



THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS



Mike Glover

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is one of the most encouraging letters he wrote; it is full of deep spiritual truths and a major source of rich blessings for the Christian today. Within it, he reminds us that all Christians are united with Christ, no matter our gender, our race or our backgrounds. The law of Moses couldn't and can't save anyone from their sins; we're all saved by the grace of God if we remain 'in Christ'.

EPHESUS

Ephesus was a large and important city on the west coast of Asia Minor where the apostle Paul planted a church. Several factors contributed to the importance of Ephesus. The first factor was economics. Ephesus was the most favourable seaport in the province of Asia and the most important trade centre west of Tarsus.

Another factor was the size. Ephesus was the largest city in the province, having a population of perhaps three hundred thousand people. There were people from many cultures and nationalities, and it was a very immoral place. In **Acts 19:8-9**, we read that there were also many Jews who lived there, and in **Acts 19:32-34**, we read about the tension between the Jews and others.

A third factor was culture. Ephesus contained a theatre that seated an estimated twenty-five thousand people. A fourth factor was that Ephesus was politically important.

It was a free city; in other words, they governed their own affairs. The city had a clerk, **Acts 19:35**. The city had officials who paid for the public games, **Acts 19:31**, and the city had courts and proconsuls, **Acts 19:38**.

The fifth, and perhaps most significant, reason for the importance of Ephesus was religion. The Temple of Artemis or Diana, at Ephesus, ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. If you were around in Biblical times and thought of Ephesus, your mind would automatically think about the city where you would find the 'temple of Diana.'

The Temple of Diana was one hundred and twenty-seven meters x sixty-six x eighteen meters high; it had one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, each a gift of a king, thirty-six of them were overlaid with gold and were studded with precious stones.

In the inner shrine was the image of Diana. The Ephesians thought she had fallen from heaven; she had many breasts, which was a sign of fertility, and people thought it was the most sacred thing in the world.

The priests of the temple were Eunuchs and the women in the temple were Melissa, that is a religious prostitute. They had very emotional, sensational worship using the flute whilst dancing.

There was an area of the temple which was provided the criminals could live in that area without being pursued by justice. The Ephesians liked their magic charms; they would use letters from some 'official' as they travelled, as a kind of lucky charm.

In **Acts 19**, we find in Ephesus, a silversmith by the name of Demetrius, who made a living out of idol making, he was causing all sorts of trouble for Paul and the other disciples. And we have recorded in **Acts 19:27** that Diana was loved and worshipped by people from all over the world.

The original temple of Diana crumbled into dust many centuries ago, but when it was rebuilt, it became one of the Seven Wonders of the World. And it was to this temple that Alexander the Great came too.

He wanted his name carved on one of the one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, and so he offered all the riches of his eastern campaign for the privilege, but the city fathers turned down the offer.

And so even the mightiest mortal on earth of the time couldn't even buy the privilege to have his name on a pillar in the temple of a god. No wonder years later the apostle Paul would write to the Ephesian church and tell them in **Ephesians 2:19-22**, that they were the temple, not of any old god but of Almighty God Himself.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN EPHESUS

The history of Christianity at Ephesus began around A.D. 50, perhaps as a result of the efforts of Priscilla and Aquila, as we read in **Acts 18:18**. Paul came to Ephesus in about A.D. 52, establishing the church and staying there for at least three years, as **Acts 20:31** tells us.

It was during that time that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and was faced with many opportunities to share the Gospel, but also faced many problems, as **Acts 18:23-41** tells us.

We also know that it was in Ephesus that Paul baptised believers who apparently came to know the Gospel through disciples of John the Baptist, **Acts 19:1-5**, and he opposed the strong influence of magic, **Acts 19:11-20**.

By the time that John penned his words in **Revelation 2:1-7**, the church at Ephesus was busy working for the Lord but had no sincere love for Him. They had all the church programs but had no passion. They were a busy church with great statistics, but they were a church that was drifting away from their heartfelt devotion to Christ.

Ephesus was a busy church with high spiritual standards. The work had been difficult, but they had not collapsed. Looking from the outside, in every way, this church is what we would call a successful church. And from the outside, people would look in and think that this is a church that deeply loves their God.

Sadly, they would learn that Christ is more concerned about what they were doing with Him, rather than what they were doing for Him. To everyone else, this was a greatly successful church, but to Christ, who is now walking amongst them, this church is in the process of falling.

AUTHOR AND DATE

It's never been really questioned as to who wrote the letter to the Ephesians; it's generally been accepted that the author was Paul. It was probably written around 61-21 A.D. and is known as a prison epistle.

THE LETTER

Ephesians 6:21-22 mentions Tychicus, who probably carried the letter. The letter itself was a circular letter, probably copied and sent to other congregations. Paul's letter to the Colossians is very similar to his Ephesian letter, but they are still different because they were written for different reasons.

Colossians speaks about the Deity of Christ, **Colossians 1**, in **Colossians 2:8-18**, we read of warnings against Gnosticism and Judaism, and in **Colossians 4**, we read his personal greetings.

In Ephesians 1:3-14, we read about the divine election and what it means to be ‘in Christ’. In Ephesians 3:40-41, we read about the power of spiritual prayer in Ephesians 5:23-33, we read about marriage and the union of Christ in Ephesians 6:13-17. We read about how Christians are soldiers who need to arm themselves with the armour of God.

PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

Paul’s main aim in this letter was to highlight the oneness of the church, which was the result of Christ’s work on the cross and to present Jesus as the head over all things, especially His church.

First of all, he reminds the Ephesian Christians of God’s eternal redemptive purpose through the church, Ephesians 1:4 / Ephesians 1:5 / Ephesians 1:9 / Ephesians 1:11 / Ephesians 1:13 / Ephesians 1:20 / Ephesians 2:4 / Ephesians 2:6 / Ephesians 2:10 / Ephesians 3:11.

Secondly, he reminds this largely Gentile church of the many blessings they have as a result of being in Christ, because of God’s grace, Ephesians 1:3 / Ephesians 2:1-10. God’s plan of salvation is summed up in the church, which He will bring into an eternal dwelling after the conclusion of the world when Jesus comes again.

THEMES FOR THE BOOK

The theme for the letter is fairly straightforward: ‘in Christ’, what does it mean to be ‘in Christ’? ‘In the heavenly places’, what does it mean to be ‘in the heavenly places’?

OUTLINE

- Introduction and greeting. Ephesians 1:1-2
- Paul illuminates the blessings we have in Christ, praise to God. Ephesians 1:3-14
- Prayer for the enlightenment of the readers of the book. Ephesians 1:15-23
- Life from the dead. Ephesians 2:1-10
- The remainder speaks about reconciliation in Christ. Ephesians 2:11-22
- Privilege, mission, and the message. Ephesians 3:1-13
- Prayer Ephesians 3:14-41
- Unity in the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:1-6
- Unity in diversity. Ephesians 4:7-16
- Off with the old, on with the new. Ephesians 4:17-5:20
- New social relationships. Ephesians 5:21-6:9
- Christian soldier, the armour of God. Ephesians 6:10-20
- Conclusion and greetings. Ephesians 6:21-24

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul says he is an apostle, which is a healthy reminder for those who doubt he is. Paul states exactly at the beginning of the letter who he is, so it would be a hard lie if someone else had written it; he is an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, [Ephesians 1:1](#) / [Acts 9:15-16](#) / [Galatians 1:5](#) / [Galatians 1:15](#).

Remember the word Christ isn’t a name but merely a title; He is God’s anointed one. Christ comes from the word Christos and isn’t translated, which would have been better.

Paul writes to the saints, [Ephesians 1:1](#), which means being holy ones, we’re holy ones when we are in Christ. We were washed and sanctified, set aside, by our Lord Jesus, [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) / [1 Peter 1:13](#).

We must note that the words ‘in Ephesus’, [Ephesians 1:1](#), isn’t found in the early manuscripts. This had led some scholars to believe that Ephesians was intended not only for the church at Ephesus, but for all the leading churches of that district.

These saints were faithful, [Ephesians 1:1](#), someone is faithful when he is full of faith. Faithfulness isn’t measured by church attendance; our faith reflects on every minute of our lives.

Faithfulness has to do with trusting God, [Hebrews 11](#), and relying on His promises. Noah was obedient because, as a great act of faithfulness, he built the ark on dry land; he completely trusted God, [Hebrews 11:7-9](#).

The main thrust of being a Christian isn’t only going to worship; it should affect every aspect of life. We’re Christian twenty-four hours a day. The important thing is how we behave in our daily lives, not that I’m a good Christian, because I go to church on Sundays.

If all you can do is go to church and that’s it for two hours, then you’d better get rid of the church and all the traditions. Why should we meet together? To love, provoke and encourage each other to do more God works. It is vital to be in worship, but it is a means to the goal, [Hebrews 10:24-25](#).

We cannot declare someone as holy; only Christ makes someone holy, [Ephesians 1:1](#). If someone is in Christ, they are holy. Calling someone ‘holy father’ like the Pope could cause some to think he is God on earth. This is blasphemy because nobody should call himself father, [Matthew 23:8-12](#).

As mentioned earlier, the word ‘saint’ means holy one; this name is generally abused. Calling someone holy with a circle around their head is an abuse. God is holy; this is His nature, [Isaiah 6:3](#) / [Revelation 4:8](#).

IN CHRIST

These faithful saints are in Christ Jesus, [Ephesians 1:1](#). We are baptised into Christ, and we have clothed ourselves with Christ, [Galatians 3:26-27](#). Some people are in Christ, and some people aren’t in Christ. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, [Romans 8:1](#). In Him, we are saved. It’s in Christ Jesus that we are new creatures and all things have become new.

To be in Christ speaks about being a spiritual being. The proper habitat for fish is in water, for birds in the sky. The proper habitat for a disciple of Jesus is in Christ, which is our spiritual environment, [John 15:5](#). We cannot bear fruit if we are not in Christ, [John 15:1-6](#).

In [Ephesians 1:1-14](#), the words, ‘in Him’ are used fourteen times. This seems to be the message or the theme of the book. The word grace, [Ephesians 1:2](#), in Greek is Charis. Some say it means God’s riches at Christ’s expense, an unmerited divine favour, which cannot be earned!

In [Galatians 5:4](#), Paul is concerned about legalism, where they try to justify themselves with the law, but Paul tells them they have fallen from grace. We get a free gift, and we only have to accept it.

The Greek word for peace is ‘eirene’. The two words Paul uses in this letter, grace and peace, are from the Father, [Numbers 6:25-26](#), which implies all the blessings come from the Father through the Son, [Ephesians 1:2](#).

PRAISE FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

‘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.’ [Ephesians 1:3](#)

In the Greek text [Ephesians 1:3-14](#), are one sentence.

Bock, in his commentary, says the following.

‘[Ephesians 1:3-14](#) is one of the longest psalms of the New Testament, and it is a praise psalm in its form, [Luke 1:46-55](#) / [Luke 1:67-79](#).’

The word praise is ‘eulogéto’s in Greek, [Luke 1:68](#) / [Romans 1:25](#) and means blessed be the God and Creator, [Romans 15:6](#) / [2 Corinthians 11:31](#). Some say that we cannot be in two places at the same time; however, we can be ‘in Christ’ and ‘in England’ at the same time. This is our physical and spiritual habitats.

What does it mean to be in Christ? It simply means to be in union with Christ, to be one with Him. We find in Him no condemnation, [Romans 8:1](#). We find in Him salvation. We are immersed into Christ, [Galatians 3:27](#). These are the people who are in Christ who have faithfully responded to the message but didn’t earn it, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Acts 2:38](#).

Was Abraham ‘in Christ’? No, but he was saved by faith. We, however, are new covenant people. How was John the Baptist’s standing before God? Was he in Christ? Well, he lived in the Old Testament era, but he was also saved by faith.

[1 John 1:1-9](#) tells us that if we’re in Christ, we continue to sin and fall short. Are we then still walking in the light, and are we still in Christ? Yes, God is merciful. Everybody sins and keeps sinning.

We’re not walking in truth when we say we don’t sin anymore, but if we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, God will forgive us, and we keep being in Christ, [1 John 1:8-10](#).

Being in Christ isn’t dependent on how good we are; if we were to die today, would we not think, did we do bad things during the last days of our lives, and did we go to church? All this doesn’t matter; we cannot earn heaven. It’s only through grace that we are saved.

Because of the goodness in Christ, we are saved. For there is no condemnation for he who is in Christ, [Romans 8:1-2](#). Remember that we are all sinners; even if we repent, we don’t repent enough. We fall short on all sides.

ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED!

We can rebel against God and walk away from Him. If we love to sin so much, we are in danger of not remaining in Christ anymore. We may turn from God, but God never turns from us. Are you saved when you die now? If you say, I hope so, then this is almost an insult to God.

John 10:27-30 tells us that nobody can get us out of Christ; however, we can decide to remove ourselves from Christ, and it's then that we become lost. As long as we believe and accept Christ's grace, we are in Christ and thus saved, but we shouldn't sin willfully, 2 Peter 2:20 / Hebrews 6:4-8 / Hebrews 10:26.

We will never be good enough, we will not be able to stop sinning, and we will not repent enough. But it doesn't matter; it doesn't change our standing for the Lord. We cannot speak too much about grace; we can never speak too much about what God does for us. We don't even speak enough about what God does for us.

To be in Christ speaks about the relationship with Christ. Although we are in Christ, we are not perfect, but being in Christ is a growing process. Someone who is in Christ for fifty years should bear more fruit, John 15:4 / Galatians 5:22-23, than someone who just come into Christ. If you don't bear fruit, nobody will know that you are in Christ, John 15:6.

In Christ, we find every blessing in Him, Ephesians 1:3. We are blessed abundantly. You cannot be half in Christ; you are either in or out. If you're in Christ, you have every blessing. Ephesians 1:20 and Ephesians 2:6 tell us that He gives blessings, and we are at war in the spiritual realms, Ephesians 3:10 / Ephesians 6:12.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'In the heavenly places' or 'realms' refers to the location from which these blessings come. The heavenly realms are where Paul spoke of the believer as being presently in his or her spiritual life. Whereas physically we are on the earth, spiritually we are already with Christ in the heavens, Ephesians 1:20 / Ephesians 2:6 / Ephesians 3:10 / Ephesians 6:12. God has united us with Jesus Christ, so we are in that sense with Him where He is now.'

It doesn't matter where you live, but what matters is where we are spiritually. It's not a physical location, it's our spiritual address, and everybody has a spiritual address, Ephesians 6:12. Our address is in Christ.

'For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.' Ephesians 1:4-6

Paul says Christ chose us, He picked us out, to be holy and blameless, Ephesians 1:4. He doesn't want any person to perish, and according to the Scriptures, God wants everybody to be saved, 2 Peter 3:9. God appointed those in Christ to be blameless and holy.

Blameless doesn't mean sinless; it means we are acceptable to God, He accepts our sacrifices, Romans 12:1-2, and our behaviour is to reflect that standing. This is valid only for people who are in Christ.

What does Paul mean by the use of the words 'predestination and fore-ordination'? Is this a passage that teaches that men are foreordained to eternal life? To whom does Paul refer when he says, 'even as He chose us in Christ'? Ephesians 1:4.

THREE POSSIBILITIES

1. All Christians? A general statement.
2. Jews? Notice, 'first hoped in Christ,' Ephesians 1:12.
3. Apostles? Acts 9:15-16 / Galatians 1:15 / Ephesians 3:2.

If this passage is to be understood as referring to salvation, according to the plan of God from before the creation of the world, it would certainly apply to all Christians generally.

Even if Paul is speaking about himself speaking, what is true of Paul, where salvation is concerned, is true of every Christian, and some people simply take the passage as referring to the marvellous thing that God has accomplished in redemption.

Notice the contrast between the use of the words ‘we’ and ‘you’ in [Ephesians 1:11](#) and [Ephesians 1:13](#). Paul quite clearly puts two groups of people over against each other.

He speaks of ‘we’, including himself and ‘you’ also. It suggests that Paul is speaking of a special calling of the apostles. Take a moment to read [Ephesians 1:9-12](#), and compare what you read with [Ephesians 3:2-6](#).

In [Ephesians 1:10](#), Paul uses the word ‘dispensation’ in the KJV. In the A.S.V., ‘administration’, giving the idea of stewardship, household management, provision or arrangement.

Here in [Ephesians 1:10](#), it is in the sense of stewardship, [Ephesians 3:2](#) / [Galatians 2:7](#) / [Colossians 1:1-25](#). Here, it describes Paul’s election and selection to apostleship.

Paul claims that he was, ‘set apart before he was born and called by the grace of God to the office of apostle,’ [Galatians 1:15](#) / [Acts 9:15-16](#). The chosen vessel is a vessel of election, [Galatians 1:5](#).

Perhaps he is thinking of His apostleship to the Gentiles, for Paul is writing to Gentiles. Paul reminds them five times in this letter that they were Gentiles, [Ephesians 2:11](#), for example. They had no hope, and without God.

The word ‘mystery’ in [Ephesians 3:3-5](#) is the Greek word ‘musterion’, and it means a secret, not a mystery, because it cannot be understood, but a secret which can be understood when revealed, [Colossians 1:25-27](#).

When Paul speaks of election, foreknowledge, predestination, choosing means something different from what the Calvinist means. Calvinism says by decree of God, some are foreordained to eternal life and others to eternal death, but Paul says by the will of God that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge, [1 Timothy 2:3](#).

Calvinism says neither are any redeemed by the Lord, but the elect only, but Paul says Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, [1 Timothy 2:6](#). Calvinism says God’s choice falls on men whilst they are still outside of Christ and in their sins, and unites them to Christ that they, the elect, might receive forgiveness.

But Paul says, when men respond to the Gospel and obey it and come to Christ, it is then that God’s choice falls upon them, that they become the elect, and enter into the blessings which before the foundation of the world, God had determined to bestow upon believers.

Calvin taught that some people who are still ‘children of wrath even as the rest’ are among those whom God has already chosen to be saved, and therefore they will eventually become children of God. Paul teaches that no man is elected until he is in Christ.

And all men are ‘non-elect’ until they accept the Gospel. Once in Christ, we are caught up in the current of God’s eternal purpose, and as His children, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing.

It’s not true that some of us are being predestined to be saved, [Ephesians 1:5](#). God didn’t create us to condemn us; it’s God’s desire for us to be saved. [Romans 9:14-29](#) tells us that God is always just, God is always fair, God is supremely fair, but also supremely sovereign. In Him, we are the chosen people of God.

Did He create some people to condemn them? How can God predestine? Because He is sovereign, because He loves us and because we are adopted by Him as sons, some adopt a child and treat them as their own child, [Ephesians 1:5](#). If you’re a foster parent, you can withdraw at any time when it becomes enough for you. But when you adopt a child, you are bound by it, you cannot withdraw. The child is now in equal standing with the new parents.

He is in all the legal rights as their own son. God adopts us also and treats us as His own children, to make us His actual children with all the legal rights, benefits and obligations.

Galatians 4:4-5 tells us He sent His son at the right time, to adopt us as sons. It wasn't our right to be adopted, but by grace, and it's like becoming sons by natural birth. We aren't guests in our Father's house; we're family, and our Father's house became our house, we have become joint-heirs.

Wiersbe, in his commentary, says the following.

'You do not get into God's family by adoption. You get into His family by regeneration, the new birth, John 3:1-18 / 1 Peter 1:22-25. Adoption is the act of God by which He gives His 'born ones' an adult standing in the family. Why does He do this? So that we might immediately begin to claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth!'

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

'In Roman law, "When the adoption was complete, it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law, he was a new person. So new was he that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were abolished as if they had never existed.'

This all happened through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will, Ephesians 1:5. Could you imagine that this loving God deliberately creates people to be destroyed? The One He loves is Jesus.

'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.' Ephesians 1:7-10

He purchased our freedom through the blood of His Son, and our sins are forgiven, Ephesians 1:13-14. Why redemption? The word 'redemption' is the Greek word 'apolutroosin', and it means buying back that which was sold under sin, redeemed by His blood. He released us, He set us free, Hebrews 9:15.

Slaves during Roman times could purchase their freedom, but here the metaphor 'redemption' carries with it the idea of being brought out by God because we couldn't free ourselves, Exodus 6:6.

We have been purchased by the blood of Jesus out of the slavery of sin, from which we couldn't deliver ourselves by works of the law or meritorious deeds, Colossians 1:14. Jesus paid the ransom price in order to redeem us, and so we are delivered from condemnation, Romans 6:23 / Romans 8:1.

The price that had to be paid was the cross, the blood offering of the Son of God, Matthew 26:28 / Acts 20:28 / Romans 3:24-26 / 1 Corinthians 6:20 / Colossians 1:14 / Colossians 1:20 / Hebrews 9:12 / 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Redemption necessitates being forgiven; the forgiveness of sins always comes with redemption by the blood of Jesus.

A person receives the forgiveness of sins when they are baptised, Acts 2:38 / Acts 22:16. When a person is baptised,

they receive the rich blessings of God, which come by grace. The Greek word 'ploutos' is riches, Ephesians 1:7 / Ephesians 1:18 / Ephesians 3:8 / Ephesians 3:16. There is grace in wisdom and understanding, Ephesians 1:8.

God poured out the riches of His grace upon His children and it was in the wisdom and understanding of God that His plan of grace was revealed to mankind, 1 Corinthians 1:24 / 1 Corinthians 1:30 / 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 / 1 Corinthians 12:8 / Colossians 1:9 / Colossians 2:3.

God revealed His mystery, Ephesians 1:9, which is the Greek word 'musterion', through Christ, a secret that has been revealed.

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

'In the New Testament sense, a mystery is something which is hidden to the heathen but clear to the Christian.'

His plan of redemption was hidden from mankind until its revelation through Jesus, Matthew 13:11 / Luke 8:10 / Romans 11:25 / Romans 16:25-26 / 1 Peter 1:10-12. The mystery was revealed on the cross and written down for all to read in the New Testament, Ephesians 3:1-5 / Ephesians 5:32 / Ephesians 6:19-20 / Colossians 1:26.

The very fact that His plan of redemption was planned before the creation of man, Ephesians 1:10, is proof of the fact that grace wasn't earned by the obedience of mankind. Quite the opposite, the very fact that God foreplanned the cross is proof that He knew that we would sin, and so would be in need of the grace of the cross.

Unlike what some people claim, Jesus dying on the cross was no accident; God had determined that He would reconcile men unto Himself through the cross of Christ, Revelation 13:8 / 2 Timothy 1:9.

We are now living in the times that are bringing to a close the history of this world. It's God's plan to unite all earthly and spiritual things in this era through Christ, Ephesians 1:10 / Ephesians 3:10 / Galatians 4:4 / Colossians 1:27.

Christ is the completion of all things, and it was for Him that all things were created, Colossians 1:16.

Separation from God had come into the world because of sin, Genesis 3:22-24 / Romans 5:12 / 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, but in Christ, we have been reconciled again to God through the blood offering of the cross.

Jesus has now ascended to reign over all that exists, Ephesians 1:20-23 / 1 Peter 3:22. He is now King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15 / Hebrews 8:1 / Philippians 2:6-10.

'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, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 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, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.'

Ephesians 1:11-14

God is always in charge, Psalms 115:3 / Proverbs 16:9 / Proverbs 16:33 / Daniel 4:34-35, and we have been appointed to obtain an inheritance.

Morgan, in his commentary, says the following.

'Our God is a God who not only wills, but He works; and He works according to His will. The word counsel stands for deliberate planning and arranging, in which the ways and means of carrying out the will are considered and provided for.'

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'For the first time in this epistle, Paul made a distinction among believers. Until now, he spoke of all believers, but here he contrasted 'we' and 'you', Ephesians 1:13. The 'we' evidently refers to Jewish Christians and the 'you' to Gentile believers, as the context suggests, Ephesians 1:12-13.

We have been adopted as sons and obtained our inheritance, Ephesians 1:11. And what is the outcome? Praise and glory for Jesus, Ephesians 1:12. We receive what is promised by the Father, the promised Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13 / Acts 2:38-39.

We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13. Like the sealing of an envelope, sealed with a seal stamp, this assigns the ownership. It's Christ who approves us before God, Romans 8:9.

If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of God within them, they are not of Him. We know we belong to God because we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, Ephesians 1:13-14, kind of like an engagement ring. The deposit has been given, 2 Corinthians 1:21-24, that God is living within us, the Holy Spirit is the assurance and guarantee that has to come.

What if God changes His mind? We can be sure that we're being saved because God gave us His Spirit as a deposit, as a guarantee that we get our inheritance. If God gave us His Spirit, He will also give us the rest. In Christ, we have this assurance.

The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge that delivery will be completed, the promise of full emancipation, freedom, and the promise of that which God had already made possible. Bearing in mind that the one who is sent bears the authority of the one who sends.

SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

According to this passage, the seal of the Holy Spirit takes place at the point of salvation. It is a promise or guarantee of the Christian's future, eternal inheritance with Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated as 'seal' is 'shragizo', which means 'to set a seal upon, mark with a seal.'

A seal could be used to guarantee a document or letter, [Esther 3:12](#), which indicates ownership, [Song of Songs 8:6](#), or protects against tampering, [Matthew 27:66](#) / [Revelation 5:1](#). The Holy Spirit is our seal in every sense of this word.

1. The Holy Spirit in the believer's life helps to guarantee he or she is a child of God, [Romans 8:16](#).
2. The seal of the Holy Spirit serves as a mark that we truly belong to Christ, [Romans 8:9-10](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#).
3. The seal of the Holy Spirit helps protect against tampering or attack, [Romans 8:13](#).

In a very real sense, God's Spirit protects us and guarantees our eternity with the Lord, [2 Corinthians 1:22](#) / [1 John 5:13](#). At what point does the sealing of the Holy Spirit take place? The seal of the Holy Spirit offers a wonderful glimpse of God's role in salvation.

When we receive salvation in Christ, we are given a guarantee, and we exchange our ownership for His, and we are protected against the forces of evil. The sealing begins when a person believes and responds to the Gospel, [Acts 2:38](#) / [Ephesians 4:30](#) / [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#). At that point, God's seal offers the promise of eternal life, [John 3:16](#) / [1 Peter 1:3-5](#).

The Holy Spirit comes to live in a person when they are baptised, [Acts 2:38](#), and He provides the assurance that they belong to God as His children, [Romans 8:15-16](#) / [Galatians 4:6](#). It's God who does the sealing, not man and salvation is based on God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not on merit, [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) / [Titus 3:5](#).

This seal should provide wonderful encouragement for the believer against the spiritual battles in this life, [Ephesians 6:12](#), and anticipation for the life to come, [2 Corinthians 5:5](#) / [Ephesians 1:14](#) / [Ephesians 4:30](#). Believers in Christ are now God's possession. He has stamped us with the Holy Spirit, and because of that stamping, He declares three things.

1. Our salvation is authentic and genuine, [Romans 8:1-2](#) / [1 John 5:13](#).
2. We are owned by God Almighty, [1 Corinthians 6:20](#) / [1 Peter 2:9](#).
3. We carry the authority of Jesus Christ, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Acts 5:29](#).

If you've ever considered buying a house, you will know that most people will need to pay a deposit first. The reason for the deposit is to give the seller the assurance that you will pay the rest.

However, the Holy Spirit is a guaranteed pledge of our future inheritance in heaven with God. We have nothing more to pay because Christ paid it all for us, [Colossians 1:14](#) / [Revelation 5:9](#).

He is 'our deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.' And because we are sealed by Him, we can be certain that we will have a glorious future and eternal inheritance with God in heaven, [1 Peter 1:4](#).

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

'For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 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.' Ephesians

Paul heard about their faith in Christ and their love for all the saints, [Ephesians 1:15](#). Paul had already left Ephesus for some time, and after he lived there for three years, [Acts 20:23-32](#), they were very loyal to the truth, and they loved the saints.

The Pharisees claimed loyalty to God but despised some people. If you have an eye for the truth, you don't automatically love, [John 13:14](#) / [John 13:34-35](#) / [Ephesians 6:23](#) / [Colossians 1:14](#) / [2 Thessalonians 1:3](#) / [1 John 4:20](#).

J.B. Philips, in his commentary, says the following.

'The love we demonstrate is the proof of our faith in Christ.'

Paul was always concerned for other people. Not only when he was with them, or as he was writing to them, but even in prayer, he remembered them to the Father, [Ephesians 1:16](#). He keeps praying for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, [Ephesians 1:17](#) / [James 1:5](#) / [Acts 7:2](#).

This enables us to approach the circumstances of life in the Spirit of God. We cannot get to know God by reading books. Do you get to know somebody through writing? You really get to know the person when you meet them. We are called to know God intimately and personally, [Ephesians 1:17](#).

Wiersbe, in his commentary, says the following.

'To know God personally is salvation, [John 17:3](#). To know Him increasingly is sanctification, [Philippians 3:10](#). To know Him perfectly is glorification, [1 Corinthians 13:9-12](#).'

'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.' [Ephesians 1:18](#)

To enlighten means to flood with light, to make clear, [Ephesians 1:18](#). He prays that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened, [Ephesians 1:18](#). When we read about our hearts, we speak about the seat of our feelings, not about a physical thing. The sign of a heart is the sign of love.

In the Parable of the Sower, [Matthew 13:1-23](#), we see it's in our hearts where the seed grows. Our emotions, working with the mind, are in our hearts. It's what makes us, us.

'Elpis' is the Greek word for hope, and it means more than our hope. We say we hope that the weather will be nice tomorrow, but this isn't the hope the Bible speaks about; our hope is a confident expectation, [2 Corinthians 3:12](#).

We just don't hope that we go to heaven like we hope the bus will come. But this is my hope, I am confident, and I know for sure that it will happen. The blessed hope in Christ, [Titus 2:13](#). We are going to inherit far more than some gold on earth; nothing on earth can match what is in heaven.

'And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 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. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.' [Ephesians 1:19-23](#)

Here we read about the supreme demonstration of Divine power, [Ephesians 1:19](#) / [John 10:17-18](#) / [Acts 2:24](#) / [Acts 10:14](#). The surpassing grace of God, [2 Corinthians 9:14](#), the surpassing love of God, [2 Corinthians 3:19](#).

'Dynamis' is the Greek word for power, God's tremendously mighty power. The same power that resurrected Jesus is at work in us today, [Ephesians 1:19](#). The power that Jesus raised has placed Him above all authorities; all things are at His feet, [Ephesians 1:20-21](#).

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following.

'If the death of Christ is the supreme demonstration of the love of God, the resurrection of Christ is the supreme demonstration of his power.'

HEAVENLY REALMS

The accounts in [Genesis 1](#) and [Genesis 2](#) focus on the creation of physical things. There's nothing said about the creation of the heavenly realms, [Ephesians 1:20](#). We read in the Bible about cherubim, angels, heaven, etc. We don't know when they came into being. [Genesis 1](#) wasn't written to give a full history.

It's only written that we know the creation in relation to God. A lot of people have no other thought than our physical existence here on earth. They think when we die, it is done, there's nothing anymore.

Because we don't understand the heavenly realms and only think of physical things, God had to come to the earth in bodily form in order for us to understand, [John 1:1-2](#) / [John 1:14](#).

Jesus now reigns and is seated on the right hand of God, [Ephesians 1:20](#), this is the symbolic place of highest honour and authority, [Psalm 110:1](#) / [Acts 2:29-35](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:23-28](#) / [Mark 16:19](#) / [Matthew 28:18](#).

The manifold wisdom of Christ made known through the church and rulers, powers, world forces, and evil forces are in heavenly realms, [Ephesians 3:10-11](#) / [Ephesians 6:12](#). God has raised Him, exalted Him, [Philippians 2:9](#) / [Philippians 2:11](#), and made Him head over the body, [Ephesians 1:22](#).

Christ is the head of the body and is also head over all other things and rulers, our Master is King of the universe, [Ephesians 1:21-22](#). This leaves no room for other authorities like the Pope, my grandfather, etc. Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Christ's ascension has resulted in His exaltation over every other authority, [Colossians 1:16](#), human and angelic, [Philippians 2:8-11](#), present and future, [1 Corinthians 15:23-28](#).'

His resurrection was the final proof of Jesus' Deity, [Ephesians 1:23](#). The resurrection gives us hope for the future. Some people say, 'if someone would simply rise from the dead,' but Jesus has risen from the dead; why not believe Him? [Romans 1:3-4](#) / [1 Corinthians 14:1-8](#). The resurrection of Christ is essential in our belief; we couldn't have hope without the resurrection, [1 Peter 1:3-5](#).

The fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, [Ephesians 1:23](#) / [Colossians 2:9](#). The word fullness, [Ephesians 1:23](#), is the word 'pleroma' in Greek; the fullness of God dwells within Jesus. Christians are supposed to be a picture of God to the world.

God revealed Himself through Israel, but it wasn't a clear picture of God. The church is to be a demonstration of God to the world. We are the fullness of Christ, but we aren't in the world to pass judgment on others.

Jesus made God His own Father, making Him equal with God according to the Jews, [John 5:18](#). We also call God our Father, [Matthew 6:9](#), because we have been adopted, [Ephesians 1:5](#) / [Galatians 4:4-5](#). God and Jesus share Deity just as our parents and ourselves share humanity.

We cannot draw a picture of God, because He is Spirit, [John 4:24](#). How can we draw the Trinity on a board? It's just not possible. The dead body in a coffin isn't the person as they were alive; this is only the flesh and bones. The real you, we didn't see. How do we know that God did these things through Jesus? Because we read it in the Scriptures, by faith.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 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. 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.’ Ephesians 2:1-3

MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST

This chapter begins with Paul reminding us of four things.

1. They were spiritually dead, **Ephesians 2:1**.
2. They were subject to Satan, although this doesn’t have to be a conscious experience, **Ephesians 2:2**.
3. Bound by fleshly passions, **Ephesians 2:3**.
4. Being under condemnation, **Ephesians 2:3**.

Paul says they were dead spiritually, **Ephesians 2:1 / 1 Timothy 5:6 / Revelation 3:1**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is a world of difference in being dead in sins, as here, and being dead to sin in Christ Jesus. Those in Christ are legally dead to sin, in the sense of being free of the penalty of it, through the death of Christ.’

Wiersbe, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The unbeliever is not sick; he is dead! He does not need resuscitation; he needs resurrection. All lost sinners are dead, and the only difference between one sinner and another is the state of decay.’

The word ‘transgressions’, **Ephesians 2:1**, in Greek is ‘paraptoma’, and it means a false step, a step aside. The word sins, **Ephesians 2:1**, in Greek is the word ‘harmatia’. They were ruled by Satan, hence why Paul uses the past tense, ‘used to live,’ **Ephesians 2:2**, which is ‘peripates’, in Greek and means how they behaved.

The word ‘world’, **Ephesians 2:2**, is ‘kosmos’ in Greek, and is normally used to speak about the present sinful order, **John 8:38 / John 9:39 / John 12:25 / John 12:31 / John 17:11 / John 18:36**.

The Prince or ruler, **Ephesians 2:2**, is the Greek word, ‘archon’, which means ruler of the world, **John 14:13 / John 14:16**. Which is an obvious reference to Satan, **2 Corinthians 4:4 / John 14:30 / John 16:11**.

The words ‘the ruler of the kingdom of the air’ is speaking of Satan ruling, appearing to be ruling in the heavenly realms, but God will always have the upper hand.

He will allow the disobedient to operate under His authority as long as He wants, **Ephesians 2:2**. The ‘sons of disobedience’ refer to those who are walking in the ways of the world, unlike the Christian way of walking.

The word ‘cravings’, **Ephesians 2:3**, is the Greek word ‘epithumia’, and it means a strong desire, more often in a bad sense, but it can also be used in a good sense. The word ‘flesh’ is the Greek word ‘sarx’. We used to live like this; it felt good, so we did it. Our behaviour starts in our minds, and we shouldn’t live our lives with sinful thoughts.

‘Orge’ is the Greek word for wrath, **Ephesians 2:3 / Ephesians 5:6 / Romans 1:18 / Colossians 3:6 / 1 Thessalonians 1:10 / John 3:36**. The words ‘we are by nature deserving of wrath’ describe our state before we were born new.

There is no reference to the birth of parenthood in this passage, **Ephesians 2:3**. Some people use this verse to say that we inherit the sins from Adam, but it’s our decision to do what we do. We can either be sinful and let ourselves be ruled by Satan or God.

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These first three verses have a description of life without Christ, the same being: 1. a life lived on the world’s standards and with the world’s values; 2. a life under the dictates of the prince of powers of the air; 3. a life of

disobedience; 4. a life at the mercy of desire. 'To succumb to that desire is inevitably to come to disaster.' 5. a life that follows the desires of the flesh, and 6. a life which deserves only the wrath of God. To this list there should also be added: It is a life which follows the desires of the mind', **Ephesians 2:3**. The unregenerated mind itself is at enmity with God; and the imaginations of it are a source of rebellion against God.'

'But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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.' **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Here's the difference God makes.

1. He made us alive together with Christ, **Ephesians 2:4-5 / Colossians 2:13**.
2. He raised us up with Him, that is, buried and raised up with Him, **Ephesians 2:6 / Romans 6:3-4**.
3. He has placed us in the heavenly places and seated us with Him, **Ephesians 2:6**.
4. He will show the riches of His grace, **Ephesians 2:7**.

In **Ephesians 2:4**, the E.S.V. says 'But God', which means He changed everything. They laid Him in a tomb, 'but God did this, **Acts 13:29**. They did this, but God did that.

All people who aren't in Christ are in the same situation; they are in the same boat, but because we've obeyed the Gospel, we died like Him, were buried like Him and raised to a new life like Him, **Ephesians 2:5 / Romans 4:17 / Romans 6:3-4**.

Lipscomb, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Ephesians 2:5**.

'We are already saved from our past sins, but we must continue faithful to the end; for the Saviour says, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life', **Revelation 2:10**.'

The word 'dead', **Ephesians 2:5**, is 'nekros' in Greek, and it means the body without the spirit is dead, **James 2:26**. Physical bodies die and rot, there they go from dust to dust, **Genesis 3:19**. Death is the separation of our spirit from God, hence we die spiritually.

How does He make us alive together with Christ? **Ephesians 2:5**. When we simply obey the Gospel in response to God's loving act of grace. We're raised with Christ to walk in the newness of life, **Ephesians 2:6 / Romans 6:3-6 / Colossians 2:12 / Galatians 3:26-27**. It's God who makes us alive.

We were 'raised up', **Ephesians 2:6**, when we were raised from the grave of baptism to reign with Christ, **Romans 5:17 / Romans 6:3-6 / Colossians 2:12-13**. Without a burial, there can be no resurrection.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Note that **Ephesians 2:1-3** describe what we were in the past, **Ephesians 2:4-6**, what we are in the present, and **Ephesians 2:7**, what we shall be in the future.'

Since the arrival of Jesus, God's expression of love to mankind through Jesus will be a continual witness of His kindness and grace, **Ephesians 2:7 / Titus 3:4**. God's grace is like the sea, **Ephesians 2:7**.

If we try to empty the sea, we will soon discover it's impossible, **Romans 2:4 / Romans 11:22 / Titus 3:4-5**. In Christ, we have a demonstration of His kindness, **Ephesians 2:7**.

The justice of God demonstrates that He has stretched His mercy to all those who seek Him by faith, **Romans 9:23 / Romans 11:31-32 / Romans 15:9-12 / 1 Peter 1:3 / Titus 3:3-7**.

Why has He stretched His mercy out to all who seek Him? Simply because of His great love for us, **Ephesians 2:4 / John 3:16 / Romans 5:8 / Romans 8:39 / 2 Peter 3:9 / 1 John 4:9-10**. Mercy isn't given to us because of debt, but out of love and mercy. His mercy isn't something that we merit according to law; it's given out of love.

When we truly understand what God has done to bring us out of sin and how hopeless we were, it's then that we begin to understand how much He loves us, **John 3:16 / Romans 5:6-8**.

He didn't wait until we were kind of righteous to show us how much He loves us. He loved us even when we were still sinners, **Romans 5:8**. We've been made alive with Christ because of God's grace, **Ephesians 2:5**, not because any of us deserve His grace or have earned it, **Romans 5:6-10**.

'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' **Ephesians 2:8-10**

We must remember that grace, in and of itself, doesn't save anyone; grace opens the way up for us to be saved, but we need other things to be saved. In **Galatians 3:26-27**, Paul mentions faith, and I'm sure that everyone would agree we need faith to be saved, **Mark 16:16 / Galatians 2:16**.

If I were to ask you if you repented of your sins before you became a Christian, what would you say? If you said yes, then you clearly weren't saved by grace alone, were you? **Luke 13:3 / Acts 2:38**.

If I were to ask you if you confessed Christ as your Lord, what would you say? If you said yes, then you clearly weren't saved by grace alone, were you? **Romans 10:9**.

Time and time again, I hear people say that we're not saved by our works, and I totally agree with that, **Titus 3:5**, but this doesn't mean, as some suggest, that all works, of every kind, are excluded from the salvation process.

Here's a question: Is faith a work? Yes, yes and yes again, **John 6:29**. Notice that 'believe is a work of God,' not man. The expression 'work of God' means the works required and approved by God.

Here's another question, is baptism a work? Yes, yes and yes again, **Colossians 2:12**. Notice again that 'baptism is a work of God,' not man. Baptism isn't a work of human merit; it's an act that has been commanded by God, **Acts 10:48 / Acts 2:38**. The resurrection, which happens when we come up out of the waters of baptism, is a work of God, not man's, **Romans 6:3-4**.

I find it interesting that people claim that baptism is some kind of work of merit, but when I look at the salvation 'process' found within the Scriptures, I see that 'believe' is something a person has to do on their own because nobody else can believe for them, **Mark 16:16**.

I see that 'repentance' is something that a person has to do on their own because nobody else can repent for them, **Acts 2:38**. I see that 'confessing Jesus as the Christ' is something that a person has to do on their own because nobody else can confess for them, **Romans 10:9**. And yet, when it comes to 'baptism', this is something which has to be done for you! **1 Corinthians 12:13**.

Are we saved by grace alone? Yes, yes and yes again! Are we saved by human merit? No, no and no again! Did we do anything to save ourselves? Well, yes and no! Yes, because Peter said, 'Save yourselves,' **Acts 2:41**. Well, how did we save ourselves? We go back to the question the Jews asked Peter, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' **Acts 2:37**. In **Acts 16**, we find the Philippian jailer asking the same question, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' **Acts 16:30**. Surely the word 'do' implies an action, something to be done.

So, we did do something to 'save ourselves', but at the same time, we didn't do anything to 'save ourselves' because Jesus did it all for us. In other words, because of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, He made it possible for us to save ourselves.

That's what grace does, grace opens the door for us to enter so that we can be saved. The question is, will we enter through that door to receive salvation? **John 10:9 / John 14:6**.

If I were to tell you I had a brand-new house built for you in London. It's my free gift to you, but in order for you to own it, you must go to London. But as you make your way to London, you must get on three trains, one bus and a taxi, or I can't give you this gift. Now imagine you accepted my free gift and you got on three trains, one bus and a taxi to London.

Did you earn that gift? No, it was my free gift to give. Did you have to do anything to receive that gift? Yes, you had to get on three trains, one bus and a taxi to London.

Would I have given you the free gift if you only used two trains, one bus and a taxi? No! Why? Because my instructions were for you to use three trains, one bus and a taxi.

Salvation can never be merited, it can never be earned, and it can never be deserved, **Ephesians 2:8**. Some say we're saved through grace only, but this simply isn't true, as God demands obedience too, **James 2:14-26**.

In **2 Kings 5:9-14**, we see that Naaman has to immerse himself seven times in the River Jordan in order to be healed of his leprosy. God promised him that when he immerses himself seven times in the Jordan, he will be healed. It had nothing to do with earning his healing, **Romans 5:5-8**.

There's nothing we can do which will provide salvation. What we do enables us to receive salvation, but we don't earn it, and because we don't earn it, we can't boast about our good works, **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

If you fall off the boat and almost drown, and somebody throws you a rope and says take the rope and he pulls you in, you didn't earn your salvation. You had to believe in the rope, that it would save you. Why grab the rope if you don't believe it could save you?

In **Ephesians 2:1-3**, Paul reminds us of who we were and what we deserved and in **Ephesians 2:4-10**, Paul reminds us of everything God has done for us. He makes us alive, He raises us up, He seats us with Christ, He saves us, and He has good works for us to do.

When we think about our identity, we're not only identified as Christians, we're also identified as 'God's handiwork', **Ephesians 2:10**. The KJV uses the word 'workmanship', which in Greek is the word 'poiema'; this means that as Christians, we are God's poetry in motion.

EVERYONE IS GOD'S HANDIWORK

Think about what being God's handiwork means! Allow those words to sink into your heart and mind! Imagine the God who created the heavens and the earth and everything within them, also created you!

The God who created the mountains and rivers, the God who created the whales and the ants, took special care to create you! He made us with His own hands and oversaw every detail, **Psalms 139:13 / Psalm 139:15**.

Unlike what the evolutionists teach us, God says we're no accident; He purposely created every one of us. He did so because He loves us and wants us to have a relationship with Him. He created us so that we will be obedient to Him, praise Him for creating us and thank Him for everything He has done and continues to do for us.

In the art world, many people call their finished work a 'masterpiece', and they go on to sign it so that everyone knows who the artist was. In a sense, God calls us His 'masterpiece', and He proudly puts His signature on our lives. You can buy certain copies of that masterpiece, but the truth is, there's only one original.

In the same way, when God created us, He created us as originals; there's only one of you, you're absolutely unique from everyone else. We all have different personalities, we all have different abilities, and we have different gifts and desires. God has constructed you to be something so useful and valuable to Him.

ONLY CHRISTIANS ARE GOD'S HANDIWORK

Although we recognise that God wonderfully created human beings, we need to remember that the text we're dealing with is addressing Christians, **Ephesians 2:10**.

Only a Christian can do the good things that He has planned for them to do, only those who've been renewed in Christ can fulfil His purpose. The question is, what is His purpose for Christians?

GOOD WORKS

Remember, we've been created not BY good works, but FOR good works, **Ephesians 2:10**. We're not saved by works of merit, we're not saved just to enjoy our salvation, we're saved because God has work for us to do, He wants to work through us to achieve His purposes.

We don't work for our salvation, we work because of our salvation, **1 Corinthians 15:10**, motivated along out of thankfulness for God's grace, **2 Corinthians 4:15**.

Doing good works is very important to God, they not only reflect what's in our hearts but it's also the basis for which a Christian will be judged on the Day of Judgment, **Matthew 7:20-23 / Matthew 25:31-36 / 2 Corinthians 5:10 / Titus 2:14**.

THE GOOD WORKS GOD HAS PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR US

As Christians, we have been created anew in Christ through our obedience to the Gospel, **Romans 6:4-5**. We recognise that we owe all that we are to God, who gives us a reason for transforming our thinking and lives, **Romans 12:1-2**.

It's by God's grace and through faith in Christ Jesus that we want to live our lives in accordance with God's will, **Romans 3:31**. God prepared in advance that those who are saved should be addicted to good works. Remember, we were created not only with skill but for His purpose.

Good works don't give us salvation, but they are the result of our salvation. Notice that God prepared these good works for us to do, way in advance. He's already planned what He wants us to do with our lives.

WHAT ARE THOSE GOOD WORKS?

The good works are all those things we practice and do as Christians. This would be things like regularly attending worship, praying regularly, studying His Word, giving of our money, material goods or time.

It would also include things like mission work, outreach, taking care of the needy in our society, the orphans, widows, homeless and oppressed, loving our neighbour, etc.

But there's more to it than those good works listed above; the original text literally says this, 'which God prepared in advance so that we might walk in them.'

Paul is saying that Christians must walk and live a lifestyle that reflects whose handiwork we are. The good works involve the whole of the Christian, all that we do by God's grace for God's purposes, **Romans 12:1 / Colossians 3:17**. It's important to get involved in all the good works I mentioned earlier, but Paul is indicating that our good works must also be reflected in our workplace, our classrooms, our homes, our hobbies and interests, etc.

What a wonderful thought it is to remind ourselves that we are indeed God's masterpiece, created anew in Christ Jesus. The next time you feel down or discouraged, just remember who you are and who your Creator is.

You are indeed God's handiwork, created uniquely and purposely for doing all those good deeds He prepared for you long before you were born or even born again, **John 9:4**.

Hoehner, in his commentary, says the following.

'God has prepared a path of good works for believers, which He will perform in and through them as they walk by faith. This does not mean doing a work for God; instead, it is God performing His work in and through believers.'

JEW AND GENTILE RECONCILED THROUGH CHRIST

'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)—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.' **Ephesians 2:11-12**

Paul encourages them to remember, which points back to their old life. They were formerly far off, spiritually they are now one new man, no longer Jew or Gentile, **Ephesians 2:11**.

Some Jews thought that Gentiles were just fuel for hell, **Acts 10:28 / John 18:28**. The Jews had to be circumcised by law, **Genesis 17:9-11**, but Jesus demands a different kind of circumcision, circumcision which is from the heart, **Romans 2:25-29 / 1 Corinthians 7:19 / Colossians 2:11-12 / Galatians 5:6 / Galatians 6:15**.

They were 'foreigners', **Ephesians 2:12**, they had nothing to do with the covenant, they were outside the covenant and the promises of God and they had no hope.

Beare, in his commentary, says the following about the words without God in the world.

'When Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna, was led into the arena before a howling multitude clamouring for his death, the Roman Procurator took pity on his grey hairs and invited him to save his life by renouncing Christ and saying, 'Away with the atheists.' (The pagans called the Christians atheists.) But Polycarp waved his hands toward the bloodthirsty throng in the arena, and cried, 'Away with the atheists!' thus turning the word back upon those who used it.'

'But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.' **Ephesians 2:13**

NEAR TO WHAT?

We were near to that which we were separated, **Ephesians 2:13 / Isaiah 57:19-21**. We now have hope and the promises apply to us, **Acts 2:38-39**, but we're still not Jewish. The good news was first preached to the Jews, **Romans 1:16**. Everything in the preparations for the Gospel to come was Jewish.

Our spiritual roots go back to Israel. We are also children of Abraham because we are his seed; we would be blessed, **Genesis 12:1-3**. If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's offspring. All this is possible because of the blood of Christ, **Ephesians 2:13 / Matthew 26:28 / Romans 5:9 / 1 Peter 1:18-19 / Revelation 1:15**.

‘For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 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, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.’ **Ephesians 2:14-18**

There are no longer any differences. He made the two into one man. He didn't make Jews into Gentiles or Gentiles into Jews; He made one new creature.

Bock, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This new institution (the church) does not dissolve ethnic distinctions, but displays reconciliation, with every believer equally qualified to share in the benefits of salvation and peace that emerge from the uniting of Jews and Gentiles into a new living community.’

The word ‘new’, **Ephesians 2:15**, is ‘kainos’ or ‘neos’ in Greek, which implies something which has recently come into existence. ‘Neos’ is used for just new, something which formerly existed and ‘kainos’ is used for something new in terms of something which never existed before.

The words ‘destroying the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,’ **Ephesians 2:14**, refer to the stone partition within the temple. It was a stone wall that divided the court of the Gentiles from the other courts of the Temple. It had inscriptions written on it which forbade foreigners from passing. The Gentiles weren't allowed to pass this wall. Paul brought Gentiles into the temple, and Paul was preaching everywhere to everyone, **Acts 21:27-29**. Jesus abolished the law, commandments and regulations, **Ephesians 2:15**, and as a result, we aren't bound by the Mosaic law, **Hebrews 8:8-13**.

This doesn't mean that God is no longer concerned about these laws, because all the important things are repeated later by Jesus and are still binding within the New Testament.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Ephesians 2:15**.

‘The thought here is similar to that in **Hebrews 10:20**, where the new and living way is said to have been opened up through the veil, that is to say, his flesh’.

Now we live under Christ's authority and law, **Romans 7:12 / Matthew 5:17-20 / Romans 3:31**. The barrier which divided the Jews from the Gentiles had now gone, and now there is no division anymore. We no longer have to become Jews to be reconciled with God and the Jews; we now find our unity in Christ, **Ephesians 2:15-16**.

We are now one man and the enmity are put to death, we are now in one body, Christ's body, **Ephesians 2:16**. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near, **Ephesians 2:17**. As Jesus lived on earth, He preached peace, **Isaiah 57:19-21**, and we also preach now to people and Christ speaks now through us to others.

Notice in **Ephesians 2:18** that Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Father are all named in it. The word access is ‘prosagoge’, **Ephesians 2:18**. We can't just go and visit the King of England and expect to have a meeting with him; we first need an invitation to go to the King. In Christ, we now have an invitation to meet and speak with God in Christ, **Ephesians 2:18 / Hebrews 4:14-16**.

‘Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.’ **Ephesians 2:19-22**

Taylor, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are no less than three metaphors of unity in **Ephesians 2:19-21**, expressed as: 1. common citizenship, 2. membership in a single household, and 3. mutual parts of one holy temple.’

We are no longer strangers, the Greek word is ‘xenoí’ but members of God’s household, **Ephesians 2:19**. The Gentiles were no longer afar off, **Ephesians 2:12-13**, they are now fellow citizens with God’s people, the church, **Ephesians 2:19 / Galatians 6:10 / Philippians 3:20 / 1 Timothy 3:15 / Hebrews 3:6 / 1 Peter 4:17**, they are joint members of the body of Christ.

The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Ephesians 2:20**, because of the work of inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are five foundations of the Christian faith mentioned in the New Testament: Number 1. The foundational teaching is composed of the teachings of Christ delivered through the apostles and prophets of the new dispensation, **Matthew 7:24-26**. Number 2. The foundational fact is that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, **Matthew 16:13-20**. Number 3. The foundation person is Jesus Christ our Lord, **1 Corinthians 3:11**. Number 4. The foundational personnel were made up of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, as revealed here. Number 5. The foundational doctrines of Christianity (six of these) are enumerated in **Hebrews 6:1-2**.’

Through the inspiration of the apostles, all truth was revealed, **Ephesians 3:1-5 / John 14:25-26 / John 16:13 / 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 / Revelation 21:14**. It was through the inspired teaching of the prophets that the truth was taught to all the churches.

Stott, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In practical terms, this means that the church is built on the New Testament Scriptures.’

When people constructed buildings in the past, the first thing which was laid was the cornerstone, and it was from that stone that everything else was measured and aligned.

In the church today, Christ is the cornerstone, **Ephesians 2:20**. We focus on Him and align our lives with His words, **Psalms 118:22 / Matthew 21:42 / Mark 12:10 / Luke 20:17 / Romans 9:33 / 1 Peter 2:6**.

The whole church is continually being fitted together, **Ephesians 2:21**, according to the spiritual measurements that come from Jesus, **John 15:1-9 / 1 Peter 2:5**. We are being continuously being built up in the Spirit to be homes of God.

The apostles and prophets revealed and preached the truth but the foundation upon which the church stands is Jesus; without Christ, there can be no Christianity. It’s in Him that the members grow into the holy temple, **Ephesians 2:21**. The word temple, **Ephesians 2:21**, in Greek is ‘naos’, and it speaks about the inner sanctuary, the whole temple. We are a dwelling place for God, we are a holy temple in which God resides, **Ephesians 2:22 / 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 / 2 Corinthians 6:16**.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.’ **Ephesians 3:1**

GOD'S MARVELLOUS PLAN FOR THE GENTILES

Paul was a prisoner for Christ, both physically and spiritually, [Philippians 1:13](#) / [2 Timothy 1:8](#). He was a prisoner for about six years, but always made the most of every opportunity, [Ephesians 5:16](#).

We can always find reasons to be negative, we can always find reasons to grumble, but this doesn't help us to do good works. Wherever Paul is, he's a prisoner of Christ. At the time of writing this letter, he was literally a prisoner, [Ephesians 6:20](#) / [Acts 21:33](#) / [Acts 28:20](#) / [Colossians 4:18](#) / [Philemon 13](#).

Paul was accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple, [Acts 21:19](#) / [Acts 22:22](#), but he can only think about the privileges he has by being a prisoner of Christ, one of which was the privilege of proclaiming the Gospel, [Philippians 4:22](#).

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

'When Paul wrote this letter, he was in prison in Rome awaiting trial before Nero, waiting for the Jewish prosecutors to come with their bleak faces and their envenomed hatred and their malicious charges. In prison, Paul had certain privileges, for he was allowed to stay in a house which he himself had rented, and his friends were allowed access to him; but night and day, he was still a prisoner chained to the wrist of the Roman soldier who was his guard and whose duty it was to see that Paul would never escape.'

'Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 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. 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.' [Ephesians 3:2-6](#)

The word 'administration' is the Greek word 'oikonomia', [Ephesians 3:2](#), and it speaks about taking care of things belonging to another, we are living in this time of God's grace, [John 1:17](#) / [Titus 2:11](#). The word 'mystery' in Greek is 'musterion', [Ephesians 3:3](#), and it carries with it the idea of something which was once hidden, but now is made known.

The word 'revelation' in Greek is 'apocalypsus', [Ephesians 3:3](#), which means that although Paul had studied, the knowledge he was given was by direct revelation from God, [Galatians 1:11-12](#) / [Galatians 1:16](#) / [Galatians 1:12](#) / [Acts 9:15](#) / [Acts 22:21](#) / [Romans 11:13](#) / [Galatians 3:9](#).

WHAT WAS THE MYSTERY?

The mystery was God's eternal plan of redemption through the sacrificial cross of Jesus Christ, [Ephesians 3:3](#) / [Ephesians 6:19](#) / [Romans 11:25](#) / [Romans 16:25](#) / [Titus 2:11](#).

Although some believe this mystery was revealed hundreds of years before Christ came, Paul tells us that the mystery wasn't revealed before the coming of Jesus, [Ephesians 3:5](#) / [1 Peter 1:10-12](#) / [1 Corinthians 2:10-13](#).

Although Paul tells us that the Gospel was preached to Abraham in [Galatians 3:8](#), we must understand that what was revealed to Abraham was that it would be through seed that the Earth would be blessed, [Genesis 12:3](#). In other words, the blessings which would come through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ weren't revealed to Abraham. Although the prophets were given partial revelations of the blessings to come, [Isaiah 53](#) / [Psalm 22](#), they didn't fully understand the nature of the Gospel and the effects it would have on mankind, [1 Peter 1:10-12](#).

It was then through the Holy Spirit that the New Testament apostles and prophets received the full revelation of the Gospel, [Ephesians 3:5](#) / [John 14:26](#) / [John 16:13](#) / [1 Corinthians 2:10-13](#) / [2 Timothy 3:16](#).

Notice the Gentiles are now 'heirs together with Israel, members together as one body, shares together in the promises of Christ', [Ephesians 3:6](#). It's clear that Paul wants the Jewish Christians to understand that both Jew and Gentile are now equal in every way in Christ, [Acts 10:34-35](#) / [Galatians 3:28-29](#).

The Gentiles, just like the Jews, received the promise of justification by grace through faith; they are fellow heirs of the Holy Spirit, [Acts 2:38-39](#), and they have the promise of eternal life in heaven.

In other words, because they are now in one body, that is the church, [Ephesians 4:4](#) / [Colossians 1:18](#), the Gentiles have all the blessings that were promised to the fathers that would come through Israel, [Romans 9:24-33](#) / [Romans 10:19-21](#).

'I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 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, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.' [Ephesians 3:7-9](#)

It was by God's grace that Paul was given the ministry of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, [Ephesians 3:7](#) / [Ephesians 1:19](#) / [Ephesians 3:20](#) / [Romans 1:5](#) / [Colossians 1:29](#).

It was by God's grace that he had the power to do the miraculous signs among the Gentiles to confirm that he was a messenger of God, [Ephesians 3:7](#) / [Romans 15:18](#) / [Mark 16:17-20](#) / [Hebrews 2:3-4](#).

Why does he speak as being the least of all the Lord's people? [Ephesians 3:8](#). He obviously still feels bad that he was a persecutor of Christians, [Acts 8:3](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) / [1 Timothy 1:13](#).

He now understands that what he is, is by the grace of God. It's because God made him like that, God has given him that, and he's enabled by God to be what he has become.

Stott, in his commentary, says the following.

'Perhaps he was deliberately playing on the meaning of his name. For his Roman surname 'Paulus' is Latin for 'little' or 'small', and tradition says he was a little man. 'I am little,' he may be saying, 'little by name, little in stature, and morally and spiritually littler than the littlest of all Christians.'

Sadly, the only time people speak about grace is when it's connected to salvation. All we have is by the grace of God. We are who we are by the grace of God. The riches of Christ are unending, it isn't exhaustible. Try emptying the sea, it's impossible, [Ephesians 3:8](#).

Can we really understand what Christ did for us? I don't think we have a clue; we're only scratching at the surface. Besides preaching to the Gentiles, Paul explained the mystery of the church to everyone, [Ephesians 3:9](#). Even though God had not revealed the church earlier, it was in His plan from the beginning, [1 Corinthians 2:7](#) / [Romans 16:25-26](#).

'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, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.' [Ephesians 3:10-13](#)

God's manifold wisdom may now be made known through the 'ecclesia', that is church, [Ephesians 3:10](#).

Bock, in his commentary, says the following.

'The church is to be an audio-visual display of God's reconciling work. In this primary way, she testifies to God's grace and wisdom. So Paul encouraged living life in Christ in such a way that reconciliation is the dominant feature of church life.'

The angelic rulers in the heavenly realms are being taught by the things the people from the church do. There are many authorities, many different kinds of spiritual forces working in heavenly realms, [Ephesians 3:10](#) / [Ephesians 6:12](#).

Paul here is telling us there are no distinctions between good and bad, but Christ is the ultimate power. It's in Christ Jesus that God carries out His eternal purpose. This points out the uniqueness of Christ, [Ephesians 3:11](#). The creation has its fulfilment in Christ Jesus.

Prayer is communion with God, and we can pray at any time with our creator, [Ephesians 3:12](#). We have boldness, we have a purpose, and we have an invitation and free access, [Hebrews 4:16](#).

Being given special permission to see someone very special, for example, visiting a king or a leader. If you were a child of this king or leader, you wouldn't need this special channel to go through.

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

'Forgiven sinners do not come to God hesitantly, wondering about their likely reception. They rest not on their own achievement, but on what Christ has done for them, and for that reason they come full of confidence.'

We have confident access through our faith in Him, [Hebrews 4:14](#) / [Hebrews 10:19](#). We have full confidence and freedom to enter, so don't lose heart, don't be discouraged, [Ephesians 3:13](#).

A PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

'For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.'
Ephesians 3:14-15

Paul says he kneels before the Father. There are many positions of prayer mentioned in Scripture. In [1 Kings 8:54](#), we see Saul kneeling to pray in [Luke 2:41](#), we see Jesus kneeling.

In [Acts 20:36](#), we see that Paul knelt in [Acts 21:5](#), we see the disciples kneeling to pray. Paul reminds Timothy that men should raise their hands in prayer, [1 Timothy 2:8](#).

What do we normally do during prayer? We bow our heads, close our eyes and fold our hands. Bowing down as a sign of respect, closing our eyes and putting our hands together are done so that we won't be distracted.

WHY DO WE NOT FOLLOW THE BIBLE'S EXAMPLE?

The only one who was standing did it for show, but we don't do it in the church for show. Jesus reminds us that we shouldn't stand on street corners like the heathens to pray, [Matthew 6:5](#).

More important than the position is the state of our heart when we pray, but we should, however, take a convenient position in order for us to endure the prayer time.

The word 'family', [Ephesians 3:15](#), is the Greek word 'patria', which speaks about family in the general sense. God is here the ideal Father; there's no better model for fatherhood than God Himself.

God forgives us when we do things wrong; He doesn't write all our wrongdoings in a bookmark with a date. He has no pleasure in doing so. Parents don't want to remember all the things their children did wrong, so why would God?

If we love to give presents to others, especially to our children, how much more does our heavenly Father like to give things to us, [Matthew 7:9-11](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is another reference to the Trinity in [Ephesians 3:14-17](#), Father, [Ephesians 3:14](#), Spirit, [Ephesians 3:16](#), and Son, [Ephesians 3:17](#) / [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) / [Ephesians 1:17](#) / [Ephesians 2:18](#) / [Ephesians 2:22](#).’

‘I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 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, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.’
Ephesians 3:16-19

God has a warehouse of goodies that never will be out of stock, He has unlimited riches and can give us an unlimited blessing, [Ephesians 3:16](#). The inner being is the spiritual part of a person, [Ephesians 3:16](#), which isn’t visible, the inward man delights in the law of God, [Romans 7:22](#), outwardly we’re falling apart but inwardly we’re being renewed day by day, [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#).

The inner being certainly involves the conscience; this is the training of our senses, [Hebrews 5:14](#). The more we allow our lives to be overcome by the Spirit of God, the more spiritual power we have. ‘Christ dwells’, [Ephesians 2:17](#), the Greek word ‘katoikeo’ means in our hearts through faith.

This is a picture of Christ taking residence in us. It’s a picture of a close relationship, [1 John 1:1-4](#). Christ had the fullness of deity dwelling in Him in bodily form, [Colossians 1:19](#) / [Colossians 2:9](#). When we are baptised, God’s Spirit takes residence in us, [Acts 2:38](#).

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT CHRIST DWELLS IN US?

Because God told us so, God promised to give the Spirit upon baptism, [Acts 2:38](#). We are confident that God lives in us and that we have peace. Our faith shouldn’t be based on our feelings. What if our feelings are down when we have a bad day?

It’s better to live by faith because it’s through faith we know what is true. If we live by faith, we might still have a bad day, but it’s not that bad anymore, because we still believe that we have peace within us.

If a person hasn’t got the Spirit of Christ, they have nothing, they have no peace, [Romans 8:9-11](#). If we have a conscience trained by the word of God, we’re able to decide what is right and wrong in almost every case. We might not know the book, chapter and verse in that case, but we still know what the right thing is to do.

Some people say that they have a dream, or a feeling that they have to do something, and they say that this was a revelation from God. But God doesn’t give direct revelations and doesn’t speak through emotions, [Hebrews 1:1-2](#).

Some people say that God commanded them to kill someone; this is just a way to reduce the responsibility. If someone loves Jesus, they will keep His words, and we make our home with him, [John 14:23](#) / [John 15:4](#). We are in Christ, and He is in us.

If the Spirit of God has a good development in us, we should live our lives by the Spirit, [Romans 8:2-8](#) / [Galatians 5:16](#) / [Galatians 5:25](#), and it’s through the Spirit that God strengthened us.

Paul prays that they will be rooted and grounded like a tree, [Ephesians 3:17-18](#). If the roots aren’t very deep, the tree can be blown down. Normally, the roots will anchor the tree and will hold it in place, but if we don’t have the love of God in our hearts, we will not be strong.

Love is our roots; it always wants the best for another, it's always interested in the highest good for those around us, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. If you build the smallest wall, you still have to make a good foundation; you have to dig down till you reach solid ground.

Without love, the Scriptures are meaningless. Before supporting everything else, there should be love! If there is no love, you are absolutely wasting your time! There is so much done around us in the name of Christ, without any form of love.

We must have our roots deep and our foundation based on love because we can't be indwelt by the Spirit of God without having love, Galatians 5:22-23. Love isn't a feeling as a response to how another person treats you; no, it's independent of the other.

Love is the intention to do genuinely what is best for the other person, making the other person more important than yourself, Philippians 2:4.

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following concerning the love of God, Ephesians 3:18.

'When believers accept Jesus Christ's revelation of the mystery of the church, they are able to comprehend that God's love is broad enough to embrace both Jews and Gentiles in the church. They can appreciate that it is long enough to reach the far off (Gentiles) as well as the near (Jews) and to stretch from eternity to eternity. They can see that it is high enough to raise both Jews and Gentiles into the heavenly places. They can understand that it is deep enough to rescue both kinds of people from sin's degradation and from Satan's grip.'

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

'No matter how much we know of the love of Christ, there is always more to know.'

The word 'fullness', Ephesians 3:19, is the Greek word 'pleroma', and it's in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, Colossians 2:9, and in Him, we are made full. People of the world live empty spiritual lives, but Paul's prayer is that our fellowship with God will be complete.

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'

Ephesians 3:20-21

This is a description of praise to God, the praise of God's power. Immeasurably, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond and above what we ask or even could think, Ephesians 3:20 / 2 Corinthians 9:8.

Imagine a road in the desert, make it as long as you like and still, God can go on and on and on, the glory belongs forever to God, Ephesians 1:19 / 1 Corinthians 2:9 / 2 Corinthians 13:4.

We have God's power to do wonderful things in our lives for God. This power that's mentioned is said to be 'in us', Ephesians 3:20. God's mighty power that saved us is the same power that raised Christ from the dead, Ephesians 1:19-20.

We have this power through the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:26, to perform acts that are pleasing to God, as Mary did when she told Jesus of the need for wine at the wedding.

She said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it, John 2:5. She didn't think about the impossibilities but was content that Jesus knew about the need and would meet that need, John 2:1-11.

God's power helps us to continually grow in our faith and knowledge of God, in order to become more Christlike throughout our lives. This power helps us persevere to salvation, 1 Peter 1:5, and enables us to bear afflictions, 2 Timothy 1:8.

God has revealed Himself to us through His work of creation, Romans 1:20, and through His work with the patriarchs, through Jesus. Since God is beyond our full comprehension, He is worthy of our worship, and it's through

the obedience and worship of the church that God is glorified, [Psalm 45:17](#) / [Psalm 72:17](#) / [Romans 11:36](#) / [Revelation 5:13](#).

As Christians, we should expect more and ask for more, [Ephesians 3:20](#). We should be encouraged by what Christ has already done in our lives. We should be assured that the conversion of our souls, and other people's souls, and the comfort of believers, will be to His glory, forever and ever, Amen, [Ephesians 3:21](#), which means so be it, [Romans 1:25](#) / [Romans 9:5](#) / [Galatians 1:3-5](#) / [Philippians 4:20](#) / [1 Timothy 1:17](#) / [2 Timothy 4:18](#).

Please note that it's not the church that's to receive glory, it's God, [Ephesians 3:21](#). When people see the work of God through those who are in Christ, the response should be glory to God, [Matthew 5:16](#). The first three chapters were theoretical; they speak about our standing in Christ and our future inheritance. The next three chapters are very practical.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

'As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.' [Ephesians 4:1-3](#)

UNITY AND MATURITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

This chapter begins with Paul, a prisoner of the Lord, [Ephesians 4:1](#), urging the reader to live a Christian life, to behave worthy of Christ, [Ephesians 4:2](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:27](#) / [1 Peter 1:14-15](#). When we come to Jesus, we change our name to Christian, [Ephesians 4:1](#).

Are we living worthy enough to use this name? To live a life worthy of His name is to live according to the Scriptures. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, it highlights that we have a problem with sin; the Supper speaks about our weakness.

Although some well-intentioned Christians believe they must be good to take the Lord's Supper, others refuse to partake in the Supper because they don't believe they're good enough. The truth is, none of us is worthy enough; that's the very reason why we should partake of it, but our attitude and our motives should be right.

Paul describes how we should live, completely 'humble', [Ephesians 4:2](#). This is the recognition that we aren't what we should be, [Romans 12:3](#) / [Philippians 2:3-4](#) / [James 4:10](#).

The word 'gentleness', [Ephesians 4:2](#), is closely connected with submission, [Numbers 12:3](#), and refers to moral authority and power issuing in restraint as far as human temptations are concerned.

The word 'patience', [Ephesians 4:2](#), is the same word that describes the patience of God with mankind, [Romans 2:4](#) / [Romans 9:22](#) / [1 Timothy 1:16](#) / [1 Peter 3:20](#) / [2 Peter 3:15](#). Christians should be tolerant, forgiving, and understanding of one another's mistakes and sins.

‘Bearing with one another in love’, **Ephesians 4:2**, simply implies that Christians should accept our place with other Christians, having an attitude that allows everyone to have the same rights as everyone else, **Colossians 3:12-13 / Galatians 3:26-27**.

Unity is so important to the Lord and His church, **Ephesians 4:3 / John 17:20-21**, there is no room for those who cause division, **1 Corinthians 1:10 / Philippians 1:27 / Philippians 4:6 / Philippians 3:1-3 / Philemon 9**.

HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT?

We maintain the unity of the Spirit, **Ephesians 4:3**, by being ‘filled with the Spirit,’ **Ephesians 5:18**. When the Holy Spirit rules in a congregation, there is unity and peace. This unity must be maintained, **Ephesians 4:3**.

The word ‘maintain’, in Greek, is ‘tereo’, and it means to ‘watch over, keep, guard’ the ‘unity’ of the one body, the church. Notice, we’re not called upon or required to create unity, but to maintain unity.

God provided us with everything we need, even when we’re tempted. He always helps us through, **1 Corinthians 10:13**. He gave us everything needed to live according to His will, **1 Peter 1:3 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17**.

Because He has given us everything we need, this should motivate us to share the Gospel with others. God already provides us with everything we will need to serve Him in the areas He wants us to.

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following.

‘For the church fellowship in which the Gentile and Jewish believers were united was no mere enrolment on a register of membership; it involved their union with Christ by faith and therefore their union with each other as fellow-members of his body.’

‘There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.’ **Ephesians 4:4-6**

Paul now goes ahead and describes seven certain truths which help Christians maintain unity among themselves.

ONE BODY

The body is the church, **Colossians 1:18 / Ephesians 1:23**, and notice there is only one, not many. This body is the church to which God adds a person at their baptism, **Acts 2:47**.

We’re not baptised into the church, we’re baptised into the body. This church is the body of believers who belong to Christ, **Ephesians 5:23 / Colossians 1:18**. This is the same church which Christ died for, **Acts 20:28**.

It’s the same church where Christ is the head, **Colossians 1:16**, and if a person is a part of this church, then they will be rewarded with eternal life, **Ephesians 5:23 / Ephesians 1:23 / Ephesians 2:16 / Romans 12:5 / 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 / Colossians 3:15**.

The church is a living organism, with a variety of members; it’s made up of individuals who have their own personalities. There may be various differences between the members of the body, racial, cultural, historical, etc., but we’re all a part of this one body that continually works together as a unit, **1 Corinthians 12:12-14**.

ONE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is very much at work before, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 2 Peter 1:20-21, and during baptism and it's the Spirit of God who baptises us into the one body, 1 Corinthians 12:13.

When we're obedient to the word of God, Ephesians 2:18 / 1 Corinthians 1:10 / Philippians 1:27, the Spirit is at work and He creates and maintains the unity, Ephesians 4:3.

ONE HOPE

Hope is the confident expectation that we will go to heaven, Hebrews 6:18-19. This is something all Christians share and have in common, Titus 1:2 / Ephesians 1:18 / Romans 5:2. We are sealed with the Spirit, which is the guarantee of heaven for those who are in Christ, Ephesians 1:13-14.

ONE LORD

There is only one Lord and His name is Jesus the Christ, 1 Corinthians 8:6, it's Christ who has the authority over all things, Ephesians 1:20-22 / Matthew 28:18 / Acts 2:36 / Acts 10:36 / Acts 10:43 / Romans 10:12 / 1 Peter 3:22.

All believers, all those who are a part of His church, have confessed that Jesus is Lord and submitted themselves as servants to the Lordship of Jesus, He is now Lord of our lives, Romans 10:9.

ONE FAITH

Notice again that there is only one faith, not many. This faith doesn't just involve the belief that Christ is Who He claimed to be, Romans 3:22. It's also the faith that comes from hearing, Romans 10:17.

The one faith also includes the Scriptures, as a whole, 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 / Ephesians 4:13 / Jude 3. Christians are brought together into one body because of their common faith, Ephesians 4:13 / Romans 10:8 / Colossians 2:7.

Hendriksen, in his commentary, says the following.

'The fact that 'faith' is mentioned immediately after 'Lord,' and is immediately followed by 'baptism,' all in a very short sentence, would seem to indicate that all three are a very closely knit unit.'

ONE BAPTISM

Notice again, there is only one baptism, not many, but which baptism is it? Is it Holy Spirit baptism? Is it baptism for the dead? Is it John's baptism? Is it a baptism of fire? Which one is it?

The word 'baptism' is the Greek word 'baptizo', and it means to dip, to plunge, or to immerse; this would exclude sprinkling. There is only one baptism in the Scriptures by which repentant believers have been buried with Jesus into

His death and united with Him in His resurrection, **Matthew 28:18-20 / Romans 6:3-6 / 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 / Colossians 2:12.**

This is the baptism that people receive and end up in Christ, where they receive an abundance of blessings, **Ephesians 1:3-14 / Romans 6:3 / Galatians 3:26-27.** This is the baptism where people are immersed in water for the forgiveness of their sins and receive the gift, not gifts of the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:38 / Acts 22:16 / Romans 6:3-6 / 1 Corinthians 12:13.**

Many people say that baptism isn't necessary for salvation, but the New Testament teaches consistently that the only way to get into Christ is through baptism, **Acts 2:38-41 / Acts 8:5-12 / Acts 8:26-40 / Acts 9:18 / Acts 10:47-48 / Acts 16:15 / Acts 16:16-33 / Acts 18:8 / Acts 19:3-5 / Acts 22:16.**

It's the birth of every Christian, **John 3:3-8.** It's the one responsive act that we have to make. Without birth, we don't live. Baptism is a common universal experience that we all share in common. In the early days, it was always common that if you wanted to become a child of God, you needed to be immersed.

Every child of God has been baptised with the Holy Spirit, but this isn't meant in a miraculous sense; it's just the Spirit at work. At baptism, everybody receives the Spirit, **Acts 2:38,** who will start dwelling in the person, as a deposit for the promise given, **Ephesians 1:13-14.**

ONE GOD AND FATHER

There is only one God to whom everyone must worship, **Deuteronomy 6:4 / Malachi 2:10 / 1 Corinthians 8:6 / 1 Corinthians 12:6.** It's in Him we live and move and have our being, **Acts 17:28.** He is our Father and we are His children, He who knows what we need and knows how to keep us safe, **Matthew 6:9-13 / Matthew 7:9-11.**

Being a part of the one body, receiving the one Spirit, sharing the one hope, submitting to the one Lord and embracing the one faith are all intimately associated with being baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, **Matthew 28:19.**

Unity isn't only about believing in the same thing, but about the way we act towards one another. These verses provide the basis for us, it's all about oneness, oneness with one another and oneness with the Father, with the Son and with the Holy Spirit, **John 17:20-23.**

‘But to each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.’ **Ephesians 4:7**

Here, Paul reminds us that there is unity in diversity. Although some people are more gifted, ‘grace’ more than others, we are still one. When we have more gifts, we also have more responsibility, but we're obligated to use our gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 tells us there is one body but many parts. We are all sustained by the one Spirit, and although members may look different, they all work together as one body.

When a person falls, they usually stretch out their hands to protect the rest of their body. Every member of the body should be concerned about the well-being of the whole body.

He says, ‘to each one of us’, meaning God gave every one of us our own abilities. If people say they aren't good at anything, are they not saying that God didn't enable them to do anything?

We can say, I can do this or that, because God has enabled us, and He has given us the ability to do this or that. All people are important, all have gifts, and nobody should feel less important.

Notice that Paul says that it is Jesus who gives the gifts, **Ephesians 4:7**, not the Holy Spirit, **Acts 8:18 / Acts 19:1-6 / Romans 1:11**, which implies these gifts weren't miraculous gifts, **1 Corinthians 13:8-12**. Remember, not all gifts were miraculous, **Romans 12:3-8**. The gifts which Paul speaks of here are mentioned in the next few verses.

'This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.' (What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)' **Ephesians 4:8-10**

When we read Paul's words, we have to imagine a Roman triumph, a great procession entering Rome led by a victorious king, returning from a great war, riding on a white horse.

At the back of him, there is a train of people, those who have been taken captive during the war and all the spoils the victorious king has gained and now brings with them. As the procession goes along, he gives gifts to men; some captives were set free, whilst others were executed.

It's a picture of the victorious Christ who gave gifts to His people. God has blessed all Christians with at least one gift. If we read further on in the passage, we see that some gifts are mentioned: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, **Ephesians 4:11**.

And notice in **Ephesians 4:8** that Paul quotes from the Psalms, **Psalms 68:18**. Here we have a picture of David looking forward to the future, it's prophetic. Notice that David says, 'received gifts', but Paul says, 'gave gifts'. This is David looking forward, and Paul looking at the fulfilment of this passage.

BUT WHO ARE THE CAPTIVES?

From **Psalms 68**, it's clear that the captives were the enemies of Israel who were defeated when Jerusalem was captured. In **Ephesians**, the captives are the enemies of Christ, namely, Satan, sin, and death.

In other words, Christ had victory over Satan, sin and death and gives gifts of the Spirit to those who have been identified with Him, **Colossians 2:13-15**. Please notice that Paul doesn't mention the word 'hell', he speaks about Christ 'descending to the lower, earthly regions', **Ephesians 4:9**.

What does this mean? 'Descended to the lower, earthly regions' isn't a reference to hell, but to His birth. We find the Psalmist using similar words in **Psalms 139:15**. In other words, Paul is referring to Christ's coming to earth as a baby; he's speaking about Christ coming into Mary's womb.

Paul is saying that Jesus, who went up to heaven, that is in His ascension, is the same Jesus, who earlier came down from heaven, **Ephesians 3:10**. Paul isn't speaking about Christ going to 'hell', he's speaking about Christ's birth as a human.

'So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until 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.' **Ephesians 4:11-13**

Here we find the gifts and the reason for the gifts given by Christ.

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following.

'There are two pairs of offices in view here: 1. apostles and prophets, and 2. evangelists and pastor-teachers. The first pair were effective in the founding of the church, and the second pair are required in all generations.'

APOSTLES

The apostles are the apostles of Christ. To be an apostle, you must have been continuously with Jesus. You should be called by Christ and be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, Luke 24:48 / Acts 1:8 / Acts 1:21-22 / 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 / 1 Peter 5:1.

Paul would be included as an apostle as he spent time with Christ, and was directly sent by Christ, 1 Corinthians 9:1 / 1 Corinthians 15:8. An apostle should be able to do the signs of an apostle, i.e. miraculous healing etc, to confirm the message, Mark 16:20 / Acts 14:3 / 2 Corinthians 12:12. It was the apostles who laid the foundation of the church, Ephesians 2:20.

There are no witnesses to Christ's resurrection today, and nobody living now was continuously with Jesus, so there are no more apostles today. You could be an ambassador of the church if you are sent out, but not an apostle.

PROPHETS

The prophets mentioned here were inspired preachers and teachers who ministered to local disciples in order to instruct them in the Word of God. Remember, there were no written Bibles back then as we have today, and so these prophets were given the task of reminding the church of the truth that was revealed through the Christ-sent apostles.

EVANGELISTS

The word 'evangelist' is found only three times in Scripture, Acts 21:8 / 2 Timothy 4:5. From these other two passages, we learn that they were preachers who travelled about preaching the Gospel to the lost. They preached the Good News to anyone who hadn't heard it before.

PASTORS

A pastor is the same as an elder, bishop, overseer or shepherd. These words are not titles but merely a description of their role within the local church. If a congregation had elders, there had to be more than one, Acts 14:23 / Acts 20:28, and they had to meet certain qualifications, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 / Titus 1:5-9. They acted as the spiritual leaders of the church.

TEACHERS

Teachers function today in a similar way to the prophets, however, their source for the edification of the church comes from God's Word, not a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, 2 Timothy 4:2.

All apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherds were teachers who were given the ability to equip the church for works of service and to build the church up, Ephesians 4:12.

THE REASON FOR THE GIFTS

The gifts were given ‘until’ we all reached unity in ‘THE faith’, **Ephesians 4:13**. Remember the word ‘faith’ here doesn’t mean belief, it means the entire teaching and words we find within the Scriptures, **1 Corinthians 13:8-12 / Ephesians 4:13 / Jude 3**.

Note also Paul speaks about ‘the knowledge’, **Ephesians 4:13 / 1 Peter 2:2 / 2 Peter 3:18**. Notice also how Paul contrasts and uses the same words as the Corinthian passage, and the same words which James uses, words like ‘mature’, ‘infants’ and ‘grow up’, **1 Corinthians 13:8-12 / James 1:23-25**.

The reason why Christ gifted the church with these men is simply to build His church up, **Ephesians 4:12**. When the body is being built up well, all parts of the body will work together, which makes it bigger and stronger. Our final goal is to become very mature, **Ephesians 4:13**.

God’s plan is to build and grow His church in order that He may receive the glory. He blessed His church with capable men who can assist us through teaching to become more like Him, **Romans 12:3 / 1 Corinthians 12:7**. All Christians have a duty to grow and work in God’s church, **Titus 3:8 / 1 Corinthians 15:10 / 2 Corinthians 4:15**.

The purpose of equipping the saints is to spiritually feed the church so that each member can be trained and encouraged to work, **1 Corinthians 14:26**. Christians are to be equipped in order to be able to minister to the needs of every member, **Galatians 6:10 / Ephesians 2:20 / Ephesians 6:21 / Colossians 4:17**. A minister is a servant of the Lord and it would be misleading to speak about ‘the’ one minister in the church because all Christians should be ministers.

‘Then 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. Instead, 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.’ **Ephesians 4:14-15**

Paul knew that when we finally got the Bible, God’s completed revelation to man, we won’t fall for every kind of doctrinal teaching that comes along, why? Because we can check it out for ourselves, we can measure what’s been taught with the Bible itself.

Now we can all grow and mature as we read and study the Bible, which has been entrusted or delivered once for all, **Jude 3**. When we are mature, we aren’t tossed up and down, like on the waves, **Luke 8:24**, but we’re stable and not easily influenced by others.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning speaking the truth in love.

‘The wholesome life of absolute integrity, truthfulness before all men, love toward all men, what priceless gems of character are these; and where in all the wide, wide world may one look for a life like that except in the humble and faithful service of the Son of God?’

‘From 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.’ **Ephesians 4:16**

Every part of the body works together to build the body up; we all become more and more like Christ, **Ephesians 4:15**. Each part should grow in love, not a few parts, but every part should grow up.

When we think about the human body, if one leg isn’t growing properly, you will use the other leg more, and it could get overloaded and worn out because it has to do twice the work it normally should do, **1 Corinthians 12:12-31**. Unity is important, and the church should continue to grow with an emphasis on every part.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

‘So, 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. They 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. Having 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.’ Ephesians 4:17-19

Paul now goes on to explain how to put our new selves into practice in our daily lives. We should be walking worthy according to how we have been called. We should live in Christ, and not live any longer as the Gentiles do, Ephesians 4:17.

We shouldn’t put some new colours on, like redecorating, but there should be a complete change, a complete rethinking is necessary, Proverbs 9:10 / Romans 12:2.

The Gentiles have empty minds, Ephesians 4:17. They are darkened in their understanding, Ephesians 4:18 / Matthew 7:22 / Romans 1:21 / Romans 13:13 / 2 Corinthians 12:21 / Galatians 5:19 / 2 Peter 2:2 / 2 Peter 2:7 / 2 Peter 2:18 / Jude 4.

They are blinded by ignorance through the hardening of their hearts, and this is their own will, Ephesians 4:18 / Romans 1:21-32 / Colossians 3:1-17. They live lives according to their empty, futile minds and have lost complete contact with God.

They are no longer tuned in to God and live lives of futility as a result, Acts 14:15 / Romans 1:21 / 1 Corinthians 15:10. This state starts with the hardening of the heart caused by themselves, Ephesians 4:18 / Romans 1:28.

They are no longer sensitive to God and have a good way of living, Ephesians 4:19. They have the principle of ‘if it feels good, it must be good’. They are now without morals and do their own things; they gave themselves over to lust and impurity, Ephesians 4:19 / Acts 26:18 / Colossians 1:21 / 2 Peter 3:1.

‘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.’ Ephesians 4:20-24

Paul says that through their former way of life, they didn’t get to know Christ, and he says that their former way of life will stop them from seeing.

Blaikie, in his commentary, says the following.

‘To learn Christ’ means ‘to learn all about Christ through complete acceptance and obedience of his teachings.’

Yes, they heard of Him, Ephesians 4:20, and were taught to put off their old selves, which are corrupted by their deceitful desires, but now as Christians, they should be completely reprogrammed; they need to get rid of their old way of living and start a completely new life, Ephesians 4:21-22 / 2 Corinthians 5:17 / Colossians 3:1-11.

The way of Christ is completely new, Ephesians 4:23 / Romans 12:2 / Romans 8:7 / Colossians 3:10, the world didn’t know it before but as Christians, we don’t belong in this world anymore, we belong to another realm, Ephesians 1:3.

The way of Christ is characterised by true holiness and righteousness, Ephesians 4:24, whilst the world’s characteristics are sensuality and lust.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Note that the ‘new man’ is not man’s doing at all, but God’s. ‘That after God hath been created!’ This simply means to ‘put on Christ.’ How is this done? Christians put on Christ in baptism, Galatians 3:26-27. They put on the name of Christ, Matthew 28:18-20. They put on (or receive inwardly) the mind of Christ, Philippians 2:5. They put on ‘the body of Christ’ in the sense of belonging to his spiritual body, the church. They put on the manner of daily living that Christ exhibited. They put on Christ in the sense of being ‘in Christ.’

It’s good to know what is going on in the world, but this doesn’t mean that we should be attached to the world, John 17:14-16 / 1 John 2:15 / 1 John 4:5.

‘Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, 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. Anyone 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.’ Ephesians 4:25-28

Lying has no place in the Christian’s life; a little white lie is still a lie, **Revelation 21:8**. We should stay away from every lie. The devil is a liar and the father of all lies, **John 8:44**, so we must refrain from telling falsehoods and speak the truth only, **Ephesians 4:25**.

Is it good to be angry? **Ephesians 4:26**. If someone burns and slaughters fifty children, or when women are abused, maybe during pregnancy, and she loses her child, or if a child is left in a dirty room with only a little food and the child dies, this makes us angry. But this doesn’t give us the right to take things into our own hands, **Genesis 4:6-8** / **James 1:19-20**.

Being angry isn’t sinful, **James 1:19-20** / **Mark 3:1-6**, it’s where that anger leads to which make it sinful and so, we need to learn to allow God to take care of certain things, **Revelation 6:11**.

If some idiot on the road behaves very badly and causes a dangerous situation, we might get angry, but don’t let it lead to sin and don’t start taking revenge on that person, **Romans 12:17-19**, don’t let your behaviour be governed by anger!

Some situations should make us angry, and if we’re not getting angry in that situation, then something must be wrong with us. Paul says, don’t let the sun go down, when you are angry, **Ephesians 4:26**.

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Ephesians 4:26**.

‘Here it is suggested that anger can be prevented from degenerating into sin if a strict time limit is placed on it: do not let the sun set on your anger.’

In other words, work out the problem as soon as possible. Don’t let it go on and on because angriness causes you to sin and the devil loves it when you are angry, so end this situation very soon, **Ephesians 4:27**.

We must replace old habits, such as stealing, **Ephesians 4:28** / **Galatians 5:13-14**, with something positive like work, **Ephesians 4:28** / **1 Thessalonians 4:10-11** / **2 Thessalonians 3:10-12** / **Romans 12:18** / **Titus 3:14**. If we don’t replace it then there will be an emptiness, a good soil for the devil.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Ephesians 4:28**.

‘The word of God reveals some acceptable methods of acquiring property, these being: 1. by inheritance, 2. by work, 3. by reception of it as a gift, 4. through merchandising, 5. through investment, etc.; two of the acceptable methods and one of the unacceptable methods appear in this verse, the latter being, of course, stealing.’

‘Do 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. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.’
Ephesians 4:29-32

As Christians, we must use our words in the right way; it’s the motive behind the use of our words that is important. Some words can be used in a good or bad way, but there is no place for offence and insults, **Ephesians 4:29**. We must have the right attitude when we speak; we should speak what we mean.

Paul tells them not to grieve the Holy Spirit, **Ephesians 4:30**. This demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is not some active force. We can walk in ways which go against Him, **Galatians 5:16**.

We can resist Him, **Acts 7:51**, and lie to Him, **Acts 5:3**. We can test Him, **Acts 5:9**, and insult Him, **Hebrews 10:24**. We can also blaspheme against Him, **Mark 3:29**, and ignore Him, **1 Thessalonians 5:19**.

When we read the context, **Ephesians 4:29-30**, we discover that Paul is talking about the things that people say. The things that Christians can say are the way we use our tongue, **Ephesians 4:29**.

He's saying, 'Look, you have received the Holy Spirit as a token that God intends to redeem you outright one day, [Ephesians 4:30](#), therefore watch your tongue, watch your language, watch the things you say, do not cause pain or sorrow but let your words give grace and not offence,' [Ephesians 4:29](#).

Grieving the Holy Spirit relates to purity, purity of speech and thought. We have new life through the Spirit, we are sealed for the day of redemption, [Ephesians 4:30](#) / [Ephesians 1:13-14](#), and the Spirit enables us to bear fruit, [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

If we offend the Holy Spirit by doing things contrary to the things of the Holy Spirit and putting him down and not letting Him work in us, then we grieve the Spirit.

These are the characteristics of a person being in Christ: don't hurt others! [Ephesians 4:31](#). Don't be bitter with people, [Hebrews 12:15](#). Don't allow rage or anger to dominate our lives. Don't get involved with brawls and don't slander anyone. We must rid ourselves of every form of malice.

It's better to live our lives in forgiveness than to have wrath or bitterness rule our lives. We are to be imitators of God, [Ephesians 5:1-2](#). We shouldn't let our behaviour be governed by others around us, [Titus 3:3](#). We should allow our lives to be governed by God the Father. We want to show the glory of God within us.

We should live a life that is focused on those around us, which means we should always try our best for those around us, but we're not living for our own benefit, but to serve others. We should allow kindness and compassion to dominate our lives, [Ephesians 4:32](#).

The Jews were too proud; they were God's people, but they were not like the Gentiles. Jesus says we should bear much fruit, by this people will know who we are, [John 15:1-8](#). If we are God's people, then we should live like Him. We have been forgiven by a Holy and loving God, and so we should be mature, forgiving people, [Ephesians 4:32](#) / [Matthew 6:12](#). How difficult it is sometimes to forgive others, but if we confess to being in Christ, then we should follow Christ's example, [Matthew 18:21-35](#).

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and 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.' [Ephesians 5:1-2](#)

If we want to follow God's example, [Ephesians 5:1](#), we must look to Jesus, [Matthew 5:48](#) / [Luke 6:36](#) / [1 Corinthians 4:16](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:1](#) / [2 Thessalonians 3:7-9](#).

Most children when they are growing up look to their father for an example, likewise as God's children we must look to our Father to follow the example He set for us, [1 John 4:7-8](#) / [John 13:34-35](#) / [Colossians 3:12-14](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:9](#). If we are truly God's children we must love one another just as Christ loved the church, [Ephesians 5:2](#) / [John 15:9](#) / [Galatians 1:4](#) / [1 John 3:16](#).

In the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were metaphorically sweet-smelling to God, [Exodus 29:18](#) / [Exodus 29:25](#), but God could smell the obedience of His son in making the offering, [Ephesians 5:2](#). As Christians, as we offer Him our sacrifices, this too is the smell of obedience, [2 Corinthians 2:14-15](#) / [Hebrews 5:8-9](#).

'But 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. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out

of place, but rather thanksgiving. For 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. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them.’

Ephesians 5:3-6

Our lives as Christians need to be worthy of our calling, and any sin must be rooted out of our lives. These sins must be dreaded and detested. Paul’s words aren’t only cautioning us against gross acts of sin, but they’re totally against what some may make light of.

These things are far from being profitable; they pollute and poison the hearers. Notice Paul says that these things shouldn’t be practised by Christians, spoken about or even thought about amongst Christians, Ephesians 5:12.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

The ‘sexually immoral’, this is the Greek word ‘ pornos’. These are the people who practice illicit sexual intercourse; this refers to all sexual sin, Romans 6:13 / Galatians 5:19-21 / Ephesians 5:4-5 / Revelation 21:8.

The people who practice this sin think only of themselves; they only think about fulfilling their own sexual desires and pleasures, Matthew 5:32 / Matthew 19:9 / Acts 15:20 / Acts 15:29 / 1 Corinthians 5:1 / Ephesians 5:3 / Colossians 3:5 / 1 Thessalonians 4:3. Anyone who practices sexual immorality won’t inherit the kingdom of God, Ephesians 5:5.

IMPURITY

The word ‘impurity’ is the Greek word ‘akatharsia’, and it refers to those who live an impure life. These were the Christians whose hearts and minds were filled with filth, Titus 1:15.

In the Old Testament, they would be classed as being ceremonially unclean before God, Leviticus 7:19-21. Anyone with an impure heart or mind won’t inherit the kingdom of God, Ephesians 5:5.

GREED

The word ‘greedy’, in Greek, is ‘pleonektes’, and it refers to those who had a materialistic spirit, Romans 1:27-32 / Colossians 3:5-7. They were the Christians who were just interested in gaining more material goods for themselves by any means, even if that meant hurting their neighbour in the process or ignoring other people’s feelings and needs, Ephesians 5:11. Anyone who practices greed won’t inherit the kingdom of God, Ephesians 5:5.

OBSCENITY

The word ‘obscenity’ is the Greek word ‘aischrotes’, which refers to those who use coarse or obscene language. They were the Christians who used foul language, and their conduct reflected their thoughts, [Matthew 12:35](#) / [James 1:19-21](#) / [James 3:5-12](#). Anyone who uses obscene language won’t inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

FOOLISH TALK

The word ‘foolish talk’ is the Greek word ‘morologia’, which refers to those who would speak using silly or senseless words. They were the Christians who loved to talk all the time without thinking about what they were actually saying. Whatever they did say never made any sense to anyone, [1 Timothy 5:13](#). Anyone who uses foolish talk won’t inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

COARSE JOKING

The word ‘course joking’ in Greek is ‘eutrapelia’, which refers to those who loved to share filthy jokes. They were the Christians who wanted everyone to laugh, despite how crude their jokes were. They would often make fun of anyone in a sarcastic manner, they often put people down and had no respect for anyone, even religious people.

Stott, in his commentary, says the following.

‘All God’s gifts, including sex, are subjects for thanksgiving, rather than for joking. To joke about them is bound to degrade them; to thank God for them is the way to preserve their worth as the blessings of a loving Creator.’

Anyone who shares filthy jokes or makes fun of someone at someone else’s expense won’t inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

IMMORAL

Although the word ‘sexual’ isn’t mentioned first, it’s still the same Greek word, ‘ pornos’, these are those people who practice illicit sexual intercourse; this refers to all sexual sin, [Romans 6:13](#) / [Galatians 5:19-21](#) / [Ephesians 5:4-5](#) / [Revelation 21:8](#).

The people who practice this sin think only of themselves; they only think about fulfilling their own sexual desires and pleasures, [Matthew 5:32](#) / [Matthew 19:9](#) / [Acts 15:20](#) / [Acts 15:29](#) / [1 Corinthians 5:1](#) / [Ephesians 5:3](#) / [Colossians 3:5](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#). Anyone who practices sexual immorality won’t inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

IMPURE

The word ‘impure’ is the Greek word ‘akathartos’, which refers to those who live an impure life. These were the Christians whose hearts and minds were filled with filth, [Titus 1:15](#).

In the Old Testament, they would be classed as being ceremonially unclean before God, [Leviticus 7:19-21](#). Anyone with an impure heart or mind won't inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

GREEDY PERSON

The word 'greedy' is the Greek word 'pleonektes', which refers to those who had a materialistic spirit, [Romans 1:27-32](#) / [Colossians 3:5-7](#). They were the Christians who were just interested in gaining more material goods for themselves by any means, even if that meant hurting their neighbour in the process or ignoring other people's feelings and needs, [Ephesians 5:11](#).

Anyone who practices greed won't inherit the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#). Those who allow themselves, either in the lusts of the flesh or the love of the world, belong not to the kingdom of God, nor shall they enter the kingdom of God, [Ephesians 5:5](#).

When the vilest transgressors repent and believe the Gospel, they become children of obedience, from whom God's wrath is turned away, [Ephesians 5:6](#). Dare we make light of that which brings down the wrath of God? Sinners, like men in the dark, but the grace of God brought a mighty change in the souls of many.

THE WRATH OF GOD

Here's a subject that a lot of preachers stay clear of and a lot of Christians don't want to even think about. But whatever our views are concerning the subject, we can't escape the fact that it's mentioned throughout the Bible. The wrath of God has to do with evil and sin and God's reaction towards it, [Leviticus 26:14-21](#).

God cannot pretend He doesn't see sin; He must move against evil, and this Holy reaction is called 'His wrath'. But we must never avoid or water down the subject of the wrath of God because it's serious business to God and therefore, should be taken seriously by us, [Romans 2:5](#) / [Ephesians 5:6](#).

I don't know about you, but many people today will be offended if we preach or teach on Scriptures like that, but the reality is that God will be even more offended if we don't, [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#).

God's wrath is coming, and because God is holy, He must give full vent to His anger against sin and evil. If He didn't, He wouldn't be the one the Seraphs call 'Holy, Holy, Holy' in [Isaiah 6:3](#).

And that's why we have the cross, when God searched for a way to save sinners, He couldn't pretend He couldn't see sin. He can't say, 'It doesn't matter; I'm just going to forget about it.'

He's got to react in His holiness against sin, and that's called wrath. On the cross, God poured out His wrath, His just wrath against all of our sins, by placing them on His sinless Son, our substitute.

The truth is this: God really is that holy, and sin really is that big of a problem, and we cannot mute that truth to find favour with unregenerate sinners. God's wrath is His way of moving and acting against evil and sin.

How can one be spared from the wrath of God at the judgment? In one word, the answer is Jesus, [Romans 5:9](#).

Through Jesus, Christians have the best life in this world, [John 10:10](#). Through Him we can escape the horrors of hell, and, yes, it's through our Lord that we live in hope of heaven.

While we recognise God's wrath, we don't live our lives in trembling fear. Why? Because Christ paid the ransom that sets us free from sin and delivers us from the wrath to come. Hence why we must not be partners with those who are disobedient, [Ephesians 5:6-7](#).

‘For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.’ Ephesians 5:7-11

It’s always helpful for Christians to remind themselves of where they came from; this helps us realise where we are now. Walking in the light should be the characteristic behaviour of all Christians.

This becomes easier when we find out what pleases the Lord, and the only way to find out what pleases the Lord is by spending time in His Word, [Romans 12:2](#) / [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) / [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) / [2 Peter 1:3](#) / [Jude 3](#).

There is a contrast here because we are in the light, we should no longer partake in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, [Ephesians 5:8](#). The result of living in the light is goodness, righteousness and truth, [Ephesians 5:9](#).

These are the fruit of the Spirit, [John 15:1-6](#) / [Galatians 5:14](#) / [Galatians 5:22-26](#). The works of darkness are unfruitful, whatever profit they may boast, for they end in the destruction of the impenitent sinner, [Ephesians 4:18-19](#).

There are many ways of abetting or taking part in the sins of others, either by commendation, counsel, consent, or concealment, but if we share with others in their sins, we must expect to share in their consequences. If we don’t expose the sins of others, [Ephesians 5:10-11](#), by default, we have fellowship with them.

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The gravest disservice that any man can do to a fellow man is to make him think lightly of sin.’

‘It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: ‘Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Ephesians 5:12-14

Paul tells us that a good man will be ashamed to speak about what the wicked do, a good man will be ashamed to speak of what many wicked men aren’t ashamed to do, [Ephesians 5:12](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Believers should not even discuss the secret dark deeds of people in normal conversation. Discussing these things will just draw attention to them and may make them attractive to the carnal-minded. It is better to keep what they do in the dark in the dark.’

As Christians, we must have not only a sight and a knowledge that sin is sin, and in some measure shameful, [Ephesians 5:13](#), but we must also see it as a breach of God’s holy law.

After the example of prophets and apostles, we should call on those asleep and dead in sin to awake and arise, so that Christ may give them light, [Ephesians 5:14](#).

Some commentators believe Paul may be possibly quoting a hymn in [Ephesians 5:14](#), whilst others believe he is quoting from [Isaiah 26:19](#). It was true back then as it is today, many Christians slip back into darkness simply because they’ve either forgotten where they’ve come from or enjoying the deeds of darkness once again, [2 Peter 1:9](#).

It’s those Christians who need to remember when they entered the light for the first time, [Isaiah 60:1](#) / [Romans 13:11](#) / [Revelation 2:5](#). Those who aren’t yet Christians are dead in their sin but can come to life if they obey the Gospel, [John 5:25](#) / [Ephesians 2:1-5](#).

The point is that Christians, through their lives, should expose the sins to the light and wake up sinners so that they might be saved too, [Ephesians 5:13-14](#).

‘Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.’ Ephesians 5:15-17

Paul urges his readers to think very carefully about how they live, and he urges them to use their time wisely, [Ephesians 5:15](#) / [Matthew 7:24-27](#). My dear mum used to say to me, ‘Time gets faster as you get older,’ and

that seems to be certainly true. Too much of our time is wasted doing unproductive things, and the reality is, we can't get that time back.

Imagine if we knew we only had a little time left on planet Earth, how would we spend that time? [Ephesians 5:16](#). I suspect that we would spend that time more productively, more wisely, [James 4:13-14](#).

There are so many traps which try to help us waste our time, television is one of them, that's why there are so many soaps, reality shows and dramas on our screens every day. Wouldn't it be sad if we look back at our lives and ask ourselves, what did we do with our lives, and we answer, watched television!

Here are the lyrics to a song called 'Life means so much' by Chris Rice. I think they are very appropriate.

Every day is a bank account, and time is our currency.
So, no one's rich, nobody's poor. We get twenty-four hours each.
So, how are you gonna spend? Will you invest or squander?
Try to get ahead Or help someone who's under.
Teach us to count the days,
Teach us to make the days count.
Lead us in better ways,
Somehow our souls forgot,
Life means so much. Life means so much.

Paul says, 'the days are evil', [Ephesians 5:16](#), which is a reference to the great persecution the church was going through by Nero and about to go through at the hands of Domitian. Paul says time is short; it's so easy to waste time. Paul is advocating a disciplined, orderly and wise life. He's saying don't have a childish way of doing anything, but walk wisely and try to understand what God's will is, [Ephesians 5:17](#). The word 'foolish' means without reason, and there seems to be a lot of this in the world today, where people do many things without any real reason.

Imagine a woman who always cuts off the end of a meat roast. Imagine her children watching her doing this for years, and so when they grow up, they do the same thing, they cut off the end of the roast meat. Then one day, her mother saw her children doing this and asked them why they were cutting off the end of the roast meat.

The children reply to their mother and say you always did that, that's why we do it today. But the mother said that this was foolish; the only reason she cut off the end of the meat was that she didn't have a tin that was big enough to hold the meat, that's why she did it.

'Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' [Ephesians 5:18-20](#)

Getting drunk on wine is the opposite of how Christians should live; instead, we should be filled with the Spirit, [Ephesians 5:18](#).

HOW CAN WE BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

When you read of the spiritual vibrancy in the life of the early church, do you ever wonder, why is my life not like that? How can I live under the Spirit's influence?

**CONVERSION TO CHRIST IS SOMETHING
AMAZING**

We receive the gracious gift of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit as a gift from God, [Acts 2:38](#). It is the Holy Spirit who then identifies us as God's children, [Galatians 3:14](#), and is the deposit guaranteeing our future inheritance in heaven, [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) / [Romans 8:9](#).

Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot belong to God. His is an essential ministry to all God's people. Though every believer has been given the Holy Spirit, not every believer lives a Spirit-filled life.

The instruction to 'be filled with the Spirit', [Ephesians 5:18](#), was written to those who already had received the Holy Spirit. Now, however, they were being instructed to display the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

SEVERAL POINTS NEED TO BE NOTED

1. The instruction to be filled with the Spirit isn't optional; it's not something we can take or leave, it's imperative!
2. Unlike our conversion, which is unrepeatable, 'we cannot be born again and again and again', being filled with the Spirit is a continuous process throughout our lives. We are literally to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. Being filled with the Spirit isn't something that automatically happens to us; it's something we're responsible for appropriating as we cooperate with God, who is working in us.

We become filled with the Spirit in the same way one becomes filled with wine, by continually drinking. How this spiritual 'drinking' is done can be seen in two examples given by our Lord. He said, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled,' [Matthew 5:6](#).

HOW DO WE HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS?

We all experience hunger and thirst; even when we are exhausted, we will not rest until we have satisfied our cravings for food and drink. The point Jesus is making is this: we are to pursue righteousness, the doing of the will of God, with the determination of a person pursuing food and drink.

Only in the holy pursuit of God's will can we be satisfied. This is why an appetite must be acquired for spiritual things. This is achieved by exposing ourselves to the will of God through our personal reading of His Word, Bible study and prayer.

SATISFYING OUR THIRST

The Lord discusses the Spirit-filled life in the Gospel of John, [John 7:37-39](#), and Jesus invites the thirsty to come to Him and drink. But who are the thirsty and how do they drink? The thirsty are those who desire to live for Jesus; they want His will done in their life.

They desire to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. They come to Jesus to 'drink' and from within them flows 'streams of living water'. This refers to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives.

And though their intake is small, their output is like streams of living water flowing from them. This is the Spirit giving a super-abundant display of His presence in their lives.

We are filled with the Spirit to the extent that we allow the Spirit to influence our lives. We yield to the Spirit's gentle movement in our hearts. We 'live by the Spirit', we are 'led by the Spirit', we bear 'the fruit of the Spirit' and we 'keep in step with the Spirit,' [Galatians 5:16](#) / [Galatians 5:18](#) / [Galatians 5:22-23](#) / [Galatians 5:25](#).

When we read what the Spirit wrote, hear what the Spirit says and do what the Spirit reveals, we are being filled with the Spirit, [Revelation 1:11](#) / [Revelation 2:7](#) / [Colossians 3:16](#).

THE HOLY EVIDENCE OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

How would you know if a person is filled with the Spirit? What would there be about his or her life that would provide confirmation? The answer isn't hard to find.

The early church needed to implement a programme to ensure that the material needs of the saints were being met. Seven men were appointed to oversee this work; they were men 'full of the Spirit,' [Acts 6:3-4](#).

How did the church know which seven to pick? They looked at their manner of life and saw the undeniable evidence of the Spirit's influence in their lives. The Spirit-filled life cannot be concealed.

When you live a Spirit-filled life, 'Christ will dwell in your hearts,' [Ephesians 3:17](#). The word 'dwell' refers to a place of permanent abode as opposed to temporary accommodation. Jesus speaks on the same theme, [John 14:23](#). The living Christ in our lives is Spirit-filled living. The Spirit-filled life isn't an ordinary life; it bears all the marks of something extraordinary, something supernatural, it's beyond natural explanation. Every believer should be actively pursuing a Spirit-filled life.

Paul continues and reminds us that Christians are to speak to one another in song, [Ephesians 5:19](#) / [Colossians 3:16](#) / [Acts 16:25](#). One of the reasons we have God's Spirit within us is to help us use our vocals to simply pour out our praises to Him in song.

PSALMS

Psalms, [Ephesians 5:19](#), were songs that were sung with the sole purpose of praising God; this may include some of the psalms and melodies which we find written by David in the Book of Psalms.

HYMNS

Hymns, [Ephesians 5:19](#), may well be songs that were composed by the early Christians, which focused mainly on thanksgiving for what God has done in their lives and their salvation.

SPIRITUAL SONGS

Spiritual songs, [Ephesians 5:19](#), were songs that were sung to encourage and edify the soul in worship; this was the means of teaching and admonishing one another.

Notice where this singing and music-making was to take place, in our hearts. The instrument for singing is our voices, and Christians should sing heartfelt praises to the Lord.

Notice also that our singing is directed to God, which implies that we don't sing for entertainment purposes. God wants to be worshipped, [John 4:24](#), not entertained.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Did you know that singing is only mentioned nine times in the New Testament? We have examples of singing individually, [Matthew 26:30](#). The word hymn in [Matthew 26:30](#) is actually the word 'hymning', which basically means they sang a lot of hymns from the Psalms, probably the Hallel Psalms, which are [Psalms 115-118](#).

We also have examples of singing as a congregation, [Romans 15:8-9](#), and there are a few more examples we could read, but we're going to look at those later. The first mention of any musical instrument in the Bible is found in [Genesis 4:21](#), and the first mention of singing with a musical instrument is found in [Genesis 31:26-27](#).

Wasn't Moses commanded to make musical instruments? Moses was commanded to make silver trumpets, but not for the purpose of music or worship, [Numbers 10:2](#).

What about David, didn't he introduce musical instruments to Old Testament worship? [1 Chronicles 23:5](#). Didn't God command the use of instrumental music in Old Testament worship? [2 Chronicles 29:25](#).

Remember that Moses nowhere appointed any musical instruments to be used in worship. There was nothing of the kind under the first tabernacle, and that's because God didn't ask for them. The above text is telling us that Hezekiah appointed the Levites in the house of the Lord, and David commanded the use of the instruments mentioned.

What did God command? He commanded through His prophets that the Levites should praise the Lord, but it doesn't mean that the Lord commanded the use of the instruments. It was by the order of David that so many instruments of music should be introduced into the divine service, [1 Chronicles 23:4-5](#).

Adam Clarke, the most renowned scholar of the Methodist Church, says the following concerning this text.

'I believe that David was not authorised by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the Divine worship of which we read, and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprehended by this prophet; and I farther believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian Church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; and that they are 'sinful'.

Yes, David introduced musical instruments into temple worship, but God didn't ask for them. David also introduced the idea of building a temple for God, but God didn't ask for one to be built in the first place, [1 Chronicles 17:1-6](#). Musical instruments in worship were David's idea, not God's. Building a temple for God to dwell in was David's idea, not God's.

Why did God allow instruments in worship? One plausible answer to that question is that God permitted it, just like He permitted divorce because of the hardness of their hearts and their spiritual immaturity, [Matthew 19:8](#).

Now we could go to [Revelation 5:8](#), and ask the question, are there harps in heaven? Perhaps there are, and apart from Revelation being a highly figurative book, we need to remember that we're dealing with the here and now, not the future.

There are no examples or commands to use instrumental music in the New Testament, but the New Testament expressly commands us to sing. The New Testament doesn't explicitly condemn the use of musical instruments, but

the New Testament doesn't explicitly condemn praying to Mary or baptising infants, does it? We don't go by the things that are not there in Scripture; we go by the things that are there.

Now we can't say that any kind of instruments weren't available to the early Christians because there were, but Christians were directed by the Holy Spirit to use only their voices. They were commanded to pluck their heartstrings rather than pluck the strings of a musical instrument.

Around six-hundred years after the apostles had gone, Pope Vitalian introduced an organ in the Latin Church around 670 A.D. But the opposition was so great that it was removed to preserve unity, and it would be another two-hundred years before it would be adopted into the Latin Mass. In 1054 A.D., a great division took place between the eastern and the western churches of Europe.

While the Western churches are Catholic, they adopted the use of images, a universal head, the Pope, instrumental music, and sprinkling for baptism, the Eastern churches, Orthodox, rejected these things. To this very day, Orthodox churches, Greek, Russian and Eastern, use only vocal music.

Secular history is very clear that the use of instrumental music in public worship did not take place until about the 10th century, which was one of the innovations of the Catholic Church.

It was never a practice in the early centuries of the church; in fact, the renowned musicologist Curt Sachs of Columbia University said, 'All ancient Christian music was vocal.'

When the Protestant Reformation began in the early 1500s, many left the Catholic Church and established other churches. Almost without exception, the leaders of these denominations were opposed to the use of instrumental music in worship.

During the Reformation period, only the Church of England and the Lutherans carried over the use of instrumental music from their Roman Catholic past. In modern-day worship, not only is it common to hear organs and pianos, but full orchestras.

Professional musicians are even employed, but again, we need to remind ourselves that this may well be pleasing to the ears of men, but Paul said to 'make melody in your heart to the Lord,' [Ephesians 5:19](#).

When we are singing the words to a song, we are feeding each other on the word of God at the same time, and because we are feeding on those words, we are also promoting purity of the heart within ourselves. God tells us that we've got four things to think about when we are praising Him in song.

1. We can sing Psalms, spiritual songs and hymns.
2. Our singing needs to be aimed at Him.
3. We need to sing with gratitude.
4. We need to sing from the heart.

It's not a matter of feelings; it's a matter of gratitude. Everything we do in our worship assemblies is done out of gratitude. Paul says it should always be like this; he says we should be thankful for all things, we should be thankful for everything in Jesus' name, and our thankfulness should be aimed at God, [Ephesians 5:20](#).

Paul doesn't say that he 'will sing with an instrument', he says 'I will sing with my spirit and my mind,' [1 Corinthians 14:15](#). The word 'singing' in our English translations is from the Greek word 'psallo', which literally means, 'plucking the heart strings'. When we use our voices to praise God, we are plucking our heartstrings, and so not only is God pleased, but it also brings us great joy, [James 5:17](#).

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, said the following.

‘I have no objection to instruments in our chapels provided they are neither heard nor seen.’

John Calvin, the forerunner of the Presbyterian Church, wrote the following.

‘Musical instruments in celebrating the praise of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews.’

Charles Spurgeon, the famous preacher of the Baptist church in London, said the following.

‘Musical instruments would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto Him. This is the sweetest and best music. We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.’

They all understood that the whole object of Christian worship is to bring glory to God and worship is not intended to please men, but to please God, [Hebrews 13:15](#).

Richard Wagner, one of the great musicians and composers in America, once expressed his opinion about vocal music in these words.

‘There is no doubt but that those qualities absolutely necessary to church music, namely, modesty, dignity and soulfulness, are more inherent in the vocal style than in any other. Vocal music is, in general, more expressive than the mechanically produced tones of instruments, which is undeniable. Religious feeling finds its most natural expression in vocal utterance, for the human heart is the source of both devotion and song.’

The real question we should be asking ourselves is simply this: are we singing and making melody in our hearts or just miming the words? Do the words of the songs move us and put our minds on heavenly things?

Paul reminds us to always give thanks for everything, [Ephesians 5:20](#). There is never a circumstance in our lives in which we cannot give thanks to the Lord. Yes, it’s sometimes more difficult to give thanks, but there is always a reason to give thanks when we are in Christ, [James 1:2-4](#).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

‘Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.’ Ephesians 5:21

If we are filled with the Spirit, we will do the will of God, we will sing, we will thank God, and we will be subject to each other. What is submission? Look at what Jesus did: He washed the feet of His disciples, [John 13:3-17](#). He was taking care of their needs.

The submission has nothing to do with superiority; it has nothing to do with inferiority. A submissive spirit in the Christian is a demonstration of Whom we follow, [Philippians 2:5-8](#). Christ continued to submit Himself, not only to God but also to others.

Those who properly submit themselves to Christ will, by the nature of that, also be submissive to one another. To be subject to one another is to consider the other as more important than yourselves, [Philippians 2:3-4](#).

WIVES

‘Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.’ Ephesians 5:22-24

The relationship between a husband and wife can be one of the greatest relationships we have; they can certainly bring out the worst in us, but they can also bring out the best in us.

God decided that man needed some kind of companionship in this world, [Genesis 2:18](#), and when Adam couldn’t find it within the animal kingdom, God went on to create Eve from Adam, [Genesis 2:22](#). When Adam saw Eve for the first time, he said, ‘here is someone like me, she’s a part of my body, my own flesh and bones. I’ll call her woman,’ [Genesis 2:23](#).

We know the rest of the story: Eve fell for the serpent’s lies and ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. She then offers some of the fruit to Adam, and he ate it, and so sin entered the world, [Genesis 3:6](#). We know that Satan was cursed by God, [Genesis 3:14](#).

We know that Adam was cursed by God, [Genesis 3:17](#), and to Eve He said her desire will be for her husband, [Genesis 3:16](#). When God created Eve, He did so by using one of Adam’s ribs, [Genesis 2:21-22](#). The word ‘rib’ is very misleading; the actual text literally says it was a shank that was removed from Adam’s side. The point is that the woman wasn’t made out of an inferior substance; the woman was a part of him, a very important part of him. God created an ‘ezer’, a helper for Adam. He didn’t create a slave, He didn’t create a servant. He created someone who would share in the responsibilities of life; he created them as equals.

In many cultures, even today, women are treated no better than slaves. The Greeks believed, ‘we have courtesans for the sake of pleasure, we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation, and we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately.’

A Greek author says the following concerning Greek wives.

‘Let her live that she might see as little as possible, hear as little as possible and ask as little as possible.’

As far as the Greeks were concerned, a wife’s role was simply to run the house and take care of the children, while the husband enjoyed pleasure and companionship from someone else.

When the Romans came on the scene, their view of women wasn’t much better; they believed ‘women are married to be divorced.’ Under Roman law, a wife had no legal rights; everything she was and had came from her husband, and so, she was completely dependent on her husband.

Hebrew women actually had it better than many other women in other cultures, but only just better. We know that by the time Christ came along, divorce was becoming rampant among the Jews, and all the rights lay with the man, [Deuteronomy 24:1](#).

By the time Christ came along, the Jews were using the phrase ‘something indecent about her’, [Deuteronomy 24:1](#), as an excuse for divorce. Some believed it meant adultery, others believed it meant if the wife had burned your dinner or gone out with their heads uncovered. Others believed it meant that the husband found someone more attractive. And so, in the Jewish culture, a woman had more rights than a slave, but only just.

Paul’s words here in [Ephesians 5:22](#) are the same words that Paul writes to the Colossian church in [Colossians 3:18](#). The wife must submit to her husband, and the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church at the same time. Remember, the Greeks and the Romans didn’t see their wives as a person; they saw them as a piece of property. Their wives weren’t allowed to make decisions of their own, especially when it came to religion. It was the husband who decided what everybody’s religion was going to be in their household.

The wife had no rights whatsoever, and so, as far as the women, the children, and the slaves were concerned, they were just objects; they had no say in anything. And so, we can imagine the impact the Gospel would have had in that society.

Imagine the impact on the Jews as they are told that God loves the Gentiles as much as them! Imagine the impact on the slaves as they are told that God loves them as much as their owners! Imagine the impact on the females as they are told that God loves them as much as the men!

Imagine the impact the Gospel would have had in that society when Paul declares that males and females are one, [Galatians 3:28](#). I'm sure all the women and all the slaves couldn't believe what Paul was preaching.

We can imagine them asking Paul, 'Are you telling us we're all one in Christ Jesus?' I can imagine Paul saying, 'yes you are, it doesn't matter if you're a Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, you're all one in Christ Jesus,' [Galatians 3:28](#).

While the women and slaves are rejoicing at this good news, I can imagine the men in that society going absolutely nuts. If these women believe what this Paul guy says, they might think they are just as important as we are!

If these slaves believe what this Paul guy says, they might get too big for their boots, they might try and take over, and we men will lose control of our homes and eventually our society! That's why Christianity was regarded as dangerous and rebellious at that time.

And so, after declaring that all are one in Christ Jesus, Paul has to be very careful about how he teaches these women to enjoy their new freedom in Christ, whilst living within their culture.

There is some good news and bad news concerning 'wives submitting to their husbands', [Ephesians 5:22](#). The good news is that the word 'submit' isn't in the original text. The bad news is that it should be, otherwise the text wouldn't make sense.

When the Bible was written, there were no chapters and verses, and so, let's read how it actually reads, 'Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, wives, to your husbands as to the Lord,' [Ephesians 5:21-22](#).

In other words, we don't start with, 'wives submit to your husbands', we start with, 'submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.' And notice that Paul doesn't say, 'wives submit yourselves to your husbands,' he says, 'wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord,' [Ephesians 5:22](#).

Now, what does 'in the Lord' mean? [Colossians 3:18](#). I think the way to figure this out in part is to look at the phrase 'in the Lord' every time it occurs in the Bible. That won't take long because it only occurs three times.

When it's used in [1 Corinthians 7:39](#), does it mean that the person she marries must be a Christian? That is certainly one alternative. It's used in [Ephesians 6:1](#). Does that mean that if you have Christian parents, you have to obey them, and if you don't have Christian parents, you don't have to obey them? No.

I think it means that children are to obey their parents in the sphere of the Lord's authority. You have to obey your parents the way the Lord says to obey your parents. 'In the Lord' means in the way that the Lord guides you, in the way the Lord teaches you, in a way that shows you are in submission to the Lord.

Does [Colossians 3:18](#) mean that if the husband is a Christian, you have to submit to him, but if he isn't a Christian, you don't have to submit to him? No. Paul's counsel is to the wives.

Wives, you are to submit to your husbands. How? In the Lord, in the way, the Lord would have you do it. Submit to him in the way the Lord leads you to submit to Him, not in the world's concept, but Jesus' concept. Wives, submit to your husbands in a way pleasing, acceptable to the Lord. 'In the Lord' signifies a realm of authority.

Put yourself in the place of a married woman living in Ephesus. Imagine you're sitting there amongst the congregation and suddenly, you hear this letter being read out to everyone, and you realise that Paul is actually addressing you, as a woman!

I'm sure they would be thinking, at last, someone who actually recognises we exist! Someone who acknowledges that we're smart enough to understand what he's saying! Imagine being there when Paul's words were being read out, and hearing those first few words, 'Wives, submit to your husbands'.

We can almost imagine the women thinking, 'oh here we go again, another man putting us back in our place where we belong!' But then they hear the words, 'as you do to the Lord,' [Ephesians 5:22](#).

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE WOMEN?

It doesn't mean they were to submit to their husbands because they had no choice. It simply means they're to submit to their husbands, because the way they respond to their husbands is a powerful demonstration of their attitude towards their Lord.

The husband has been given certain responsibilities within the marriage and family, and if the husband is fulfilling these responsibilities, then the wife is actually responding to the One who made him responsible.

I'm sure you would have noticed that I used the word 'responsibility' and not the word 'authority'. Paul never says, 'the husband is the authority figure in the home, who rules the family with an iron rod, and women better submit!'

He doesn't say that, he doesn't say that men are superior, and women are inferior. He's saying that a husband has been given responsibilities by God, and the wife simply needs to recognise those responsibilities and respond to them. When she recognises her husband's God-given responsibilities and responds to them, it's then that she's submitting to her husband as to the Lord.

Peter says, if you were married to someone who isn't a Christian, you can still submit to them, by showing them what it means to submit to the Lord, [1 Peter 3:1](#).

And he says, you don't even have to preach the Gospel to them, but you can show them the effect the Gospel has had on you, [1 Peter 3:1](#). Who knows, because of your Christ-like behaviour, they may one day become a Christian.

WHY SHOULD WIVES SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS?

'For the husband is the head of the wife'. Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. [Ephesians 5:23-24](#)

Notice that Paul doesn't say, 'the husband is the head of the family', he doesn't say, 'the husband is the head of the house'. Paul says, 'the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.'

The word 'head' here doesn't mean authority as it's used elsewhere. The word 'head' in this verse speaks about the source, the source that brings well-being, the source of supplying one's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, [Ephesians 1:22](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:3](#) / [Colossians 1:18](#) / [Colossians 2:19](#).

In other words, God has given the husband the responsibility of providing for his wife's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, [1 Peter 3:7](#). Wives also have some responsibilities too, [Proverbs 27:15](#) / [Titus 2:3-5](#) / [Proverbs 12:4](#). When people get married, they become one, but they both have different roles within that marriage relationship, and when both couples recognise those roles and accept them, that's called submitting to one another.

God wants nothing but the best for both the husband and the wife, which means the husband should want nothing but the best for his wife, and the wife should want nothing but the best for her husband.

And the only way you can really get the best out of each other is by submitting to the Lord and each other. Just as the church submits to Christ as her head, then the wife should submit to her husband, [Ephesians 5:24](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:12](#) / [Colossians 1:18](#).

HUSBANDS

'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.' [Ephesians 5:25-27](#)

Paul says marriage is all about love, and the Bible gives us the greatest example of all, of how husbands are to love their wives. The first example is this: 'husbands must love their wives sacrificially', [Ephesians 5:25](#), and how did He demonstrate His love for the church? He died for her, He sacrificed Himself for her, He shed His own blood for her, [Matthew 20:28](#) / [Mark 10:45](#) / [Luke 2:11](#) / [John 4:42](#) / [Acts 20:28](#) / [Philippians 3:20](#).

Paul says, if husbands want successful marriages, they must look to Christ and what He did, by going to the cross of Calvary. When we look at Christ, we see an example of self-sacrificial love, we see Him dying to self, we see Him dying to selfish ambition.

Husbands, we must be willing to sacrifice things that are very personal to them, in order to love our wives as Christ loved His church, [Ephesians 5:25](#). Husbands must love their wives intentionally and with a purpose. Christ's dying on the cross wasn't an accident; it was intentional. He died with a purpose in mind, [Ephesians 1:5](#) / [Ephesians 2:4](#) / [Romans 5:8](#) / [Colossians 1:21-22](#).

Husbands are to intentionally love their wives; they are to purposely love their wives. Christ loved the church because He wants her to be holy, He wants her to be radiant, He wants her to be blameless, [Colossians 1:22](#) / [Jude 24](#).

Patterson, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Ephesians 5:26](#).

'The purpose Jesus Christ had in mind when He sacrificed Himself for His bride, the church, was to set her apart (sanctify, make her holy) for Himself as His own forever, [Hebrews 2:11](#) / [Hebrews 10:10](#) / [Hebrews 10:14](#) / [Hebrews 13:12](#).'

Hoehner, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Ephesians 5:27](#).

'The cleansing here is spiritual rather than physical. The Word of God cleanses us in the sense that when we believe the gospel, it washes our sins away as water washes dirt away, [Titus 3:5](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:11](#). Thus, washing is a metaphor of redemption.'

Marriage isn't just about two people; it's about three people. God must be the third chord in our marriage relationship, [Ecclesiastes 4:12](#). If husbands want their wives to be like Christ wants His church, then we must remember to keep God in the middle of our marriages.

The husband might put a strain on that marriage, the wife might put a strain on that marriage, but if God Almighty is intertwined within that marriage, it makes it a lot harder to break. There's strength in marriages when God is in the middle of them.

‘In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. ‘For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.’ Ephesians 5:28-33

Husbands must see their wives as part of their bodies, [Ephesians 5:28](#). Paul said earlier that ‘the body is the church’, which would include our Christian wives, [Ephesians 5:23](#).

The last time I looked, everyone I know has a body attached to their head. Paul is saying a head without a body is no good to anyone, a body without a head is absolutely useless, [Ephesians 5:29](#) / [1 Corinthians 12:17-18](#).

Sometimes men get so busy doing a thousand other things, and we jump up at a moment’s notice to help other people out, to such an extent that we neglect our own home, [Song of Songs 1:6](#).

We need to help each other, support each other, and encourage each other, [Ephesians 5:30](#), all of which are driven by Christ’s love for His church, [Colossians 3:19](#) / [Colossians 3:21](#). Paul says husbands must not only love their wives but they mustn’t be harsh with them, [Colossians 3:19](#).

If husbands don’t treat their wives with respect, and if they don’t see their wives as heirs of this wonderful life, God won’t answer their prayers, [1 Peter 3:7](#) / [Proverbs 31:10-12](#).

Just because a wife submits to her husband doesn’t mean she’s our personal slave. Peter says husbands are to be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect, [1 Peter 3:7](#).

Husbands need to consider her needs, consider her desires, consider her feelings and thoughts and respect her in all things, respect her opinions, respect everything she does and says. Marriage is about togetherness, completeness, oneness; it’s about ‘us’.

Husbands need to keep studying their wives, [Ephesians 5:28-30](#). Before most people get married, there’s usually a courting period that takes place first. It’s then that we study each other’s spiritual character, we study each other’s humour, we study each other’s mannerisms and let’s be honest, we study each other’s physical bodies. But after we had been married for a few years, we stopped studying each other.

Solomon, speaking in physical terms, speaks about studying each other, [Song of Songs 7:1-5](#), but Paul is speaking in physical and spiritual terms. If Christ provides everything the church needs, He feeds her, He blesses her, and He protects her, then husbands should do the same with their wives.

What Christ provides for you as a Christian husband, you should provide for your Christian wife. If you’re so important to Christ, then your wife should be just as important to you.

In [Ephesians 5:31-33](#), Paul, quoting from [Genesis 2:24](#), tells us that when a man and a woman come together in marriage, they become one. And he uses that text to describe Christ’s relationship with His church, they have become one, [Ephesians 5:31](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following concerning [Ephesians 5:32](#).

‘The mystery in view is the truth previously hidden but now brought to light. The relationship that exists between a husband and his wife is the same as the one that exists between Christ and His church. The church has as close a tie to Christ spiritually as a wife has to her husband spiritually. Paul revealed that [Genesis 2:24](#) contains a more profound truth than people previously realised. The mystery is great because it has far-reaching implications.’

He again reminds husbands that they should protect, defend and provide for their wives, just as Christ does for His church. And if the husband does all these things, then his wife will truly respect him for it, [Ephesians 5:33](#).

But that will only happen when the husband and the wife remember the words of Solomon, ‘I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine,’ [Song of Songs 6:3](#). Someone once said that ‘The Song of Songs’ is the one book of the Bible dedicated solely to romantic love. They go on to say, ‘Isn’t it ironic that its initials are SOS!’ Our wives need to know

that they aren't just our wives; she needs to know that they're the wife of a man who treasures them and builds them up.

As Christ is the head of the church, so also the husband is head of the family. A wife should be submissive to her husband, and a husband should be submissive to his wife. A husband must sacrificially love his wife as Christ did for His church, and as Christ and His people are one, so also the husband and wife are one.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

'Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honour your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—'so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'
Ephesians 6:1-3

CHILDREN

So far, Paul has dealt with what it means for wives to submit to their husbands and how a husband should love his wife, and now he goes on to speak about why children need to obey and honour their parents, **Colossians 3:20**.

Reminding children that they must obey their parents is almost old school these days because we've got to the point in our society where children have almost more rights than their parents. But whether society accepts this command or not is irrelevant, because God says, 'it's right for children to obey their parents', **Ephesians 6:1**.

The greatest example of an obedient child is Jesus Himself, **Luke 2:51**. Mary and Joseph weren't well off; they were poor, **Luke 2:24**, and I'm sure that being poor brought about a lot of financial stress on their family.

And like most parents, I doubt very much if they were perfect parents, but nonetheless, Jesus lived obediently under their roof for around thirty years, **Luke 2:51**.

I believe there are times when children shouldn't obey their parents. For example, if our parents asked us to steal some food from the shop, should we obey them?

If our parents fell away from the Lord, and they asked us to stop attending worship, should we obey them? The Lord is above our parents, and there may come a time when you have to choose between obeying God and obeying your parents, **Luke 14:26-33**.

Remember in the Old Testament when Saul asked his son Jonathan to help him kill David? **1 Samuel 19:1**. There are times when children shouldn't obey their parents.

Jonathan refused to help his father to sin. He chose to obey God rather than his father, Saul, **1 Samuel 20:31-34**. And if children find themselves in a position where their parents want them to do something which goes against the Lord, then the child should refuse to obey them, **Matthew 10:37**.

What does it mean to 'honour' your father and mother? **Ephesians 6:2**. The word 'honour' basically means 'heavy,' which implies that our parents carry some weight in our lives. Our parents brought us into this world, they cared for us, nurtured us, fed us, clothed us, provided for our needs, loved us, kept us safe and watched us.

But it was God Himself who placed our parents over us. And He holds children especially accountable for our relationship with them because they share something of the honour of God Himself, **Ephesians 3:14-15**.

In other words, every family stems its existence, its concept and its experience from God. We're in a family and are under a father because God Himself created men and women in His likeness and created marriage and the family.

But how do you honour your parents? You listen carefully to their instructions, and we take any advice they give us seriously. Children often forget that their parents were young once, but now that they are older, they have many years of experience in life.

They've lived longer than their children, and they made some great choices in life, but also some bad ones. Children need to understand that their parents don't want them to make the same mistakes they made; they want them to be wiser and help them to make good decisions in life.

It was Mark Twain who said the following.

'I thought my parents were out of it, that they were way behind the times, that they just didn't get it, but once teenagers grow up and make it through that stage, there develops a new respect for the wisdom of parents.'

Not only are kids to honour their parents, listen to their parents and take their advice seriously, but they must also understand that God takes their obedience to their parents seriously too, **Deuteronomy 27:16 / Proverbs 20:20**. The Bible says that honouring your parents is a life and death choice.

The people who carry the most weight in a child's life should be their parents. Why? Because they've got a personal interest in their well-being, they've got a personal interest in their soul, and they want them to get to heaven more than anyone else on this planet, **John 10:10**.

Notice the reason Paul gives as to why children should honour their parents, **Ephesians 6:2-3**. Out of all the ten commandments, this is the only one that has the promise 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth,' **Exodus 20:12 / Deuteronomy 5:16**.

This doesn't mean that if children honour their parents, they'll live to one-hundred and get a letter from the king of England. There have been some godly people who've lived long, and there have been some who've died young, despite honouring their parents. Jesus was obedient to His parents, but He still died at thirty-three years of age.

So, what does it mean? The answer is simple, just like God, parents want things to go well for their children; they want them to have a long life. Too many kids' lives have come to an end prematurely simply because they haven't listened to their parents' advice, **Proverbs 15:5**.

FATHERS

'Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.'
Ephesians 6:4

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

'This idea would have been revolutionary in its day; in the first-century Roman Empire, fathers could do pretty much what they liked in their families. They could even sentence family members to death, **Genesis 22:1-14 / Genesis 38:24 / Deuteronomy 21:18-21**.'

If fathers want their children to know what God is like, then they must show them through their lives, their speech and their conduct. The way fathers conduct themselves is a reflection of the way God portrays Himself to us.

Paul says one of the goals of being a good father is to raise our children without discouraging them, **Colossians 3:21**. That word ‘discouraged’ carries with it the idea of losing heart and being spiritless.

When it comes to raising our children, fathers need to instill hope in their children’s lives; they need to show them what it means to be happy, confident and courageous.

In today’s society, children are being raised to put their hope in their looks, wealth, and popularity, but that’s not the kind of hope Paul has in mind. He’s speaking about giving our children hope in God, not things. Fathers shouldn’t discourage their children but give them hope in God.

Children need to experience happiness, the happiness which can only come from knowing God, **Romans 5:3-4 / Psalm 4:7-8**. Fathers shouldn’t discourage their children but fill them with joy in God by helping them to hope in God.

I don’t believe there’s anything wrong with instilling self-confidence in a child, but there comes a point when they can easily become too self-confident in themselves, **2 Corinthians 1:9**. We need to help them become more God-confident in their lives.

Paul not only says, ‘don’t discourage your children’, but he also says, ‘Fathers, do not embitter your children,’ **Colossians 3:21**. That word ‘embitter’ or ‘exasperate’ carries with it the idea of over-exercising your authority.

Remember, Paul said, ‘children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.’ **Colossians 3:20**. When we put these two sentences together, it’s clear that God has given parents tremendous authority and responsibility.

But Paul’s warning here for fathers is that they shouldn’t misuse that God-given authority.

Fathers, instead of discouraging their children, should train them and instruct them in God’s Word, **Proverbs 22:6**.

Solomon says children who learn righteous living in the home will have a standard to which they’re able to return if they wander into a life of sin. Fathers must teach God’s Word to their children, and they must show them an example of what it means to live as Christians.

MOTHERS

Although Paul doesn’t deal with mothers here, let me share a few thoughts on mothers because I don’t know of a more special group of people who have a huge impact on a child’s life than mothers, **2 Timothy 1:5**.

The first thing we learn concerning Timothy’s mother and grandmother is that they were women of sincere faith. Their faith was so sincere that Paul says to Timothy, ‘I see it in you’.

Now here’s the interesting part about Timothy’s mother and grandmother: we don’t know when these women became Christians, but what we do know is what Luke tells us: ‘Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek,’ **Acts 16:1**

It’s possible that Lois had been converted in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and had come home to tell her daughter. It’s also possible that both women were devout Jews who responded to Paul’s preaching when he visited Lystra. All we know about Timothy’s father is that he apparently was a Greek unbeliever.

Why a godly woman of faith like Eunice would marry a pagan man, no one knows, but Eunice’s story is in the Bible to give hope to women in mixed marriages. If her son, Timothy, could grow up to follow the Lord as he did, then God can do the same for your children, even if your husband isn’t a believer.

God intends for the father to take the lead in the spiritual training of the children, but mothers can still have a great impact even in situations where the father is opposed to God. This must involve having a sincere faith, **2 Timothy 1:5**. Sincere faith means that mothers sincerely live what they believe, they spend time with their kids, reading the Bible and praying together. Sincere faith means that mothers show their kids that they're not perfect but are always trying to please the Lord.

It means they develop godly character qualities and attitudes of submission, thankfulness, and joy in the Lord, demonstrating that kind of faith will have a huge impact on children's lives.

Timothy's father wasn't the man to instil that kind of faith in his son's life, but his mother and grandmother did just that. Timothy could see the Lord in them, and it attracted him to the Lord. One of the main ways to instil that faith in our children is by training them in God's Word, **2 Timothy 3:14**.

This tells us that Timothy was clearly influenced by God's Word; he was looking at his mother's and grandmother's lives and comparing the way they lived with the Scriptures. Over time, he became convinced that the Scriptures were reliable and true. Mothers should never underestimate the power of God's Word to save.

Godly mothers will not only train their children in God's Word, but they will also use God's Word to lead them to saving faith in Jesus, **2 Timothy 3:15**. Children need to know more than just that Jesus loves them and wants to be their friend.

When they get to a certain age, they need to know what God's Word says about the condition of their hearts. They need to understand why Christ came in the first place and died on that cross. They need to understand that they can't earn God's forgiveness but simply receive it.

They need to know that they are sinners in need of salvation. Godly mothers will not only train their children in God's Word and use God's Word to lead them to saving faith in Jesus. But they will also train their children how to live by God's Word, **2 Peter 1:3-4**.

Mothers don't have to go outside of God's Word to teach their children how to live, **2 Timothy 3:16**. We don't know what the lifelong impact Lois and Eunice had on young Timothy.

Yes, he was raised in the Scriptures, yes, he became a Christian and a close friend of Paul, but we mustn't lose sight of the fact that the foundation of his faith was laid by his godly mother and grandmother.

There's an important point which needs to be raised here concerning raising children. Just because mothers raise their children in the Scriptures, just because they showed them what saving faith looks like, just because they've demonstrated to them how the Christian life is, this is no guarantee that they will grow up to become Christians or stay faithful all their lives.

Now, mothers especially feel like they've failed if their kids don't become Christians or fall away, but they're not a failure; not once in the Scriptures does it say parents are responsible for their children becoming Christians or remaining faithful.

If God holds mothers accountable for anything, it's raising their child up in His ways, **Proverbs 22:6**, but becoming a Christian is their choice, and remaining faithful is their choice.

SLAVES AND MASTERS

'Slaves obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of

God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 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 favouritism with him.' Ephesians 6:5-9

How do you become a slave? You could become a slave in one of three ways.

1. Your father was a slave, and if his dad was a slave and he was born into that family, he was the owner's property. The owner could sell him and do whatever he wants with him.
2. Maybe he was a thief who stole money, and under Jewish or even Roman law, if you stole and could not pay back, then they could take you as a slave.
3. Maybe he was a murderer, but instead of killing him, they would decide to give him to the victim's family and the family could take him, sell him or do whatever they liked.

For whatever reason, a slave has no rights whatsoever; he was a piece of property, and his masters owned him. And at the slave market, they would auction them off; someone would buy them for so many shekels, and now the slave belongs to him.

Imagine when the slave's new master takes him home. Who is going to supply a bed for the slave? His master is going to supply a place for him to sleep. In the morning, where is the slave going to get food from? The slave doesn't have any food with him, so his master has to feed him. The master has to feed, clothe and provide a place for his slave to sleep.

The slave depended completely on the master for his life; he had nothing if the master did not provide it for him. That meant that the slave didn't worry because he simply depended on the master, but no matter what the master said, the slave had to do it.

There is a section in Deuteronomy which describes a special rule for slaves and their masters, **Deuteronomy 15:12-17**. On occasion, a Hebrew would end up purchasing a fellow Hebrew as a slave, **Deuteronomy 15:12**.

Can you imagine for a moment that you are a Hebrew and you have served me for six years? **Deuteronomy 15:12**. And congratulations, it's your seventh year, you've served me, and now you are free to go.

However, when we read on, the text says, 'and when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the LORD your God has blessed you,' **Deuteronomy 15:13-14**.

Now, if we were to apply this today, if I were to give the slave £5, the Lord would ask, is this supplying him liberally? No. Liberally is saying, 'here is a blank cheque, here are the keys to a brand-new car for you, which is parked outside, and there is a holiday villa which is yours waiting in Hawaii.'

The slave has just gone from being a slave with nothing to having a charge account, a car, and a place to live. I have supplied him liberally now. Now, any slave is saying, 'this is my lucky day', and most slaves would say, 'thank you very much' when the master says, 'ok, it's all yours, you're free to go'. But as the slave begins to go, he turns and says, 'I don't want to go'.

Deuteronomy 15:16 says, when the servant says, 'You know what, master, I appreciate all of this, but I'd rather stay, you take care of me, you give me life, I don't have to worry, can I stay?'

The Scripture says, 'If he says that, then you take him to the doorpost of your house'. The reason you would go to the doorpost is that there is a strong piece of wood, and then you take an awl, which is a metal object used to poke holes in leather.

You would take his ear, and you would take a hammer, and you would drive it through his ear, piercing his ear. And in that hole, you would hang something from it, which probably had his master's name on it, and for the rest of their life, they were your servant.

Though in this context Paul deals specifically with slave-master relationships that were the common work relationships of the Roman Empire, the principles that he discusses here should also be applied to employee-employer relationships.

In such societies, an employee isn't under bondage as a slave, for he can quit the job whenever he so desires, **1 Corinthians 7:17-24**. However, he is to treat his employer with no less respect and servitude than Paul here enjoins servants to respect their masters, **Ephesians 6:6**.

We would conclude that an employee in today's economic structure should treat his employer with even greater servitude in view of the fact that he has the freedom to quit the job.

In all things, the Christian employee must remember that it's his responsibility to make his employer successful. If, through irresponsible conduct, he does not, he will be out of a job and subsequently bring shame on the name of Jesus.

Slaves should obey their masters with a sincere heart, **Ephesians 6:6 / Colossians 3:23-25**. If they give grudging service, they will bring harshness upon them by their masters. Their service should be motivated by a heart that fears God.

In the Old Testament, the fear of God was in reference to our obedience to God. Those who feared God obeyed His commandments. In this context, when we fear God, we will be the best employees we can possibly be in response to the will of God.

'Work at it with all your heart', **Colossians 3:23**, should be the attitude of all Christians who serve either masters or employers, **Ecclesiastes 9:10 / Romans 12:11**. Paul's point is that Christianity changes the nature of our service to others.

Those employees who are in the world may give grudging service to their employers, but not so with Christians. Their attitude toward their masters and employers should be based on their fear of God, **1 Peter 2:18-25**. The service of the Christian is given to others as if they were working for the Lord, and not a master or employer, **Ephesians 6:6-7**.

When the Christian is working for their living, therefore, they are working on behalf of the Lord, **Ephesians 6:7**.

When we become a Christian, our attitude changes concerning our work in making a living. As Christians, we go to work every day for the Lord, not for people.

By working to earn a living to support our own necessities, we earn in order to help the poor and to support the Gospel being spread throughout the world, **Romans 10:15 / Philippians 4:17**.

Those servants and employees who do wrong to their masters and employers will reap what they sow. Both servants and masters, employees and employers should work in view of the fact that all men will stand in judgment before God, **Ephesians 6:8 / 2 Corinthians 5:10**.

Wood, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Ephesians 6:8**.

'Like Jesus himself, Paul does not shrink from referring to rewards.'

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Whatever people may do, Christ will reward all of his workmen at last. It is the consciousness which would enable the workman, even though he was a slave, 'to work zestfully and cheerfully even for a master who was unreasonable in his demands and impossible to please.'

As Christians, we must remember that all our service in this world to others is in view of the fact that God served our sin problem through Jesus. Paul continues to encourage masters to deal fairly with their servants, **Ephesians 6:9 / Colossians 4:1 / James 5:4.**

Christian masters must understand that they will also give an account before their Master in heaven. Therefore, they should deal with their servants or today's employees, in view of the fact that they will stand in judgment for their own behaviour.

It's an encouragement that is based on the concept that they should do to others as they would want the Lord to do to them, **Matthew 7:12.** We all have to remember, whether slave or master, that on Judgement Day, the only people that will walk through the pearly gates are those who respond to the words, 'well done, good and faithful servant!' **Matthew 25:21.**

'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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.' **Ephesians 6:10-12**

We are fighting a spiritual war, and we should wear our full spiritual armour to protect ourselves against the devil's evil schemes. We need protection, and the Lord gives us the protection, but we must wear the armour and don't put it down before the battle is over.

Most people are aware that there's always been a struggle between good and evil, even within ourselves, **Romans 13:12 / 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 / 2 Timothy 2:3 / 1 Thessalonians 5:8,** but our strength isn't found within ourselves, it's found in the Lord, **Ephesians 6:10 / Romans 8:31 / Romans 8:37 / 2 Corinthians 6:7 / 2 Corinthians 10:4 / 2 Corinthians 12:9 / Philippians 4:13.**

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

'The strength of his power' is a striking use of two words for might. There is probably no great difference in meaning here, but the combination puts emphasis on the importance of the divine power at work in believers.'

Wiersbe, in his commentary, says the following.

'Sooner or later every believer discovers that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground, and that he faces an enemy who is much stronger than he is-apart from the Lord.'

Remember Jesus has already won the victory over evil for Christians and Christians will share in this victory if they remain faithful, **Revelation 2:10.** The main reason Christians are to put on the whole armour of God is simple to understand, it helps us to stand against Satan's schemes, **Ephesians 6:11 / Ephesians 4:14 / 2 Corinthians 11:3 / 2 Corinthians 11:14 / 1 Thessalonians 2:18 / James 1:13-15.**

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'To be strong in the Lord, **Ephesians 6:10,** the Christian must 'put on', **1 Thessalonians 5:8,** the full armour that is God's. He supplies it for the believer, **Isaiah 11:5 / Isaiah 59:17.'**

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, **John 18:36-38,** but against evil spiritual forces in heavenly realms, **Ephesians 6:12.** This tells us that this world is not all there is. There is more going on, but that is momentarily out of our imagination, **John 12:31 / John 14:30 / John 16:11.**

These verses aim to make us aware that we are spiritual beings and that there is more than we can see. God is the ultimate spiritual being, and we are fighting against the spiritual beings that are in opposition to God. These evil beings make themselves known to us in every temptation and difficulty we face.

Our struggle is a spiritual battle against those spiritual beings who try to tempt us and deceive us into leaving God or going against His will, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 / Luke 22:53 / Romans 8:38 / Colossians 1:16 / Colossians 2:15.

These rulers, authorities and powers, Ephesians 6:12, are of the Devil, who is the source of all the evil that is seen in the world today. It's his dark forces that are at work today, deceiving people, 1 Timothy 4:1 / 2 Timothy 3:13.

Christians need to be aware of how the devil operates in order to protect themselves from falling away, Matthew 24:4-5 / Matthew 24:23-25 / Acts 20:30 / 2 Corinthians 4:4 / Ephesians 2:1-2 / 1 Peter 5:8.

The devil uses every deceptive means possible to deceive people, even Christians, Ephesians 4:17 / 2 Corinthians 2:11 / 1 Peter 2:11 / 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

THE FULL ARMOUR OF GOD

'Therefore, put on the full armour 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' Ephesians 6:13-17

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

Physical weapons are of no use to the Christian in spiritual warfare; we have to fight according to the strength that God has given us. We ought to do everything to stand firm; we have to be prepared before the swords start flying around.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Isaiah described God as a soldier, Isaiah 11:5 / Isaiah 59:17 / Isaiah 52:7 / Isaiah 49:2. Paul may have had these descriptions in mind, but he probably used this figure to describe God's protection because armoured Roman infantrymen were commonplace throughout the empire. One may have been guarding Paul when he wrote this epistle, Acts 28:16. Everyone knew what they looked like.'

Paul isn't speaking about camouflage; he doesn't tell us to hide, so that the devil will not find us, but he tells us to use our armour and fight against the evil spiritual beings, Psalm 36:12 / Galatians 2:11 / James 4:7 / Revelation 6:17. We must stand firm, Ephesians 6:13-14.

When we look at a railway line, we can tell when it's being used because it's shiny, but we can also tell when it's not being used because it looks old and rusty. We must let your armour shine, and we must use it, Isaiah 11:5 / Isaiah 59:17.

THE BELT OF TRUTH

We should wear the belt of truth first, Ephesians 6:14 / Philippians 1:27. The truth holds everything together. A life that is being built on lies will fall apart, and so, with the child of God, there can be no compromise in matters of truth, John 14:6.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The breastplate of righteousness, **Ephesians 6:14**, protects our vital organs. You can live without arms and legs, but not without vital organs. It's our right behaviour before God, **Ephesians 5:9**, and it speaks about our standing before God.

If our life is characterised by the right behaviour, then we are protected and stand firm. There is no place for lies and deceit in spiritual matters, and so, we should live upright as much as we are able.

It's not only doing the bad things but also doing the good things; leaving out doing good is also wrong! **Ephesians 4:24 / Ephesians 5:9 / Psalm 119:172 / Isaiah 49:17 / Romans 13:12 / Philippians 1:11 / 1 Thessalonians 5:8 / 1 John 2:29 / 1 John 3:7.**

FEET FITTED WITH THE READINESS THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Sandals with the Gospel of peace are the foundation, **Ephesians 6:15**. We should have peace with God and with all men, **Ephesians 2:14 / Ephesians 2:17**. Christ is our peace.

Christians can have the peace of mind and confidence that Jesus has all things under control, **Ephesians 1:20-23 / Hebrews 2:14-15 / 1 Peter 3:22 / Romans 10:15 / Philippians 4:7 / Isaiah 52:7 / 2 Timothy 1:12.**

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

The shield of faith, **Ephesians 6:16**, is used to protect against flaming arrows, which is a very real aspect of warfare, but it's a horrific picture. We need our faith for repelling the attacks of the enemy; our personal faith and confidence in Christ is very important, **1 John 5:4**.

Robertson, in his commentary, says the following.

'These darts were sometimes ablaze in order to set fire to the enemies' clothing or camp or homes, just as the American Indians used to shoot poisoned arrows.'

The more we study God's Word and hear God's Word, the more our faith will become stronger, **Romans 10:17 / 1 Corinthians 10:13 / 2 Timothy 2:15 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 2 Peter 3:18.**

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

The helmet of salvation, **Ephesians 6:17**, is worn to protect a rather important part of the body, knowledge of our deliverance. Christ has already won the victory, and we need to be sure about our salvation, **Philippians 2:12-13 / 1 John 5:13.**

The helmet protects the head, which often gets filled with doubts, but because the helmet protects the head, Christians should be able to keep their heads held high in the full assurance that they are saved, 1 Thessalonians 5:8 / 2 Timothy 1:12 / 1 John 2:1-6 / 1 John 3:19-24 / 1 John 5:18-20.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

The sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17, is the only weapon listed here, as the other things are for defence. We don't attack other people with the sword; we fight the evil spiritual beings with it, Isaiah 49:2.

There is power in the Word of God, not magical words but a conviction, a conviction that says, 'Satan you can fight me what you want, but I know that I have salvation in Christ and I know you have already lost the battle', Matthew 4:4 / Matthew 4:6 / Matthew 4:10 / Ephesians 4:14 / 2 Thessalonians 2:8 / Hebrews 4:12 / Revelation 1:16 / Revelation 19:13-15.

PRAYER

'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. 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, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.' Ephesians 6:18-20

Praying at all times in the Spirit means we communicate with Him and we ask Him to help us in the battle, Mark 14:34-38 / Romans 8:26-27 / Colossians 4:2. We should be bold enough to proclaim the Gospel, and we should pray for each other, that we are strong enough to stand firm and resist the temptations.

This is a letter of eternal value, and there is not one thing in this letter that is not of any value to us. If we don't pray in the Spirit, this is only lip service, praying without the heart.

Prayer means communicating with a spiritual being in a spiritual realm. It's our opportunity to communicate with our heavenly Father and to pray for the church family, Ephesians 6:18 / Luke 18:1 / Colossians 1:3 / Colossians 4:2 / Philippians 4:6 / 1 Thessalonians 5:17 / 1 Timothy 2:1.

Notice that Paul was humble enough to ask the Ephesians to pray for him too, Ephesians 6:19. Remember, he's in prison, and his future is uncertain; he doesn't know if he's going to live or die.

He tells them exactly what he wants them to pray for: boldness in sharing the mystery of the Gospel, Ephesians 6:19 / Ephesians 1:9 / Acts 8:35. He wants them to ask God to help him remain faithful in this spiritual warfare, 2 Corinthians 3:12. He had no doubts that God would answer their prayers.

Paul was Jesus' ambassador to Rome, Ephesians 6:20 / 2 Corinthians 5:20 / Philemon 9. He was working on behalf of God. The word 'ambassador', in Greek, is 'presbeuomen', and it is defined as a diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government to another.

Who were the ambassadors represented by the plural pronoun 'we'? In the Corinthians passage, we see the antecedent to the pronoun 'we' is Paul and the other apostles.

Why did Paul refer to himself and these other apostles as 'ambassadors on behalf of Christ'? To truthfully answer this question, we must examine nothing but the context in which the statement is made. Much of 2 Corinthians is Paul's proof of preaching a divine message with divine origins.

Paul was being accused by some brethren of preaching a message that would ‘commend’ himself to the brethren so that he could have personal gain, **2 Corinthians 3:1**.

Some went so far as accusing Paul, and his preaching companions, of scamming the brotherhood for money under the guise of there being a need in Judea for the saints, **2 Corinthians 12:16-18**. Paul, hearing that his motives and message preached were under attack, set out to prove the divine origin of his message.

The ambassadors’ objective was to reconcile the Corinthians to God, **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**. These men were divinely armed with revelation to accomplish this task. They had no personal agenda of gaining a following or getting rich. Their work involved the souls of men.

Paul and his preaching companions did not have a monopoly on preaching, **2 Timothy 2:2**. We do not have inspired men today to serve as ambassadors of Christ, yet we do have the command to use the power of the Gospel to save souls, **Matthew 28:19-20 / Mark 16:15-16**. Paul once again asks that they pray that he may be fearless in proclaiming the Gospel, **Ephesians 6:20 / Ephesians 6:19**.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The mystery of the gospel (i.e., God’s provision of salvation through Jesus Christ) needed defending in Rome because the Romans viewed Christianity as simply a sect within Judaism, **Acts 18:12-17**. The Jews saw it as a heretical religion, **Acts 21:27-28**.’

TYCHICUS

‘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. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.’ **Ephesians 6:21-22**

It’s clear that Paul had sent Tychicus with this letter to inform the Christians in Ephesus about his well-being, as they were obviously concerned about Paul, **Ephesians 6:21 / Acts 20:4 / Colossians 4:7-8 / 2 Timothy 4:12 / Titus 3:12**.

The reason for sending Tychicus was to encourage them with the good news of how God was working through him, **Ephesians 6:22 / Acts 14:26-28 / 2 Corinthians 1:6 / Colossians 4:7-8**.

Tychicus’s mission was to give the Ephesian church more information about Paul as well as to comfort and encourage them, **Acts 20:4 / Colossians 4:7 / Titus 3:12 / 2 Timothy 4:12**.

‘Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.’ **Ephesians 6:23-24**

Over and over again, Paul emphasises peace, especially among the Jews and Gentiles, **Ephesians 6:15 / Ephesians 2:14-18 / Ephesians 4:3 / Philippians 4:7**. God’s ideal is that peace is proclaimed throughout the world whilst the Gospel is being preached, **Ephesians 6:15**.

Along with peace, he sends his love, this same love which he spoke about earlier, **Ephesians 1:4-5**. This undying love when brought together with faith, tells us that Paul not only desired more faith for the Ephesians but faith with love, **Galatians 5:6 / Ephesians 1:4**. The Father and the Son are the authors of peace and love, **2 Corinthians 13:14**. Paul understood the importance of God’s grace, **Ephesians 2:8-9 / Romans 16:20**. He’s basically saying, may God continue to bestow His favour on all who love Jesus Christ with a pure conscience, **1 Corinthians 16:23 / 2 Corinthians 13:13 / Galatians 6:18 / Philippians 4:23 / 1 Thessalonians 5:28 / 2 Thessalonians 3:18 / Philemon 25**.