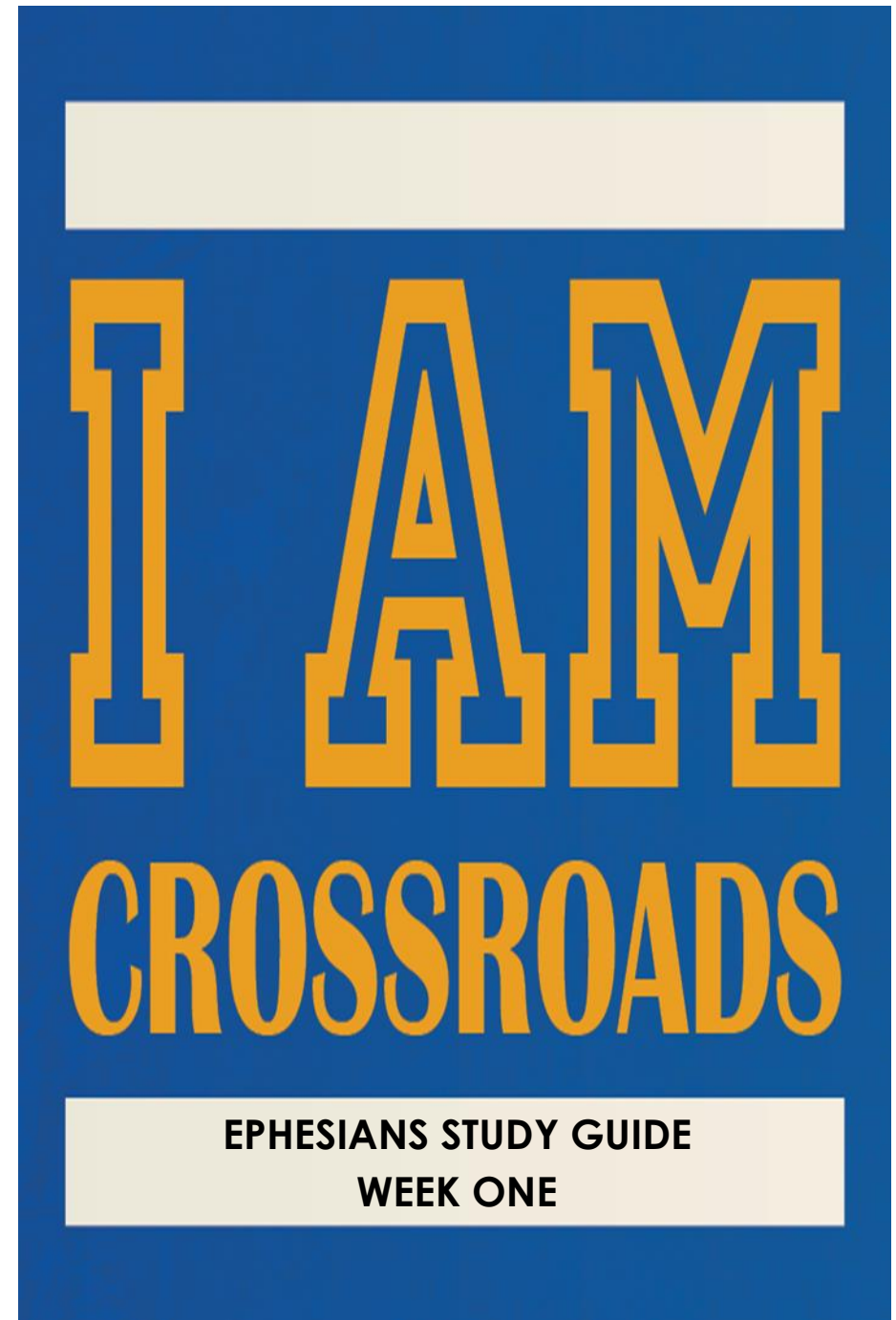


4. How does Paul's long description of Christ in 1:21-23 relate to our practice of prayer?

APPLY

Based on Paul's example of prayer, how would like your own prayer life to change?

Are you currently praying for fellow believers? List 5 believers in your life and pray for them each day this week.



This devotional is designed to be a resource for you to use as we go through the book of Ephesians during the “I AM CROSSROADS” series. Each week we will provide an in-depth study of the Scripture we discussed on Sunday morning. Each day is designed to take about ten minutes to help you think through and explore how you can apply the scripture to your life.

{Below is some background information to help you understand the purpose and role of the book Ephesians}

BACKGROUND ON EPHESIANS

AUTHORSHIP

Paul was born in Tarsus into Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28) and later educated under the illustrious rabbi, *“Saint Paul Writing His Epistles”* by Valentin de Boulogne (ca. 16th century) Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Zealous for the Law, Paul became the chief persecutor of the early church until his conversion when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Immediately, Paul began to proclaim Jesus as Savior, eventually focusing several missionary journeys to the Gentiles throughout Asia Minor. During his journeys, he traveled to Ephesus and ministered there for almost three years (Acts 20:31). After Paul departed from Ephesus, he left Timothy behind to combat false teaching (1 Timothy 1:3). At some later point, Paul wrote this letter while in prison either in Caesarea or Rome as one of his many “Prison Epistles” in A.D. 60-62.

DAY 6

1. Rewrite Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians in 1:15-23 in your own words. What, specifically, does he ask God for? (Hint: try to define the meaning of phrases like “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation” and “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.”)

2. What effect can our prayers have on the lives of others or our own lives (see Luke 11:9-10; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; James 4:2; 5:14-18.)?

3. How does this passage relate to the previous passage? In other words, how does the content of Paul’s prayer in 1:15-23 relate to the believer’s blessings in 1:1-14?

Where is Jesus now, and what is He doing?

What is the significance of being “at the right hand” of God (see Acts 5:31; Hebrews 1:3-13)?

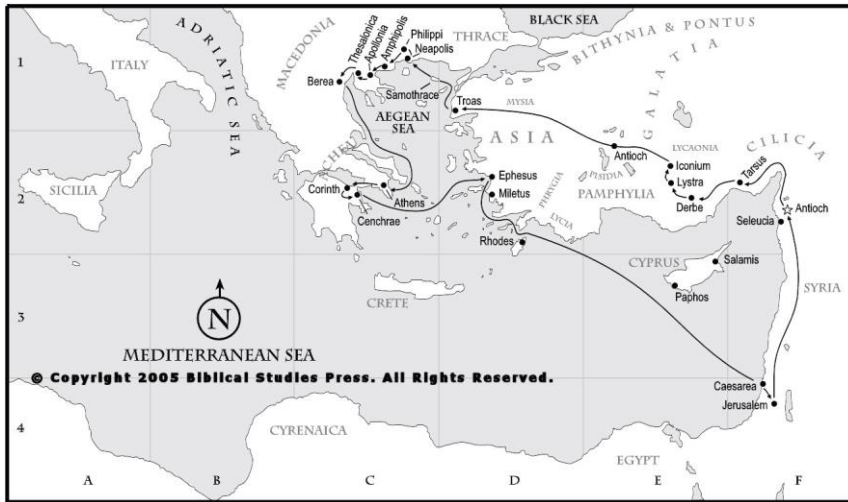
BACKGROUND

Once you have completed the introductory questions on the previous page, read this background article on the book of Ephesians (portions compiled from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* and *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*). Despite recent debate that the book was written by someone who did not use his own name but instead claimed to be Paul, there is no strong reason to reject Pauline authorship of the book.

RECEIPTS

Ephesus was a leading city on the west coast of Asia Minor. It essentially linked the western and eastern portions of the Roman Empire on the main highway and even possessed the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia. Due to its location within the Empire, Ephesus exerted great influence culturally, economically, and religiously. With a population over 300,000 people, Ephesus contained a theatre that seated an estimated 25,000 people. It became the center for worship of the goddess Artemis (Diana in Roman mythology), which often included temple prostitution. Her temple ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and became not just a center for worship but also the primary banking institution for all of Asia Minor. As a result, Paul’s apostolic ministry that turned people to Christ and away from Artemis represented a significant financial threat to temple-related businesses like that of the silversmith, Demetrius (Acts 19:23-41). Ephesus also became a center of occult practice as many used magic, witchcraft, and sorcery to manipulate hostile spiritual powers to their advantage (Acts 19:11-20).

DAY 5



The Mediterranean region as Paul traveled to Ephesians for first time.

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. Paul begins 1:15 by saying, "For this reason..." What reason is he referring to?
2. What is the primary thing Paul asks for in this prayer? Why does he place such emphasis on this request?
3. What do we learn about each Person of the Trinity in these prayers? Consider the following...

To which of them should we pray? Why (1 Corinthians 15:22-28)?

What is the primary thing Paul asks for in this prayer? Why does he place such emphasis on this request?

PURPOSE

Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers does not seem concerned with any particular heresies as we see in Galatians and Colossians, nor with any particular occurrences of immorality as in 1 Corinthians. Rather, Paul's purposes are to declare the glory of God and the extravagant riches given to the Church. Paul focuses on the call, identity, and conduct of the Church, the body of Christ, throughout this rich epistle.

OBSERVATIONAL QUESTIONS

1. List the specific things Paul prays for in 1:15-23 and 3:14-21
2. List some of the similarities and differences you notice between Paul's prayers in 1:15-23 and 3:14-21
3. What key words do you notice in this passage? These are words that are theologically significant or that set the theme or big idea for the passage.

DAY 1

Ephesians 1:1-14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

1. Underline or highlight the names of God you observe in this passage? This should include names of any individual members of the Trinity.

DAY 4

2. List all of the “spiritual blessings” you see in this passage given by God to believers.

3. What’s the big idea of each of the following sections of this passage”

- 1:1-2

- 1:3-12

- 1:13-14

- And for the whole thing – 1:1-14

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Spend a few minutes thanking God for these blessings.

Memorize

Ephesians 1:3 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

PRAY

Thank the Lord for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs you have.

DAY 2

1. Refer back to your list of “spiritual blessings” mentioned in this passage. What role does each person of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) play in providing us these blessings?

2. What does “redemption” mean (see Romans 8:23; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:25; 11:35)? What did it cost and who paid the cost? What motivated this cost to be paid for us?

3. What does it mean to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit” (1:13)? What must a person do to receive this? How does this sealing relate to our inheritance and redemption?

DAY 3

4. What does Paul mean by “adoption as sons” (see Romans 8:15-17)?
How did it occur?

5. According to 1:4-6; 11-12; and Romans 8:23-30...

What does it mean to be “chosen” or “predestined” by God?

When did God predestine us?

Why did God predestine us?

In other words, what is the purpose of His choice?

Why does any of this really matter?

In predestination just a big theological debate, or does it have a practical application to our lives?

1. Should we be looking for apostles like Paul to lead us today? Why or why not? To answer this question look up 1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 12:28-30; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 2:19-22 and 3:1-7 and consider these questions:

What is the basic meaning of the title “apostle”?

What qualifications did an apostle need?

What were the responsibilities of an apostle?

God wants the truth of these spiritual blessings to affect our lives.
How should these truths...

...effect your self –worth or opinion of yourself?

... benefit you when you go through hard times or commit sin?

