

Ephesians Overview

Background

You may want to consult a study Bible or Bible dictionary for help with these questions.

1. Who is the human author of this letter?

2. What do you know about him? (his background, his ministry, his culture)

3. Where was he when he wrote this letter?

4. Who are the recipients of this letter?

5. What do you know about them? (their relationship to the author, their circumstances, their relationship to God, their relationship to each other)

6. How are these people and their circumstances similar to us?

7. How are they different from us?

Major Themes

Read through the entire letter in one sitting (takes about 20–30 minutes) and then answer the next few questions.

8. Why was this letter written? (Is the author addressing problems? Is his tone encouraging or confrontational? Does the author seem to have a primary purpose?)

9. What do you see as the primary themes of this letter? (If you can't decide on one, identify two or three prominent themes.)

10. What topics from the text are you excited about discussing in the next 2 weeks?

11. What questions do you have after reading through this book?

Ephesians 1:1–14 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Why is it important that Paul was an apostle “by the will of God” (v. 1)?

2. What stands out to you as the main theme of vv. 3–14?

3. The phrase “to the praise of His glory” appears in verse 6, 12, and 14. What is the significance of this repetition?

4. According to v. 3, what is one reason why God should be blessed?

5. What does it mean that God “chose us before the foundation of the world” (v. 4), and what is the purpose for which He chose us?

6. Look up “adoption” in a Bible dictionary, study Bible, or commentary. How is this concept different from our modern practice, and how does that aid your understanding of verse 5?

7. How many times does the phrase “in Christ” (or an equivalent phrase with “in” and a pronoun referring to Christ) appear in vv. 3–14? When you look at these in context, how would you summarize the actions of God on our behalf?

8. What does the passage identify as the “inheritance” mentioned in verse 11?

9. Describe the role of the Holy Spirit identified in vv. 13–14.

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 1:1–14 for your own life today.*

10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

11. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 1:15–23 (NKJV)

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What is Paul's primary prayer request as he prays for his readers (vv. 17–19)?

2. What does Paul specifically pray that his readers would learn (vv. 18–19)? How would you explain each of these ideas?

3. What is it about God's calling that brings hope (v. 18)?

4. What is the "inheritance" described in verse 18?

5. Explain why the phrase "toward us who believe" appears in verse 19.

6. What is the significance of the phrase "above all principality and power and might and dominion" (v. 21)?

7. What is the church (vv. 22–23), and what does that mean for your role in one of God's churches?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 1:15–23 for your own life today.*

8. What does Paul's example in verses 15–16 teach us about how we pray for others?

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 2:1–10 (NKJV)

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins,² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What does it mean to be “dead in trespasses and sins” (v.1)? Explain the difference between someone who *is currently* “dead in trespasses and sins” and someone who *once was* “dead in trespasses and sins” (v. 1)?

2. Explain what it means to “walk” after “the course of this world” (v. 2). You may find it helpful to consult a variety of translations on this phrase.

3. Why does Paul say that we were children of wrath by *nature* (v. 3)? How should this affect our view of lost people?

4. What does it mean that God is “rich in mercy” (v. 4)?

5. What three things did God do to us when we were “dead in trespasses” (vv. 5–6)? Were these actions performed for us individually, or as a collective group?

6. According to the passage, what is God’s one purpose for the three actions mentioned in question #5? How do those actions accomplish that purpose?

7. Why is it important that we are saved “by grace through faith” (v. 8)?

8. What is the “gift” mentioned in verse 8?

9. Explain what it means to be God’s “workmanship” or “creation” (v. 10).

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 2:1–10 for your own life today.*

10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

Ephesians 2:11–22 (NKJV)

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. What is the significant point Paul is making about the past experience of his readers in verses 11–12?

2. Why is it significant that the Ephesians had once been “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” and “strangers from the covenants of promise” (v. 12)?

3. According to the text, how were the Ephesians “brought near” (v. 13)?

4. What does Paul mean when he says that Christ “made both one” (v. 14) and that He “created in Himself one new man from the two” (v. 15)?

5. In verse 16, Paul says that through the cross Christ *reconciled* both Jew and Gentile to God. Look up *reconciliation* in a study Bible or commentary and explain what it means. Can you find any helpful cross-references?

6. Contrast v. 19 with v. 12, and explain what this means about the identity of the church.

7. Paul uses a variety of metaphors to describe the New Testament church in vv. 19–22. Explain what these metaphors mean and how are appropriate.

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 2:11–22 for your own life today.

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 3:1–13 (NKJV)

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,⁷ of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.¹³ Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Compare and contrast Paul's self-reference in v. 1 with his self-reference in 1:1. In this context, why might Paul be motivated to alter the terms in which he describes himself?

2. What is Paul referring to with the phrase “the dispensation of the grace of God” (v. 2)? [Note: The word “dispensation” may also be translated “administration,” “stewardship,” or “commission.”]

3. By what means (v. 3) did Paul gain his knowledge of “the mystery” (v. 4)? By what means do we gain knowledge of the same mystery today?

4. In verses 5–6, Paul gives an extended description of “the mystery.” What is Paul using this term to describe? Why is this term helpful? [Note: You may wish to compare with other occurrences of the term “mystery” in Eph. 1:9; 3:9ff; 5:32; and 6:19.]

5. When did Paul become a minister (v. 7)? How does this verse reflect Paul’s conversion on the Damascus road (cf. Acts 9:1–19)?

6. Is Paul correct when he describes himself as “less than the least of all the saints” (v. 8), or is he just overly conscientious about his sin? [Hint: Consider 1 Cor. 15:9 and 1 Tim. 1:15.]

7. How does the church display “the manifold wisdom of God” to the “principalities and powers” (v. 10)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 3:1–13 for your own life today.

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 3:14–21 (NKJV)

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. When Paul says that it is “for this reason” that he prays (v. 14), what is the reason that he is referring to in context?

2. What is the “family” that Paul mentions in v. 15?

3. What does it mean when Paul speaks of God “grant[ing] you ... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (v. 16)? To what extent should we expect God to carry this out?

4. Describe actions that would characterize someone in whose heart Christ dwells (v. 17).

5. What does it mean to be “filled with all the fullness of God” (v. 19)?

6. How can the church bring glory to someone as infinite and powerful as God (vv. 20–21)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 3:14–21 for your own life today.*

7. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

8. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Review and Reflect: *Take some time to think back over our past six weeks of study in Ephesians 1:1–3:21.*

9. As you review these chapters, what are some great doctrines that have challenged you over the past 6 weeks?

10. When you think about those doctrines, what are some key passages in Ephesians that you have found meaningful? How has your understanding of God grown through our study so far?

Ephesians 4:1–16 (NKJV)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.⁸ Therefore He says:

“When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.”

⁹ (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. How would you define a “walk” that is “worthy of the calling with which you were called” (v. 1)? How does the context of this verse explain this idea?

2. What do you think the “unity of the Spirit” that Paul describes in verse 3 might be? How can you “keep” it in “the bond of peace”?

3. Paul uses the word “one” seven times in vv. 4–6. What are the entities that he describes as singularities? How does the singularity of these things support his argument?

4. How much grace is given to “each one of us” in v. 7? What is described by the phrase “Christ’s gift”?

5. Explain the reference to the “lower parts of the earth” in v. 9.

6. What does the passage identify as the purpose of the gifts to the church (identified in verse 11)?

7. Describe the goal of faithful ministry (found in v. 13–15). What would the result look like in an individual congregation and in the church at large?

8. What is the relationship between Christ and the church that is described in v. 16?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 4:1–16 for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 4:17–32 (NKJV)

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, “*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*” for we are members of one another. ²⁶ “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What does Paul identify as the cause of the Gentiles' ignorant lifestyle (vv. 17–18)?

2. What is it that verse 19 describes the Gentiles “giving themselves over” to pursue? Compare a few translations as you examine this verse.

3. Explain what it means to “learn Christ” (v. 20–21).

4. Paul gives a number of prohibitions in vv. 25–31. Explain how these prohibited actions would reflect our “former conduct” (v. 22).

5. Reflect on verses 26 and 27, and try to restate them in your own words.

6. Contrast “corrupt words” with words that are good for edification (v. 29).

7. How might a believer grieve the Holy Spirit (v. 30)?

8. Why should you forgive (v. 32)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 4:17–32 for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 5:1–14 (NKJV)

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

³But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.¹⁴ Therefore He says:

“Awake, you who sleep,

Arise from the dead,

And Christ will give you light.”

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Verse 1 begins with the word, “therefore.” How does this passage fit in with the prior context?

2. Look up the word translated “imitator” in a concordance or using Bible software. How do the other references to this term in the New Testament help us understand what Paul is saying in Eph. 5:1?

3. Reflect on the significance of Christ’s own actions as described in verse 2. What is the relationship between our responsibility to “walk in love” and his actions on our behalf?

4. In verses 3–4, Paul identifies several actions that are “not fitting for saints.” What exactly are these practices, and what is it that makes them inappropriate? [Note: You may want to consult cross-references for additional help.]

5. What is the key phrase identifying the person in verse 5 who does not have an “inheritance in the kingdom”?

6. What does it mean to be a child of light (v. 8)? How does the surrounding context explain this idea?

7. How does one discover “what is acceptable to the Lord” (v. 10)?

8. In verse 11, Paul contrasts “darkness” with “light.” What does this verse suggest about the effect of Christian living?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 5:1–14 for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 5:15–33 (NKJV)

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What does it mean to “walk circumspectly” (v. 1) and to “redeem the time” (v. 2)? You may find it helpful to compare a variety of translations of these phrases.

2. Why does v. 18 condemn drunkenness? Why is that contrasted with being filled with the Spirit?

3. What five expressions of Spirit-filling can you find in vv. 19–21? How does each one demonstrate a fruit of the Spirit?

4. What does it mean for a wife to “submit” to her husband (v. 22)? Consider Titus 2:5 and 1 Pet. 3:1–6 as you think about this idea.

5. What reason does Paul give for wives to “submit” to their husbands in vv. 23–24? Is there any situation in life when that reason would be invalid?

6. What does it mean for a husband to “love” his wife (v. 25)? Helpful cross-references include Col. 3:19 and 1 Pet. 3:7.

7. What reason does Paul give for husbands to “love” their wives in vv. 28–31? Is there any situation in life when that reason would be invalid?

8. In verse 32, Paul says he is speaking “concerning Christ and his church.” What do we learn about Christ and the church from vv. 25–32?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 5:15–33 for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 6:1–9 (NKJV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.² “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he* is a slave or free.

⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. In vv. 2 and 3, Paul quotes from Ex. 20:12 (see also Deut. 5:16). What does it mean when Paul says that “this is the first commandment with promise”?

2. What does it mean to “bring [children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (v. 4)? Other versions may also be helpful in understanding this phrase.

3. Consult a study Bible or commentary to find out more about the life of a “bondservant” (v. 5) in the first century.

4. Why does Paul expect bond-servants to obey “with fear and trembling” in verse 5? What does that mean?

5. In what circumstances would verse 8 bring comfort to both bondservants and free individuals? In what circumstances would it not be comforting?

6. What reason does Paul use to support his command to masters in verse 9? Why is that significant?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 6:1–9 for your own life today.*

7. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

8. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Ephesians 6:10–24 (NKJV)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

²¹ But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;²² whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. What is the source of the believer's strength in verse 10?

2. What is the purpose of the "armor of God" in verse 11? Should we understand this purpose as primarily offensive or defensive in focus?

3. See Eph. 1:19–22. What does this cross-reference tell you about the battle described in v. 12?

4. Consult a study Bible or commentary and briefly define each piece of the Christian's spiritual armor described in vv. 14–17.

Belt of Truth

Breastplate of Righteousness

Feet shod with preparation of the Gospel of Peace

Shield of Faith

Helmet of Salvation

Sword of the Spirit

5. What is the role of prayer in Christian warfare, and how important is it (v. 18)?

6. What was Paul's personal prayer request (v. 19–20)? Would you have anticipated his request?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 6:10–24 for your own life today.

7. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

8. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
