “put on” the new self is to ask ourselves what we tend to do when we feel lonely, insecure and/or unloved. What habit do we run to for comfort? As we identify that habit or pattern we can then choose a spiritual discipline that will help bring that coping mechanism under God’s control. Sometimes it helps to have trusted friends help us choose this discipline.

Here are some examples:

1. Do you get online and shop when life feels out of control? Perhaps your “new self” is being called to a season of simplicity.
2. Is food your go-to comfort? A fast may prove to be a very fruitful time for you to rely on God.
3. Do you check email or social media incessantly or in the quiet moments of life? Try fasting from technology and begin to allow space for silence and solitude that allows you to hear the voice of God.

Exercise

1. Determine the area in your life that God is inviting you to offer up to him for transformation. Record that area here.

2. Choose one of the following disciplines (or another that is not included in this list):
 - Solitude & Silence
 - Fasting
 - Scripture Memorization
 - Meditation
 - Simplicity
 - Confession
 - Giving
 - Hospitality
 - Service
 - Surrender
3. Identify a specific amount of time to practice this spiritual discipline. 1-3 days is a great amount of time to start with any of these.
4. Keep a journal and record your reflections as you enter into the journey of placing yourself before God and allowing him to transform you.

Resources for Practicing the Disciplines:

Spiritual Discipline Handbook, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
Celebration of Discipline, by Richard Foster

Notes: Put on the New Self





Week Four: Be Like God

Who can be like God? This call in **Ephesians 5:1** seems absurd. But, the message of Jesus is to follow him and to be like him. Jesus is the ultimate model for humanity and he shows us how to live. He became a human being for our salvation but also for our transformation. It is encouraging to know that when he faced temptation he relied upon the same gifts given to us: the power of the Holy Spirit, access to God the Father in prayer and the fellowship of the community of believers. So, before you dismiss the notion of being like God, consider Jesus who came to make this imitation possible.

Scripture

Read **Ephesians 5:1-20** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

Observations

Looking at **Ephesians 4:29-5:20** list all that it means to “follow God’s example.”



Walk in the way of love.
Live as children of light.
Find out what pleases the Lord.
Understand what the Lord's will is.

Always ask Why: Why are the following considered improper for God's holy people (5:3): sexual immorality, impurity and greed?
 Record your thoughts here.

1. Even a Hint of Sexual Immorality (see also **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**; **1 Thessalonians 4:3-4**; **Hebrews 13:4**) —

2. Any kind of impurity —

3. Greed (see also **Hebrews 13:5**) —

What Pleases God? **Ephesians 5:10** says we should “find out what pleases the Lord” and **Ephesians 5:17** encourages us to understand what God's will is. What do the following passages reveal about discerning God's will and pleasing him?

Scripture	Discerning God's Will and Pleasing Him
<p>1 Kings 3:5-6, 10-12 God said (to Solomon), “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” ⁶Solomon answered, “. . . give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong . . .” ¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart . . .”</p>	
<p>Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.</p>	

Scripture	Discerning God's Will and Pleasing Him
<p>Hebrews 13:16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.</p>	
<p>Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.</p>	
<p>Colossians 1:9-10 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,</p>	
<p>Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.</p>	
<p>Psalms 40:8 I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.</p>	
<p>Philippians 2:12-16 ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.</p>	
<p>1 Thessalonians 2:4 But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.</p>	
<p>Romans 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.</p>	
<p>1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.</p>	



You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness.

Anne Frank

Two Gifts for Being Like God

When Paul calls us to “follow God’s example” he highlights the two gifts that will empower this change. The first gift is that we are loved by God (**Ephesians 5:1**). This is no small thing. If we think that imitating God will earn or gain his love then this call is a crushing burden. But if know we are first loved by him then this call is a gracious invitation.

The second gift is that we have the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit (which happens at the moment of salvation) we are invited to continue being filled with the Spirit (this is the language of **Ephesians 5:18** which is literally translated “keep on being filled with the Spirit”). To be filled with the Spirit is to yield to the Spirit of God and to let his power transform us.

How would following God be different if we did not have the Holy Spirit?

LOVE.
HOLY
SPIRIT.

Application

1. **Apply it to Your Everyday:** Look back over this lesson and consider what God is inviting you to change in your life today. What will be your first step toward change?

Prayer: Make this your prayer today.

*Show me Your glory, I pray to You, that so I may know You indeed.
Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”
Then give me grace to rise and follow you from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long.
In Jesus’ Name. Amen.*

A. W. Tozer

⁸O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob! *Selah.*
⁹Behold our shield, O God, And look upon the face of Your anointed.
¹⁰For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside.
I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
¹¹For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
¹²O LORD of hosts, how blessed is the one who trusts in You!

Psalm 84:8-12

For My Group

What are the two most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

Going Deeper: Be Like God

Memorize:

Ephesians 5:1-2

¹ Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Practicing the Presence of God: To imitate someone, we must see them. To be like God we must be in the presence of God. Adele Calhoun speaks to this practice and suggests some exercises to help us in her book, *Spiritual Discipline Handbook*.

God is always Present.

We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito.

C.S. Lewis

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:7-10

Spiritual Exercises to Practice the Presence of God.

1. Dedicate some task that you are doing to the Lord. Choose something that is part of your normal routine like making or eating a meal, changing a diaper, meeting with a client or fulfilling a task at work. Talk to God about the task before you begin and again when you are done. How did this help you to be more aware of God in the process?
2. Decide to stop several times throughout your day to pay attention to God and practice being in his presence. Set an alarm on your watch or phone. When the alarm sounds take just a moment to acknowledge God with you.

Take action. Record here what you will do to become more aware of God's presence.

Notes: Be Like God





Week Five: Love and Respect

We come now to a passage that brings with it great controversy. What is this command for wives to submit to their husbands? For some this seems right and fair and the ticket to a harmonious marriage. For others it is a formula for abuse and the suppression of women in society. Before we dive into the passage it is right to consider the historical context in which it was written. Paul's encouragement to wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters follows the pattern of the "household codes" that were common at that time.

Author Rachel Held Evans notes:

As far back as the fourth century BC, philosophers considered the household to be a microcosm, designed to reflect the hierarchal structure of the society, the gods, and ultimately the universe. Aristotle wrote that "the smallest and primary parts of the household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children" and devoted several sections of his *Politics* to the importance of free men ruling over their wives, children, and slaves. First-century philosophers Philo and Josephus included the household codes in their writings as well, arguing that a man's authority over his household was critical to the success of a society.

In the context of the patriarchal society Paul was writing to and the existence of these household codes of philosophers that emphasized the dominance of husbands, fathers and masters, the "household" code in **Ephesians 5:21-6:9** (and **Colossians 3:12-4:6**) would appear absolutely radical to the first century reader. Here Paul is advocating for mutual submission (5:21), for men to love and serve their wives (5:25-31) and for all relationships to be in and unto Christ.

Scripture

Read **Ephesians 5:21-6:9** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

Observations

How does Paul say the following relationships should look (**Ephesians 5:21-6:9**)?

Husbands to Wives	
Wives to Husband	
Children To Parents	
Fathers to Children	
Slaves to Masters	
Masters to Slaves	
Christ to the Church	
Everyone to Christ	[Note how many times Paul speaks of living for or to the Lord/Christ.]

Summarize. What does this passage reveal about the biblical pattern of relationships?

What does this passage reveal about God?

Key Words and Definitions: Look up the definitions for the following key words.

Key Word	Definition (dictionary.com) and Lexicon (biblehub.com)
Submit	
Respect	
Obey	
Exasperate	

The husband is the head of the wife. What?! For women, this can be a disturbing suggestion in **Ephesians 5:23**. Look also at **1 Corinthians 11:2-12**. What thoughts and questions do you have about these passages? Feel free to look into commentaries and books that give insight to the culture that Paul was speaking to at the time.

Abuse or Beauty? How might the relationship of husbands and wives described in **Ephesians 5:21-33** be misused for abuse? How might it be lived out for the beauty of the gospel and the benefit of both the husband and the wife?

Reverence for Christ. How is submission to others an expression of reverence for Christ?

Application

Apply It to Your Heart: How is God inviting you to live differently in light of this passage?

Prayer: List your relationships (husbands, children, employers, employees) and then take a moment to pray for each person, asking the Lord to guide your prayers for them through the Holy Spirit.

For My Group

What are the three most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

3.

Going Deeper: Love and Respect

Memorize:

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submission: We do not like the word submission. It feels weak and vulnerable to abuse. We want to consider what it means for us to live lives of mutual submission in our relationships.

*The call to mutual submission “demands readiness to renounce one’s own will for the sake of others,
and to give precedence to others”*

Word Biblical Commentary, Ephesians

True biblical submission is not linked solely to hierarchy and roles. It begins in the very center of the Trinity where the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all mutually honor and defer to each other. Christ’s submission to the Father did not make him less than the Father.

It was a way the Son gave glory to the Father. [John 5:19-20, 12:49-50].

Adele Calhoun

What does submission demand of us?

Read **Philippians 2:1-11** and reflect on what it shows about mutual submission expressing itself in love.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-11

Notes: Love and Respect





Week Six: Battle Evil

Throughout Ephesians Paul speaks of the Spiritual World, the presence of the devil and the reality of evil (1:3, 10, 20; 2:2, 6; 3:10-11; 4:9-10, 27; 6:11-12). We live in a now and not-yet age. Christ has accomplished victory over Satan through his life, death and resurrection (1:20-23). This victory has been accomplished and is being accomplished. So in our passage today, Paul exhorts us, not to win victory over the devil (that has been done by Jesus), but to stand firm against his schemes. We live in a time when the devil is working to defeat and discourage those seeking and following Jesus. This passage reminds us to stand strong, not in ourselves, but in the Lord.

Scripture

Read **Ephesians 6:10-13** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

Observations

Make at least 15 observations from **Ephesians 6:10-13**.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Read the following Scripture and record what they reveal about the devil/Satan and how we can combat him.

Scripture	Observations
<p>Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.</p>	
<p>1 Peter 5:8-9 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.</p>	
<p>John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.</p>	
<p>James 4:6-8 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.</p>	
<p>1 John 3:7-8 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.</p>	
<p>Ephesians 4:25-27 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.</p>	
<p>2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment . . .</p>	

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors . . .

C.S. Lewis

Application

Apply It to Your Life: Look back over the passages on the devil/Satan. How can you stand against the schemes of the devil in your life this week?

Prayer: The Warfare Prayer by theologian Victor Matthews (condensed).

Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before you. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in my prayer life.

Satan, I command you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave my presence with all your demons. I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between us.

Heavenly Father, I worship You and give You praise. I recognize that You are worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise. I renew my allegiance to You and pray that the blessed Holy Spirit would enable me in this time of prayer. I am thankful, Heavenly Father, that You have loved me from past eternity and that You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die as my substitute. I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ came as my representative and that through Him You have completely forgiven me; You have adopted me into your family; You have assumed all responsibility for me; You have given me eternal life; You have given me the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ so I am now justified. I am thankful that in Him, you have made me complete, and that You have offered Yourself to me to be my daily help and strength.

Heavenly Father, open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this day. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the Cross and in His resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies. I take my place with Him in the heavenlies and recognize by faith that all wicked spirits and Satan himself are under my feet. I declare, therefore, that Satan and his wicked spirits are subject to me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for the Armor You have provided. I put on the belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Sandals of Peace and the Helmet of Salvation. I lift up the Shield of Faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy; and I take in my hand the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. I choose to use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life. I put on this Armor and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, blessed Holy Spirit.

Today I put off all forms of selfishness and put on the new nature with its love. I put off all forms of fear and put on the new nature with its courage. I put off all forms of weakness and put on the new nature with its strength. I put off all forms of lust and put on the new nature with its righteousness, purity, and honesty. I am trusting You to show me how to make this practical in my daily life.

In every way I stand into the victory of the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby all the principalities and powers were made subject to Him. I claim my place in Christ as victorious with Him over all the enemies of my soul. Blessed Holy Spirit, I pray that You would fill me. Come into my life, break down every idol and cast out every foe.

I surrender myself to You. I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way this victory over all the satanic forces in my life. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.

For My Group

What are the two most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

Going Deeper: Battle Evil

Memorize:

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Satan, the devil and the demons

The first place to start when studying a topic in the Scripture is with a simple word search and study. Then follow that up with looking in commentaries and Bible dictionaries because it is always important to understand the context and the purpose of the book in which the word appears.

Do a word search at www.biblegateway.com on satan, devil and demons. Record what you discover here.

How do you want to live differently in light of what you discovered through this search through Scripture?

Notes: Battle Evil



Can Christians be Demon-Possessed?

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

The term *demon possession* is an unfortunate term that has found its way into some English translations of the Bible but is not really reflected in the Greek text. The Greek New Testament can speak of people who “have a demon” (Matt. 11:18; Luke 7:33; 8:27; John 7:20; 8:48, 49, 52; 10:20), or it can speak of people who are suffering from demonic influence (Gk. δαιμονίζομαι, G1227), but it never uses language that suggests that a demon actually “possesses” someone.

The problem with the terms *demon possession* and *demonized* is that they give the nuance of such strong demonic influence that they seem to imply that the person who is under demonic attack has no choice but to succumb to it. They suggest that the person is unable any longer to exercise his or her will and is completely under the domination of the evil spirit. While this may have been true in extreme cases such as that of the Gerasene demoniac (see Mark 5:1–20; note that after Jesus cast the demons out of him, he was then “in his right mind,” v. 15), it is certainly not true with many cases of demonic attack or conflict with demons in many people’s lives.

So what should we say to the question, “Can a Christian be demon possessed?” The answer depends on what someone means by “possessed.” Since the term does not reflect any word found in the Greek New Testament, people can define it to mean various things without having clear warrant to anchor it to any verse of Scripture, and it becomes difficult to say that one person’s definition is right and another one’s wrong. My own preference, for reasons explained above, is not to use the phrase *demon possessed* at all, for any kinds of cases.

But if people explain clearly what they mean by “demon possessed,” then an answer can be given depending on the definition they give. If by “demon possessed” they mean that a person’s will is completely dominated by a demon, so that a person has no power left to choose to do right and obey God, then the answer to whether a Christian could be demon possessed would certainly be no, for Scripture guarantees that sin shall have no dominion over us since we have been raised with Christ (Rom. 6:14, see also vv. 4, 11).

On the other hand, most Christians would agree that there can be differing degrees of demonic attack or influence in the lives of believers (see Luke 4:2; 2 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 6:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8). A believer may come under demonic attack from time to time in a mild or more strong sense. (Note the “daughter of Abraham” whom “Satan bound for eighteen years” so that she “had a spirit of infirmity” and “was bent over and could not fully straighten herself” [Luke 13:16, 11].) Though Christians after Pentecost have a fuller power of the Holy Spirit working within them to enable them to triumph over demonic attacks, they do not always call upon or even know about the power that is rightfully theirs. So how severe can demonic influence become in the life of a Christian after Pentecost who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

Before answering this question, we should note that it is similar to a question about sin: “How much can a genuine Christian let his or her life be dominated by sin, and still be a born-again Christian?” It is difficult to answer that question in the abstract, because we realize that when Christians are not living as they ought to live, and when they are not benefiting from regular fellowship with other Christians and from regular Bible study and teaching, they can stray into significant degrees of sin and still can be said to be born-again Christians. But the situation is abnormal; it is not what the Christian life should be and can be. Similarly, if we ask how much demonic influence can come into the life of a genuine Christian, it is hard to give an answer in the abstract. We are simply asking how abnormal a Christian’s life can become, especially if that person does not know about or make use of the weapons of spiritual warfare that are available to Christians, persists in some kinds of sin that give entrance to demonic activity, and is outside the reach of any ministry that is accustomed to giving spiritual help against demonic attack. It would seem that in such cases the degree of demonic attack or influence in a Christian’s life could be quite strong. It would not be correct to say there can be no such influence because the person is a Christian. Therefore when someone asks, “Can a Christian be demon possessed?” but really means, “Can a Christian come under quite strong influence or attack by demons?” then the answer would have to be a positive one but with the caution that the word *possessed* is here being used in a confusing way. Since the term *demon possessed* is a misleading one to use in all cases, especially when referring to Christians, I would prefer to avoid it altogether. It seems better simply to recognize that there can be varying degrees of demonic attack or influence on people, even on Christians, and to leave it at that. In all cases the remedy will be the same anyway: rebuke the demon in the name of Jesus and command it to leave (see Grudem’s Systematic Theology for further discussion).



Week Seven: Stand Strong

Last week we focused our attention on our enemy the devil. This week we focus on the weapons God gives us to stand strong against the devil and to remain standing as this enemy schemes and plots against us. Note that the tone of this section is not fear. Paul is not telling us to be afraid — he's telling us that we have armor and that we will stand strong if we use it.

Before you start the study, confess any fear you may have and spend a moment thanking God for all that he provides us to live full and abundant lives, even in the midst of evil.

Scripture

Read **Ephesians 6:12-18** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

Observations

The Armor: Who does the armor belong to and why is this significant?

Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can stand against the devil's schemes." What are the "schemes" (or methods) the devil most uses against you?

Putting on the Armor: Consider each piece of the armor of God and how this piece specifically helps us stand strong against the devil and the spiritual forces of evil. Also look up the cross-references about this piece of armor in Ephesians and list your observations.

Armor of God	The Purpose of this Piece of Armor	Cross-References
Belt of Truth		Ephesians 1:13; 4:15, 21, 24, 25; 5:9
Breastplate of Righteousness		Ephesians 4:24; 5:9
Readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace		Ephesians 1:13; 3:6; 2:17; 3:8 (gospel) Ephesians 1:2; 2:14-18; 4:3; 6:23 (peace)
Shield of Faith		Ephesians 1:1, 13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13
Helmet of Salvation		Ephesians 1:13; 2:5, 8; 5:23
The Sword of the Spirit		Ephesians 1:13; 5:26
Prayer		Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; 6:18-20

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!
No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. And God is faithful;
he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,
he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

What does **1 Corinthians 10:12-13** reveal about temptation?

What does this passage reveal about God?

What is the "way out" that God is providing for you from a temptation that you are currently facing?

Application

Putting on the Armor today: Look back over the list of armor pieces. Which piece do you need most today?

How will you "put on" this piece of armor today?

Prayer: Thank the Lord for giving you his armor to protect you from evil. Pray through each piece, asking God to protect you and those you love from evil and the schemes of the devil.

For My Group

What are the two most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

Going Deeper: Stand Strong

Memorize

Ephesians 6:13

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Be Strong and Courageous: Read **Joshua 1:1-9** and make at least 30 observations from this passage. An observation is simply recording what you see. Hang in there — the best observations come as we really sit in the passage.

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:

²"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

⁸Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:1-9

Notes: Stand Strong





Week Eight: Pray

Most commentaries do not list prayer as a piece of the armor of God, but Paul certainly attaches it to this conversation about how to stand strong and remain standing when we face the enemy who is the author of evil and lies. Prayer is simply a conversation with God. To pray is to have access to the almighty, powerful God of the universe. He hears our cry and he responds with truth through the Scripture and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Take comfort that God is always inviting us to be in conversation with him. A beautiful gift is that Jesus also prays for us (**Hebrews 7:23-25; John 17**).

Scripture

Read **Ephesians 6:18-20** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.



Observations

Prayer: List all that this passage reveals about prayer. Note how many times Paul uses the pray/prayer, etc. Also note his repetition of the word "all".

Application

Praying on all occasions with all kinds of prayer: Looking over **Ephesians 6:18-20** what might you do this week to grow in your own prayer life (privately and/or with others)?

Prayer

To learn to pray, we pray: Spend time praying using the prompts from Paul in this passage.

1. **Pray in the Spirit**—as you settle in to pray, pause to listen to the Spirit speak to you through Scripture or his gentle prompting. Pray as he leads.
2. **Be Alert** — consider what is happening in your life today. Be alert to God’s presence, his nudges and his invitation. Be alert as you pray.
3. **Pray for all the Lord’s people** — pray for those in your life (family, Bible Study friends, neighbors, friends, missionaries, etc.)
4. **Pray for yourself and share your requests with friends** just as Paul is doing here (6:19-20)
5. **Pray for the mission God has given you** just as Paul desires for the Ephesians to pray for his mission.

Getting the Big Picture

Reflecting on Ephesians 4-6. Take a moment to look back through this study and capture what has impacted you.

List three words that for you summarize **Ephesians 4-6**.

How has this study transformed your thinking and your living over the past eight weeks?

What is the most important thing you experienced about God in this study?

For My Group

What are the three most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

3.

Going Deeper: Pray

Memorize

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's People.

Word Search: Discover all that Paul teaches about prayer. Go to www.biblegateway.com and search the word "pray" but limit your search to the Pauline Epistles. Record your findings here.

As you read over Paul's teaching on prayer, what do you discover about God?

Praying is first and foremost listening to Jesus, who dwells in the very depths of your heart. He doesn't shout. He doesn't thrust himself upon you. His voice is an unassuming voice, very nearly a whisper, the voice of a gentle love. Whatever you do with your life, go on listening to the voice of Jesus in your heart. This listening must be an active and very attentive listening, for in our restless and noisy world God's loving voice is easily drowned out. You need to set aside time every day for this active listening to God if only for ten minutes. Ten minutes each day for Jesus alone can bring about a radical change in your life.

Henri Nouwen

Notes: Pray



Ephesians 1-6

Ephesians 1

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

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

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 2

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

us to do. ¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 3

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

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

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

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

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

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

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

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

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

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

Ephesians 5

¹Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as

Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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

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

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

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

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

Ephesians 6

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

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

they do, whether they are slave or free.

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

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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

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

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

People in my group and prayer requests
