



The Book of Ephesians
Discussion/Reflection Questions

Ephesians 1:1-2

Like the book of Galatians, Ephesians opens with grace and closes with grace. First, Paul reminds the Ephesians that he is an apostle, which means “one who is sent” and he says – this is God’s will in his life. Then, he uses a familiar phrase used in all of his letters, wishing them both grace and peace. Take note of the word order that Paul always puts in his greetings. He puts grace first and peace second. We must first experience God’s grace before we experience his peace.

God is a God of both mercy and grace but those are not the same. Mercy is forgiveness and not receiving a punishment that is deserved, while grace is receiving a blessing we do not deserve. In God’s mercy, he has forgiven our sins and because of his grace we have reconciliation and peace with God. Is Christ your Savior? How have you experienced the peace of God in your life? When we do not have peace, often times it is because we are focusing on all the troubles this world brings rather than the mercy and grace God has already given us. In what area of your life do you need more peace today?

Ephesians 1:3-10

God has blessed us and so we must bless him in return. Our salvation does not just change us, it gives us a personal relationship with God. God loves us and has chosen us and adopted us as his children. His blessings are not material blessings, but spiritual blessings secure in heaven for us.

You are so loved! Are you living loved? If you minimize what God has done for you then you will not have much of an outpouring of love back to God. So, pause for a moment and consider...

GOD chose you.
God CHOSE you.
God chose YOU.

God sees you, desires you, wants you and has chosen you! We are made in God's image – he wants the same thing in return – to be seen, pursued, desired, wanted and chosen. I commend you for committing to study the book of Ephesians. I pray you complete this study and that you never stop pursuing God. Take time right now to write out words of love and blessing to God for the spiritual blessings he has given you.

Ephesians 1:11-14

Through God's great love for us, he chose and predestined us for adoption. Those who have heard the word of truth and believed in him, receive the Holy Spirit which acts as a seal, guaranteeing our inheritance in heaven.

Here we see God's sovereignty at work in our salvation as he chose and predestined us. We also see man's cooperation, as we heard the truth and believed. The Holy Spirit is present in every single believer. Isn't that wonderful? God is with you all the time and his promises are sure. You are guaranteed an eternal life in heaven. No one can break the seal of God! In what area of your life are you struggling to trust God and how does knowing this truth give you more confidence in the Lord?

Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul is praying for the church. He is praying that they would have God's wisdom and knowledge and that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to know of the great power of God. Paul was not praying that they would get the power of God but that they would know it. He wants them to experience it.

Paul speaks of the eyes of our heart being enlightened. Our heart is the center through which we live our lives. The eyes of our hearts need to see and to literally understand the knowledge of the exceeding greatness of God's power towards us. This power is displayed through the work of Christ being raised from the dead and being seated in heavenly places. He has put all things under him and has defeated the enemy and death. Have the eyes of your heart seen – really seen and taken in this power? Take time right now to ponder the greatness of his might! How have you experienced the power of God in your life?

Ephesians 2:1-10

We were dead in our trespasses and sins BUT God! God being rich in mercy and love for us has made us alive with him. And we are not just saved through our faith but by HIS grace, through our faith. It is not a result of any of our good works or good

behavior so that God receives all the glory. And now we are his workmanship. The word workmanship in Greek is *poima* which means a beautiful poem or a work of art.

There is no greater gift than the gift of our salvation! You are God's *poima* - his work of art - his poem. Isn't that beautiful? And as you do the good works that he prepared in advance - specifically for you to do - he is actively making you into a beautiful new creation. You see works do not save us but instead, after our salvation - we are compelled to do good works for his glory. What is the work that you feel God has called you to do? How are you being faithful to do these good works for his glory?

Ephesians 2:11-21

God not only reconciles us to him through Christ, but he brings unity in the body of Christ, across cultural divides and racial divides. The Gentiles had no hope and God broke the dividing wall of hostility between the Jews and Gentiles and reconciled us all to him, through Christ. Those who were once far from Christ were made near, not through their works or their daily reading of God's word but through the blood of Christ and his work on the cross.

Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross is the only reason we are able to be brought near to God. It is not because we do good works, go to church, give money, read our Bibles or are born of a certain nationality, that we can be near to God. It is Jesus' deep, sacrificial and saving love for you, that has brought you near to him. Do you feel near to God today? Why or why not? Remember that our nearness is not based on the good and bad things we do but on the blood of Christ. God is near even when he does not feel nearby.

Ephesians 3:1-13

Paul suffered as a prisoner for sharing the gospel with the Gentiles. He knew that though it was the Roman Government who put him in prison, it was the Lord's will for his life. God gave him the gospel to steward. He calls the gospel a mystery three times in this passage. A mystery is something that is inexplicable or hard to understand. But through the revealing of God's grace to the church, the gospel is made known and it is not just made known to man, but also to the spirit world, the rulers and authorities in heavenly places. And so, Paul does not want them to be discouraged by his suffering because God is being glorified.

The wisdom of God is displayed through the church, to the angels. God doesn't use the angels to reveal himself to us but instead he uses us to reveal himself to the angels. Have you considered that God has called you to something far greater than just your own salvation? God is not only teaching the universe a beautiful lesson through the

blood of Jesus and the unifying of the church across divides – but also through YOU! There is an unseen world watching. What do they learn from your walk with God and your local church? In what ways are they seeing the wisdom of God displayed in your church? (for further study about the angels watching the church, read these passages: 1 Peter 1:12, 1 Timothy 5:21, Hebrews 13:1-3, Matthew 13:39-43)

Ephesians 3:14-19

The Jews normally prayed standing with their hands in the air but here, Paul is now kneeling in prayer. This is a position of humility. As Paul considers God's amazing eternal plan, he cannot help but to fall to his knees and direct his prayers to the heavenly father. Down through the ages, the advancement of the gospel has been unstoppable even when those in the church have been imprisoned like Paul. Just as he prayed for the church at the start of his letter, he is praying that the church would be strengthened and would know the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love.

Do you have a favorite place and posture for prayer? The Bible shows us that there are many different ways to pray but we see in scripture, Solomon, Ezra, David, Daniel, Stephen, Peter, Paul, Jesus and many more kneeled in prayer. Let's follow their example today and change our posture for prayer. Would you join me in humbling yourself by kneeling in prayer? While you are on your knees, pray for whatever God has laid on your heart along with praying for the both the universal church (Christians around the world) and your local church that you attend. After you finish praying answer this question: Did changing your posture change your prayer? In what ways?

Ephesians 3:20-21

Here we have a doxology. A doxology is a short song of praise at the end of a prayer or song. As Paul finishes the first three chapters of Ephesians, he cannot help but to pause and simply give God glory because God can do more than we can even ask or imagine. He uses the words "exceedingly abundantly" to express that it's beyond what the human mind can even measure or describe. And so, through all generations, may the redeemed glorify him forever and ever. Amen.

God can do more than we ask or think. Think of all you have ever asked God for – he can do MORE than that! Think of all that you have imagined God could do – he can do MORE than that! Our human minds cannot imagine or comprehend all God can do and is doing in the world right now. How does knowing and thinking about how beyond comprehension our God is, bring you peace as you go through hard times? How can you trust him more today and how can you pass this on to the next generation?

Ephesians 4:1-7

After looking at all God has done for us, Paul calls us to live right with humility, gentleness, patience and love for one another. When we live this way, we will be maintaining unity and peace in the family of God. This unity comes because of all we share as one body, one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father. All of this should surpass any differences we have in the church.

You see we don't live right to receive God's love, instead because we have received God's love -- we live right. Our character matters! Evaluate yourself right now and write below which areas you need to work on. In what areas are you tempted to be prideful and how can you be humbler? Would others describe you as gentle? Why or why not? Is anyone trying your patience right now? Pray for strength. Who do you need to love more? Is there anything you can do more to bring greater unity and peace in the body of Christ?

Ephesians 4:8-16

God has gifted some of the saints to speak his words, preach the good news, and teach and build up the church. This is both to expand the church and strengthen the unity of the body of believers. These leaders equip each believer to live out the calling God has on their own individual life. Paul uses the analogy of the human body to show them that they are not to use their gifts for their own benefit but instead to see the entire body grow and work properly.

We cannot grow to maturity in isolation. We need one another. We need pastors and teachers to lead us and we need each other, to build one another up in love. This is how a healthy church works. Are you sometimes tempted to isolate yourself from other believers? Do not do this - it will stunt your growth. Who is someone that has built you up either through them using their gift to teach you or through their love? Who is someone from your church that needs built up right now? Name one thing you can do today to build up the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:17-24

When we become new in Christ, that means we are exchanging an old life for a new one. This requires us to actively put off our old self and put on the new. It's not a feeling - it's an action and our life is to become all new in the way we think and live. This only comes about through the renewing of our minds but it's more than just head knowledge, it is heart knowledge. It's knowing that Christ is always with us and so we want to walk in a manner worthy of him.

The analogy of putting off the old self and putting on the new is one like the changing of clothes. Think about what it's like when you take old clothes and donate them or throw them away. You are done with them forever. Now think about when you go shopping and buy brand new clothes. When you put those on you feel different. It feels good. This is what it is like when we are saved. The old self that was corrupt should be gone – let it go - the new self that is both righteous and holy has come. In what specific ways have you changed since your salvation? Which old ways have you put off? What new ways have you put on? Are there any lingering old ways that you need to actively put off? What is holding you back?

Ephesians 4:25-32

The new man tells the truth. He does not steal but works hard for what he has, and he does not make an excuse for his anger. He is careful with his words to not grieve the Holy spirit. He let's go of bitterness and slander and is kind, tenderhearted and forgiving.

Anger is a heart issue. The last thing we want to do when we are angry is be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving. We must not let our hearts grow calloused but instead be tenderhearted. I once heard a preacher say that the word anger is one letter short of danger. Anger is dangerous. It cripples relationships and gives the devil a foothold in our lives. We are not told to control our anger but to get rid of it. It's important that we don't wait and let our anger grow but instead resolve matters quickly. How do you act when you are angry? Are you a little out of control? Do you resolve matters quickly? How is your heart condition right now? Do you have some anger towards someone you are holding onto? It's easy to let years turn into decades and to hold bitterness in our hearts but that will give the enemy a foothold. What do you need to either let go of or resolve today? Don't wait. I encourage you to take care of it before sundown today.

Ephesians 5:1-14

At one time, we were not just in darkness but darkness itself. But God! Now, he has made us light. We are the light of the world and so we are called to walk as children of light. This means that the sins we once walked in like anger, bitterness, sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, foolish and crude talk or other shameful things, must all be a part of our past.

We are children of the light so we must live like it. The fruit of the light is good, right and true and it makes visible the darkness. Our light exposes the works of the darkness. Paul does not tell us to avoid people in darkness but to avoid the unfruitful works of the darkness. If a bunch of lights are all in one room, while it may be a very bright and

pleasant room – it isn't helping those in darkness much. But if you are in a very dark room and a bunch of lights are brought in, the light is a huge blessing. Your light in this dark world is needed. Are you shining your light for Jesus? Are you tempted to just hang out with other lights? Who is in darkness that you need to bring light to today? Pray for this person in your life right now and ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to be a light in their lives.

Ephesians 5:15-20

Paul says to look carefully at how we walk and be wise. Time is not to be wasted. Our time is limited so we must be wise in how we live and make the most of all the opportunities God gives us. Instead of being like the world and getting drunk with wine, we are to be full of the Spirit and singing hymns and spiritual songs and giving thanks to God for everything.

Our eyes are the windows to our life. Physical vision problems are common. It is estimated that around 75% of adults wear glasses. That's a lot of us! Spiritual vision problems are just as common. Too many of us – me included – get caught up in seeing the world around us, just in the physical sense. When we do that, we lose our spiritual focus. We must correct our spiritual vision problems. Pause right now and look. Look carefully at how you are walking. Are you being wise? Are you making the best use of your time? What changes do you need to make?

Ephesians 5:22-33

Paul quotes Genesis 2:24, when he says *"a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh."* This shows that this was not just said of Adam and Eve's marriage but of every married man and woman today. God wants oneness in marriage and that oneness displays the mystery of Christ and the church. Jesus wants more than just a shallow friendship with us. He wants us to be united with him.

Paul gives believers clear instructions for how husbands and wives are to love each other. Christian marriages should look different from the world because they are a picture of Christ and the church. Five times in just these few short verses on marriage, Paul speaks of Christ and the church. If you are married, in what ways is your marriage like Christ and the church? Are there any instructions in this passage that you need to work on? If you are unmarried, in what ways does this passage of scripture reveal Christ's deep love for you, as part of the church body – his bride?

Ephesians 6:1-4

As parents, we have the responsibility to teach our children how to obey. This is what is best for the family in the long run. But our authority as parents is not to be used to rule over our children harshly, instead a warning is given to not provoke our children to anger. Our child's feelings matter to God and they should matter to us as well.

As adults, we no longer have to obey our parents, but the principle of honor still stands. I know this is a messy and complex issue for those who have had very bad parents. Some of your parents may have provoked you to wrath by their unkindness, neglect or evil towards you. They may never understand how much they have hurt you but God cares. They disobeyed God and should never have treated you the way that they did. For those whose parents have deeply wounded you, I want to encourage you to honor your parents from afar by writing a prayer for them below. For those who are in contact with your parents, what is one way you can honor your parents this week? Consider a thank you note, a phone call, a word of encouragement or praise, a listening ear, a helping hand or a prayer together.

Ephesians 6:5-9

As believers, we are not to work only for our boss but ultimately, we work for the Lord. This means we are to be respectful at work. Our attitude should be sincere and honoring to the Lord. We are to try to please the boss, even when they are not watching because God is always watching.

God cares about how we work. When we get saved, the way we work should change. We should be hard workers; whose work reflects a desire to honor God in all we do. All of us work whether we have a boss or not. Consider your work ethic, is it honoring to the Lord? Do you work hard willingly, or do you find yourself grumbling and complaining? If you have a boss, is your boss pleased with you? How can you honor God more in the work you do?

Ephesians 6:10-20

As we read through the book of Ephesians, we now come to a very popular passage of scripture in the Bible. Let's put it into context. Paul has just spent 5 chapters talking about all Jesus did for us on the cross and the way a believer is to conduct themselves. And so, in light of all of this, there is a call to be strong in the Lord and take a stand against the devil and his schemes. There is a spiritual battle that cannot be avoided that all believers are in. Paul calls for prayer because our battle is not against flesh and blood but against evil and we cannot fight this battle and have victory without the armor of the Lord.

Though it is easy to focus on just what we see with our flesh, we must not ignore the fact that we are all in a spiritual battle with forces we cannot see. God has given us his armor and it is sufficient to battle the enemy. Paul tells us to put it on. This is a verb. This is something we have to do. We have to put on the WHOLE armor of God. Read down through the list of the armor. Are any of the pieces missing in your life? Are you battle weary? Paul closes this passage reminding us to pray at all times. Pray alone, pray in groups, pray in the car, pray before dinner, pray in the shower, pray out loud, pray silently, pray standing up and pray kneeling down. Keep on praying for yourself and for other believers who are in the battle with you.

Ephesians 6:21-24

Paul closes the book of Ephesians the same way he began, with a focus on grace and peace. This is a blessing spoken over all those who love God with an undying and sincere love.

Do you love God? Tell him how much you love him right now.

Though we might be in the midst of a spiritual battle, Paul reminds believers that God's grace and peace is with us. How have you experienced more of God's grace and peace during your time studying the book of Ephesians? What is the biggest lesson you have learned from this book of the Bible?

May you continue to experience God's grace and peace. Keep walking with the King!