The Book of Ephesians

Study Guide

Part of the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus with the Library of Celsus in the background

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Ephesus in the Roman Province of Asia

Map from *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. ©2008

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Ephesians 1:1-14

Background

Refer to Acts 19:1-20:1 for the story of Paul's evangelization of Ephesus and the region surrounding it.

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 1 slowly. Underline any 'big' words and put a star next to each thing you find that God has done for us.

Write one thing that stands out to you in verses 1-14:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-14 as follows:

Paul begins this letter by telling us we have been blessed by God (verse 3).

What does it mean to be blessed?

How does a blessed person feel?

In verses 3-14 Paul lists a number of the spiritual blessing God has given to us in Christ. List on the next page the ones you can single out:

Several times in this letter Paul will give us some insight into God's bigger purposes in saving us. What purpose(s) can we find in:

Verse 6?

Verse 12?

Verse 14?

Note the three facts about God's grace toward us in verses 6-8:

1.

2.

3.

In verse 10, what does Paul reveal about God's future plans for Jesus? What will God do through him?

Give it some thought:

Of the blessings Paul tells us that we've received, which one means the most to you?

Why?

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Ephesians 1:15-23

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 1 slowly. In verses 15-23 number the individual things Paul asks God to give the Ephesians.

Write one thing that stands out to you in verses 15-23:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 15-23 as follows:

List the requests that Paul makes to God in his prayers for the Ephesians that you numbered above:

In verses 19b-22 Paul explains the kind of power that is at work in each of us. List some ways this power was demonstrated in Jesus:

When you think of fullness (verse 23) what do you think of?

According to verse 23 what represents Jesus' fullness?

What does Paul means when he says that Jesus 'fills all in all' or 'fills everything in every way'?

What does that mean for you and your life?

Give it some thought:

If the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is working in you, what difference should that make to your life?

If Jesus 'fills all in all' or 'fills everything in every way,' then he fills you with everything. What could that mean to you?

Ephesians 2:1-10

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 2:1-10 slowly. Number the things that God did for us out of his mercy and grace.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-10 as follows:

Describe lost people according to verses 1-3:

List the words Paul uses to describe God's attitude toward lost sinners in verses 4-7:

Explain the importance of the phrase 'not of works, so that no one may boast' in verse 9:

What did God plan for us as saved people according to verse 10?

Give it some thought:

Write some of your own thoughts about God's grace as it is revealed in this passage:

Where would you be today except for God's grace?

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Ephesians 2:11-22

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 2:11-26 slowly. Number the things that God did for us out of his mercy and grace.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 11-26 as follows:

Note the contrasts Paul brings out between what Gentile unbelievers were before Christ and what they are now. Fill in the following chart with as much as you can find. I've started you off:

List the things Jesus did to bring all people together in him:

Gentiles before Christ	Gentiles after Christ
Separate from Christ (12)	*Brought near to Christ (13)*

What special privilege do you now have through Jesus according to verse 18?

What special relationship do you now have to God according to verse 22?

Give it some thought:

How should the truth that God has removed all barriers and separations between people who are in Christ show up in the church?

What challenges do you see that still remain in bringing about true oneness in the body of Christ?

What does it mean to you to be part of 'a dwelling of God in the Spirit' or 'a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit' (verse 22)?

Ephesians 3:1-13

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 3:1-13 slowly. Look for and underline the word 'mystery' where it appears.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-13 as follows:

Paul talks about something he calls a mystery. According to verse 6 what is this mystery?

Since this thing that was once a mystery is now known, how did Paul come to know it (verse 3)?

List words and phrases that Paul uses to describe his ministry to the Gentiles:

What purpose does God have for the church in verses 10-11?

Give it some thought:

What does it mean to you to be told that we have 'boldness and confident access through faith in Him' or 'In him and through faith in him we may approach God with faith and confidence'?

How should this fact influence how you approach God in prayer?

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Ephesians 3:14-21

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 3:14-21 slowly. Number each of the three things Paul wants for the Ephesians in verses 17-18.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 14-21 as follows:

Why does Paul want us to know the love of Christ (verse 19)?

How do you think knowing Christ's love and being filled to all the fullness of God related?

List the four dimensions of love that Paul wants us to know and give your thoughts as to what each dimension of God's love might mean on the other side of this page:

Dimension	What it probably means

According to verse 20 how much is God able to do?

What is Paul's ultimate desire for the church according to verse 21? What are some ways this would occur?

Give it some thought:

When it comes to knowing and experiencing God's love, what would you pray for?

What is something you could do that would bring God glory?

Ephesians 4:1-16

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 4:1-16 slowly. Note the different reasons Paul mentions that a church should be united.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-16 as follows:

Paul turns from doctrine to practice at the beginning of chapter four. He urges us to walk (live) in a manner worthy of our calling as believers. List below some of that characteristics of such a life that Paul mentions in this passage:

Why do you think maintaining unity in the church is so important?

In verses 11-12 Paul mentions gifted leaders that Jesus gave to the church. What is their task?

In verses 13-16 Paul uses the analogy of a body to talk about the church and each of us as members of it. What does God want to use the other members of the church to help accomplish in our life?

In verses 14-16 how is spiritual infancy different from spiritual maturity?

Give it some thought:

What gifts, abilities, and talents has God given you that he can put to use in the church, serving other believers and helping reach the lost?

How have you used these gifts and abilities or where could you see yourself using them?

Ephesians 4:17-32

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 4:17-32 slowly. Underline .

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 17-32 as follows:

Write down the ways that unsaved people live according to verses 17-19:

According to verses 20-24, what should be the evidence that we are saved people?

Do Christians necessarily live better lives than non-Christians? If not, should they and why?

In verses 25-32 Paul contrasts the old way of life with the Christian's new way of life. What parts of life are supposed to be impacted by our coming to Christ?

Give it some thought:

In verse 30 Paul tells us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. How can we do this? Can you think of some specific examples?

As you look at the transformation of your life that this passage calls for, compose a brief prayer to God for yourself below:

Ephesians 5:1-14

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 5:1-14 slowly. Underline the words darkness and light in the passage.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-14 as follows:

What do children do when they imitate someone else?

How can Christians be imitators of God? What can we do that is anything like God does?

In verses 3-4 what six things should not be part of our lives as God's children?

What do you think it means to be a 'partaker (or partner) with them' in verse 7? How can we avoid this?

According to verses 11-12 how are we to relate to what unsaved people do 'in the darkness'?

Give it some thought:

Is there food for thought in this passage about watching television, going to the movies, listening to music, or going to entertainment events that our unsaved friends and family think nothing of? What is it?

Do you find the ideas of holiness and separation from the world attractive or unattractive? Why?

Ephesians 5:15-21

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 5:15-21 slowly. Number each of the commands Paul gives in this passage.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 15-21 as follows:

What are the characteristics of wise people according to verses 15-17?

What are some things that being drunk (verse 18) affects?

What are we commanded to do with the Holy Spirit in verse 18?

According to verses 19-21 how should being filled with the Holy Spirit affect us?

What does 'be subject to one another' (verse 21) mean to you?

Give it some thought:

Paul urges us to make the most of our time or the most of every opportunity (verse 16). What do we have to do to accomplish that? What stands in our way?

Are you being filled with the Holy Spirit? If not, why not step off the throne of your life and turn it over to the Holy Spirit right now?

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Ephesians 5:22-33

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 5:22-33 slowly. Circle the commands given to wives and the commands given to husbands in these verses.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 22-33 as follows:

In verse 21 Paul told us that being subject to one another was a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. How do Spirit-filled wives show they are under the Spirit's control to their husbands?

How do Spirit-filled husbands show they are under the Spirit's control to their wives?

What analogy does Paul give to wives about how they are to relate to their husbands? What is their submission supposed to be like?

What analogies does Paul give to husbands about how they are to treat their wives? What is their love supposed to be like?

How much of the fulfillment that marriage is meant to bring do you think depends on these two qualities being demonstrated? Explain.

Give it some thought:

Why do you think God singles out submission on the wives' part and love on the husbands' part as the special traits that mark out a Spirit-filled marriage?

Thinking about marriage, how hard could either of these commands be?

What could make them hard?

Ephesians 6:1-9

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 6:1-9 slowly. Underline the commands Paul gives to children, to fathers, to slaves, and to masters.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 1-9 as follows:

Paul is continuing his discussion of how being Spirit-filled should affect our relationships. How is a child to show submission to his/her parents?

What can be difficult about this?

How is a father to show submission to his children according to verse 4? What can be difficult about that?

What special responsibilities do fathers have according to verse 4? What do you think is involved in fulfilling this command?

In what way were servants or slaves to show they were Spirit-filled Christians according to verses 5-8?

How were Spirit-filled slave or servant owners to demonstrate that they were under the Spirit's control to their slaves or servants?

Give it some thought:

How much effort and time is involved in a father carrying out the commands of verse 4? What does this say about how fathers need to order their priorities?

When you go to work, what parts of the instructions to servants or slaves in verses 5-8 do you think apply to you?

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Ephesians 6:10-24

The Light Approach:

Read through Ephesians chapter 6:10-24 slowly. Circle each item of our armor and each weapon we have that Paul lists in this passage.

Write one thing that stands out to you in this passage:

The Deeper Approach:

Do everything in the light approach then focus in on verses 10-24 as follows:

What in the world is going on around us and to us according to verse 12?

What are some ways Satan attacks believers?

What commands are we given in verses 10-11 about the struggle going on around us?

How can the Bible serve as a sword to believers in their struggle against Satan?

Can a Christian soldier afford to slack off in praying? Why or why not?

Give it some thought:

Which piece of the armor do feel the most need for? Why?

When are you most successful at defeating Satan's attacks? When are you least successful? What would improve your success?