

# **A Walk Through Ephesians**

## **Introduction**

*Paul is in house arrest in Rome, and Epaphras brings him news and a gift. The believers in Philippi, ever supportive and caring for Paul, have sent funds so he can pay for his lodging and expenses. But there's news of conflict and false teaching in Colosse, Laodicea and even Philippi.*

*Paul then pulls his thoughts together and writes three letters via Timothy, and sends them through Tychicus to Colosse, Philemon, and Ephesus.*

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## Chapter 1

'This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. '

Ephesians 1:1-3

The core of our message is simply grace and peace. God's grace gives us life, a life we didn't deserve. And His peace floods us, reminding that there is no judgement left against us. We have every blessing ever thought possible - all because of Jesus! We are one with Him!

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'Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. '

Ephesians 1:4-6

Before. Even before the world. First things first, God chose us. He loved us, before we did anything lovable. He chose us before we did a single thing commending choice. He simply loved and chose us, to be holy, and to be without fault. He decided on us, before He even made the world. He adopted us as His children. And He takes great delight in us.

We didn't earn it, yet it's true. We are made His children. And He knows how this plays out. No matter the battle, He has won it. No matter the wall, He has climbed it. No matter the obstacle, He is already over it. And you and I are His kids.

So we stop, lift our hands, look to Him and say "thank you." We praise Him for amazing works in us! We commend Him. We honor Him. We trust Him. We follow Him. We are family!

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'He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. '

Ephesians 1:7-10

Amazing God has showered us with His kindness and grace. He has pulled us to Himself, made us His family, and rescued us forever. And then He has begun showing us His plans. He will complete all of them, and they include us. We are rescued from despair and death, and filled with His Spirit. He has shown us His plan to pull everything in the world together in Christ. And we receive His wisdom and understanding. We are His kids, children, washed and redeemed, and with Him as He does all of this!

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One five year old in Pittsburgh exclaimed "I am excited!" as we talked about lots of things. Well I am excited too. With all the Lord is doing, are you excited?

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'Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you.

And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him. '

Ephesians 1:11-14

When God pulls everything together in Christ, He gathers both Jewish believers and Gentile believers, into His own family. Together we bring praise to God, giving Him glory. And He has given us His Holy Spirit to live in us, to lead us, to teach us, to guide us, to empower us, to bring His own self into our lives. And all this is a reminder that we have an inheritance forever with the Lord! We have a place and a piece in His Kingdom. And all this because He decided to love us and redeem us to Himself!

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'Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. '

Ephesians 1:15-18

I've heard of your trust and hope in Christ. You've poured out love, and yet you are going through it. Life isn't easy for the believer. But God is good, amidst the struggle. Wisdom and insight can help you navigate, help you maintain the course, help you recover from the valleys, and keep you on course. In all this your knowledge of God will increase, your trust will grow, and you will continue forward. This is the hope and confidence we believers have. And this promise will bring us home to glory with Jesus as well.

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'I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.'

Ephesians 1:19-23

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God who adopted us as His kids, has put all of His power in us. We who believe are the core of His engine to power the world. Would you like to see change? We have His resurrection power. Would you like to see healing? We carry His Spirit, the same that resurrected Jesus from the grave. Would you like to get past hard habits? Would you like to overcome huge obstacles? God has put His power in only one place: His body of believers. That's you. That's me. Where shall we ask Him to work this power today?

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## Chapter 2

"Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature.

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. '

Ephesians 2:1,3-7

Dead. We were dead. You were dead. We lived in our sins, we were disobedient, and under God's anger. Everybody is here from the beginning.

But God raised us up with Christ. He is full of love for us, and mercy for our sorry state, and He did something about it! We are in Christ, we are seated with Him in heaven, and we are completely washed anew. And He shows this amazingly new and clean nature as an example for eternity. All who trust in Christ for their redemption and recreation are welcomed in! You are welcome in too!

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'God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. '

Ephesians 2:8-10

Simply, when we believed. This is when it happened. His grace rushed in, flooded us, sealed, established His forever reign in us. And it's a gift, not earned. Nothing from God is earned. All of it is His giving, His choosing, His compelling. He goes after everyone, because He wants each one with Him!

So look at what's next. He made us new, so that we can live in all the great things He has planned. He has good things, good works, set out for us to do. I can't wait!

So what is on your dance card? What's next? Go do His work!

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'Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been

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united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. '

Ephesians 2:11-13

Don't forget! Once you were far away from God. I was too. We were outsiders, separate from the promises of God, and outside of His chosen people. We didn't know His promises, and we had no hope of life. But now we have been joined with God's Son, Jesus Christ. He welcomes us in, covers our sins, and has washed us completely new. What a life we now have, with the Lord as our Lord. Never forget!

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'For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations.

He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. '

Ephesians 2:14-18

Look what He's done! He brought peace, unity, and destroyed hostility. He ended the law, and created one new people. In His own body he bore the break, carried the curse and destroyed the enmity. Now we can all come to the Father because Jesus has opened the door wide and invited us. Come on in!

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'So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.'

Ephesians 2:19-22

What an amazing change! We were far off and lost. But now we are no longer strangers and foreigners. We are citizens, with all of God's holy people. We are members of God's family. We are part of His house. We are joined in the construction that God made beginning with the prophets and the apostles. And Jesus is the capstone, the cornerstone who holds the whole house together.

We are now the temple of God - He lives in us. Every one of us gentiles and Jews are part of this Holy building, and He pours His Spirit to live in us forever. We are in.

Hear His Spirit. Talk with Him. Sit quietly before Him. Hear His voice. Follow His leading. Oh what is ahead? I am not sure but it is good!

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## Chapter 3

'When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . . assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles.

As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. '

Ephesians 3:1-6

Paul was given insight into God's eternal plan. And His plan is that both Gentiles and Jews would be welcomed as children, adopted, and will share in God's riches. These riches are all the gifts of Holy Spirit, deep love, full joy, blessed peace, enduring patience, sweet kindness, a heart for goodness, soft gentleness, and strong self-control. He also sets a path before us, good works to walk in, and provides what we need as well. And so, Paul bows before the Lord in worship and praise!

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'By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. '

Ephesians 3:7-11

When God picks a criminal and cleans him up, He gets about His real plan. And what a plan! God picked Paul to bring a message to the world, to nations, kings and rulers. The message is for every people, and includes you!

And the message is that all people are welcome into God's Kingdom. He has made each one a part, and together they are His family. The plan was kept secret from the beginning, but is now declared for every nation, for every people, for every culture, for every tribe, in every language, that God welcomes you. In Christ is salvation, propitiation, restoration and reconciliation. He welcomes you!

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'Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored. When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the

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Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. '

Ephesians 3:12-19

Oh the deep roots of Jesus, growing into all of your life! He brings so much when we join Him. Salvation for sin, salve for healing, cleansing for righteousness, life for death, blessing for curse, abundance for poverty, glory for shame, acceptance for rejection, a new identity. Have you joined Jesus' Kingdom? Have you let Him bring all these into your life? What are you holding that belongs to Him? It's time to live fully in His Kingdom, where He is Lord, where Spirit leads, and where Father's love pours out through you.

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'Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.'

Ephesians 3:20-21

When we see all the Lord has done, redeeming us, gathering us from all nations to Himself, and leaving no people or cultural in the dark, we get excited. We raise our hands in worship, and our voices to exclaim Him. What amazing work He has done, all out of love for all of us. So we join with Paul and offer our praise and give glory to Him for all He does, and keeps doing!

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## Chapter 4

'Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. '

Ephesians 4:1-4

Having raised our hands and hearts in worship, we are beckoned to live worthy of Christ. We've been called together with all the saints, to be His people. And Paul reminds us that we have a choice. How shall we then live? So pour everything into living worthy of the call. Humility and gentleness, patience and kindness. These must be the markers that show up when we show up. There is one Spirit who calls us, and one body in which we have been placed. So Let's be unified, caring and loving and doing the work of the Lord together!

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'There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of all,  
who is over all, in all, and living through all.

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. '

Ephesians 4:5-7

We are one church, one family. There is but one Jesus, who is Messiah for all of us. And we share Him. It's one faith. We join together in one baptism. No matter where we are from, we are one family in Him!

And then comes the amazing part. He is the Lord, the Master. And, He has given gifts, roles for each of us. These are ministry gifts, which are given individually. Each of us has a place, a role, a job. And the family is built up better because of what Jesus has given! I am excited! Aren't you excited too?

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'That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. '

Ephesians 4:8-10

Jesus, the one in whom we are all baptized, has gone from the depths of earth to the heights of heaven. He has been to all of it, seen all of it, and is the only Lord of all of it. He fills the entire universe with Himself. There's not a single part that is foreign to Him. There's not a single person, family, tribe, nation or people that is foreign to Him.

In all of these He has made one church, one gathering of people who believe. And He leads, guides,

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and gives gifts. There's gifts for every believer, anointings that make life amazing. Two things you need, a repentant heart to come to Jesus, and a willingness to go with Him. Are you ready? Let's get to work!

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'Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. '

Ephesians 4:11-13

When Christ ascended to heaven, He gave gifts to the church. What gifts? Apostles who would lead as we carry the gospel to the nations. These men and women break through barriers to bring Jesus to all peoples. And then there are Prophets, to declare and proclaim the gospel message. They declare what God is doing and saying! God has also given evangelists who will contend for the faith in Jesus. These have a gift to bring lost people to our savior. They work in stadiums, fields, living rooms and coffee shops. God has given pastors to care for the body, interact and encourage the sad and weary, and help with challenging situations. And God has given teachers, who instruct all of us in the nuances of our faith. They explore God's Word and illuminate the truth He has given.

The results are amazing. We are all built up, encouraged, strengthened and equipped for the work that belongs to every member of Jesus' church!

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'Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. '

Ephesians 4:14-16

Look what happens when the teachers teach, the shepherds care, the apostles break new ground, evangelists declare the good news. Everyone in the church is made stronger. All members grow in faith, learn the truth, and are not easily swindled by lies and tricks of the devil.

We thank the Lord for gifted men and women. And we pray for them, to keep doing their part, so the whole body will grow. Are you continuing in the calling placed over you? Maybe you've lost sight of the big picture. Here's the truth, you must keep on with your part. The role and calling on you will bring fruit. Maybe you don't see it. But the Lord has gifted you and placed a road before you. Walk that road! Follow that path. Keep going, the whole body needs you in your part!

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'With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because

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they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ.

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. '

Ephesians 4:17-24

We've turned to Christ, and been made family. Now we have choices. But choose the good, not the old. Skip the impure thoughts, lies and deceit. Instead choose new thoughts, new attitudes. Choose our new nature, to be like God in purity and character. Be righteous. Be separate from the world, holy to Him. It's our choice. So choose right!

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'So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.'

Ephesians 4:25-32

It's time to live as Christ's family. Stop the lies, the stealing, the harsh words. Don't let anger have any place. Speak truth and love one another. Be kind, tender toward one another. Jesus has forgiven everything. We should live like that is the truth!

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## Chapter 5

'Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. '

Ephesians 5:1-4

Here's how kindness and forgiveness plays out. We live lives that care for others, serve others, love others. We flee from sin, from immorality, from impurity and from greed. And while we are at it, let's drop the obscene talk, foul language and coarse jokes. There's no need for these in the family of love and light!

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'You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. '

Ephesians 5:5-9

Work for the Kingdom of Heaven. Set aside sin. Set aside immorality. Set aside impurity. Set aside greed. We've been called by Jesus into His family. These sins pull a person away from God. Instead, draw near to Him. Love Him and His Word. Once we were darkness but have now become light in Christ. We must live as people of light!. And the fruit will follow!

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'Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

“Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead,  
and Christ will give you light.” '

Ephesians 5:10-14

God gives His Son as a savior without cost and without measure. Jesus is completely free, a washing of our sins and a return of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. He completely saves us, who cannot save ourselves at all.

And then comes our response. What are we to do next? We are to carefully strive to please our Lord. What is pleasing to Him? These things we must do. What is displeasing to Him must be forsaken. We take no part in those dark deeds. Instead we live for Christ.

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So there's a call on us to arise, to let Christ shine His light through us! Let's live for Him!

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'So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. '

Ephesians 5:15-20

Saved by grace, and now living it out by the Holy Spirit. He is at work in us, through us. So we turn from selfishness, drunkenness, and thoughtlessness, to love, joy and kindness in the Holy Spirit. We trade drunkenness for praise and singing. And we are thankful to the Lord for everything! Let's see what Holy Spirit will lead us to next!

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'And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. '

Ephesians 5:21-24

How do the decisions get made? First of all, they get made in the submitting to one another. We submit to one another as we recognize Christ is in the other. We love and follow Him, and He is at work in her. He is at work in Him. So the wife is to submit, and not conflict, recognizing Christ as head of the church. The husband is likewise the head of the family. But there's more - see the next part!

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'For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. '

Ephesians 5:25-30

This is the harder job! Do you remember what the world was like before Christ came and died for us all? We were a helpless, hopeless mess. And yet Jesus gave up everything that was his right, set those all aside, and died. He did that to give us life.

OK, husbands, this is for you. This is what we are to give up for our wives. There is no promise for her to follow. This is entirely on us. So we give up everything, every time. We love her, care for her, and protect her, doing everything for her. Jesus did that for us!

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OK married people, go and do likewise!

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'As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.'

Ephesians 5:31-33

Husbands, love! Wives, respect! Leaving father and mother means a new leadership in the family, Husband and Wife united as one! Together we make great marriages, and we model the love of Jesus given to His Church. God's love for His Church will never end, and our commitment to marriage is to strive for the same! This is how we do it!

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## Chapter 6

'Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."'

Ephesians 6:1-3

This one is for the children. Kids of all ages need this reminder. Honor, respect, be kind to, consider, care for and bless your parents. God has built a family and the ones to whom you owe so much are your parents. They aren't perfect, but that's not the point. Your heart wins or loses here, and your life gains or suffers. Are you going through tough times? How are you doing with your parents? Are you seeing blessing? How is your relationship with your parents? God wants us to live long in the land that He gives us. Honoring your parents is a foundation for your success.

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'Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. '

Ephesians 6:4

Paul gives three principles for fathers and their children. And this applies to mothers as well. Regarding training and instruction, the rules need to be reasonable and clear, so that the kids are able to follow. We can't create such a system that the kids are unable to obey their parents.

Regarding the instruction, we need to lead and guide in the truths of God, so the kids learn who He is, how He loves us, what He desires, and how following Him plays out. And along with this, there is discipline that corrects disobedience.

So do set out His plan for them. Share His love. Teach them from His word. Correct when the kids decide to disobey. Parenting is a balance, and is hard. And the Lord knows it! He has set out this passage so we know where the guardrails are, and we as parents can follow.

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'Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. '

Ephesians 6:5-8

"But I don't like my boss." Or, "I hate going to work." Jesus calls you to Himself. Work for Him. Because of Jesus, show deep respect and submission to your boss. Do everything you can to please them, even when they are not looking. And our reward comes from God, not from man. He has placed you in the role, so go for it, and do your very best for Him!

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## A Walk Through Ephesians

'Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. '

Ephesians 6:9

Masters, treat your slaves like the father should to his children. Treat them like the husband should to his wife. Instruct them. Love them. Give everything up for them. Don't frustrate them. Serve them. Correct them. Do everything in kindness as we all stand before God as equals. Employers, this is for you. Managers, this is for you. Supervisors, this is for you. Leaders, this is for you. Every single person is made in God's image and has His interests and concerns. None of us are God, each of us are under God. Let's get the relationships right, because God's love is over all of His people and fills all of His actions. He is why we are in our roles!

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'A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. '

Ephesians 6:10-13

The final word to leaders, to husbands, to wives, to children, to slaves, and to masters is Be strong. We live our lives out amidst a battle. And the world is watching. Jesus said the thief comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy. He stands against the Lord, and he works to decimate you and I.

So be strong. Be filled with God's mighty power. And put on your armor, you'll need it. Every resource the Lord sets out, we must put on. Then, and only then, will we be able to stand against satan and his gang of thugs. The Lord has equipment, and we will look at them next. But prepare yourself, by being strong, and availing of all the Lord gives you.

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'Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. '

Ephesians 6:14

Our battle is actually won by the Lord already. But the battle has not concluded, and we are faced with evil every day. Satan and his minions want to destroy all that the Lord is doing, and he attacks us.

So we first must stand, not run away. We are strengthened first and foremost by the truth. We wear the belt of truth. We learn the truth, share the truth, defend with truth, and stand firmly on the truth. God's word is the truth.

God's truth includes that we are right, we are righteous, as we stand in Jesus. His righteousness is our armor, protecting us. As we stand in Him, we wear His righteousness as our own, and we are protected.

Put on the belt of truth and His armor of righteousness!

## A Walk Through Ephesians

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'For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. '

Ephesians 6:15

How do we stand firm wearing shoes of peace? We choose to rest in Christ, and trust Him. We do not allow anxiety to overwhelm us. We cast out fear, and return to the solid truth that God is our assurance. So we have peace. These shoes of peace allow us to stand, they allow us to move as the Lord leads. Our confidence is entirely in Him. So put on the sandals of peace, and let the Lord be our firm foundation. We shall stand strong.

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'In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. '

Ephesians 6:16

Arrows are coming. Stinging darts. Quiet attacks will surprise you from unexpected places. Suddenly you are under attack. A conflict rises with a friend. A family member doesn't understand. An offhand comment stings. A coworker disagrees. Somebody makes a hurtful criticism. Words can hurt. Little offenses add up. Every one of these flaming arrows comes from the devil. He wants to steal your security, kill you, and even destroy you. (John 10:10)

Jesus has given us a shield, the shield of faith. Every day we must pick that shield up and move it to intercept the dart. We already have a belt of truth that strengthens us. The truth is already settled. We have righteousness which covers our body. Christ was declared us clean and restored. And we are standing on sandals of peace.

Still the darts come, the arrows, flaming and hurtful. So we hold up our faith in Jesus. He really has done it for us. His righteousness is mine, and His plans are fully at work. I take my faith, and I quench that angry word, that cruel comment, the terrible thought. Faith keeps those at bay. My God is at work, and I can trust in Him.

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'Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. '

Ephesians 6:17

Your final two pieces of armor are Salvation and God's word. Salvation is a helmet, the protection that keeps you alive. Ultimately we are secure by salvation, so remind yourself, often. We are saved, God has provided, and we are in His care. No matter what is before us, we are saved. This helmet keeps us alive now!

And we have a sword. God's word is our sword. With God's word we attack every false truth, every misplaced thought, every temptation and challenge. God's word establishes truth, given from God alone. With this sword we undo the false claims of the enemy. We stabilize our minds and keep God's plans and commands up front and center. Dig into God's word daily, and put His truth and commands into action. Leave nothing undone.

## A Walk Through Ephesians

This is how we win the battle for our souls, for our world, and for God's Kingdom.

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'Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. '

Ephesians 6:18

Never give up praying. Pray with what you know. Pray when you don't know, trusting the Spirit to intercede. We are a people of our God, and we follow Him in His quest. He is reaching the nations. He is rescuing one by one. We join in that effort, and pray for every man, woman, boy and girl. We seek their turning to Jesus in repentance, finding salvation, and living their lives with Him as Lord. Keep praying for every one!

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'And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should. '

Ephesians 6:19-20

What does the seasoned worker need? He needs the right words. He's been around the block, walked with the Lord for years. But his words need to be fresh, able to lead new people to follow Jesus. He still needs just the right words to lead them into God's family. Pray for the right words.

What else does the seasoned worker need? He needs boldness. He's been harassed, beaten, attacked, arrested, left in prison or forgotten. He needs boldness. He needs invigorating courage to go back up front, and begin yet another message, another plea. He needs to stand and declare the wonderful truths of the Lord who brought him out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

Pray for your workers! Join them and help them back up front, especially now!

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'To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. '

Ephesians 6:21-22

Tychicus is a messenger sent by Paul (on the field) back to his supporting team (in Ephesus). The global worker keeps his partners in the loop. They pray, and help in any way they can. But just a few get to be in both places. This encourages the worker on the edge, and blesses the foundational senders back home.

Tychicus had another role too. He was sent to encourage Paul, to meet him face-to-face, look in his eyes, and do all he can to build up Paul. Even if this lasts for only a few days.

## A Walk Through Ephesians

The model works the same today. Workers on the edge keep the home team engaged. Or at least they try to do so. The home team sends care givers to the field as well, to encourage, help, and shepherd the worker who has everything on the line.

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'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

This letter finishes with a full reminder of all that the Lord has given! Peace to the men and women who have placed their hope in Jesus. Sin is settled, and life is assured in Him. Peace to you as well!

His love is fully yours too, and a complete establishment of faith in you too. God the Father loves you and gives you the gift of keeping your hope and trust in Him.

Finally there's grace, His assurance that you are His, and can do nothing to ruin this. His forever undying love is yours. Celebrate, draw near and bring your praise. He cherishes you!