OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is for you to gain more knowledge and insight into the things pertaining to salvation and the Christian life through what God has revealed to us through this epistle (letter) of Paul to the church at Ephesus. After studying Ephesians, you should have a better understanding of the salvation that we have received from God by faith in Jesus Christ, and to have a better understanding of what Jesus did for us regarding our sins and our relationship with God.

ABOUT THE CITY OF EPHESUS

Ephesus was one of the largest and most impressive cities in the ancient world. It was a political, religious, and commercial center in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) and associated with the ministries of Paul, Timothy, and the Apostle John.

LOCATION

The ancient city of Ephesus was located in western Asia Minor at the mouth of the Cayster River situated between the Maeander River to the south and the Hermus River to the north. Ephesus had excellent access to
both river valleys which allowed it to flourish as a commercial center. It was once a prosperous Greek city and then a prosperous Roman city when Rome came into power in the region. The present-day site of the city is approximately five to six miles inland from where it was in ancient times due to the accumulation of silt deposited by the river, which was a constant problem for the city as it moved several times during its history.

Figure 2 Map showing location of Ephesus

Figure 3 - Map Showing Ephesus (from http://ephesus-tours.pro/ephesus/maps.html)
The Apostle John lived in the city until the rule of Trajan (AD 98-117). Large numbers of the commendable practices mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians were abandoned by the time John wrote Revelations. The city was a center for the worship of the fertility god, Artemis (Greek god Diana). A temple to Artemis was built in the middle of the 6th century BC and was the largest edifice in the Hellenistic world being entirely constructed of marble. The temple of Diana (Roman “mother of gods”) was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and it was so large that you could fit a football field inside of it.

Ancient Ephesus had a 495 ft theater, a large main street (35 ft wide), a library, fountains, civic buildings, and more. Ephesus was a wealthy city where houses had “modern” amenities such as running water, mosaic floors, and public lavatories (bathrooms). There were also houses of prostitution.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The earliest inhabitants of Ephesus were a group of peoples called Leleges and Carians who were driven out around 1000 BC by Ionian Greek settlers led by Androclus of Athens. They assimilated the native religion of the area, the worship of a goddess of fertility whom they identified with the Greek goddess Artemis, the virgin huntress. (Later the Romans identified Artemis with their goddess Diana.)

Around 560 BC Croesus of Lydia conquered Ephesus and most of western Asia Minor. It was during his rule that the Temple of Artemis (known as the Artemision) was constructed. In 547 BC the Persians came into power and Ephesus came under their control. Unfortunately, the temple of Artemis was damaged by fire (arsenal) in 356 BC. It was again damaged by the Goths in about 268 AD. The Temple was closed by the Roman Christian State in the early to mid-fifth century. Eventually some of the stones were used to construct other buildings. The temple was lost until about 1869 when it was rediscovered by an expedition led by John Turle Wood (sponsored by the British Museum). More items were discovered in the early 20th century.
Alexander the Great, who was reportedly born on the same day as the Artemision fire, took over the area in 334 BC. His offer to finance the ongoing reconstruction of the temple was diplomatically declined. The rebuilt temple, completed about 250 BC, became known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Lysimachus, one of Alexander’s generals, ruled over Ephesus from about 301 to 281 BC, when he was killed by Seleucus I. Under Lysimachus the city was moved again to higher ground to escape the danger of flooding. City walls were built; a new harbor was constructed; and new streets were laid out. After the death of Lysimachus, Ephesus fell under the control of the Seleucids until their defeat by the Romans in 189 BC. Rome gave the city to the king of Pergamum as a reward for his military assistance. In 133 BC, at the death of the last Pergamum ruler, the city came under direct Roman control.

Ephesus thrived under Roman control and was at the height of its greatness during the first and second centuries of the Christian era. At the time of Paul, Ephesus was probably the fourth largest city in the world, with a population estimated at 250,000. During the reign of the emperor Hadrian, Ephesus was designated the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Archaeologists uncovered the ruins of the Artemision, the civic agora, the temple of Domitian, gymnasiaums, public baths, a theater with seating for 24,000, a library, and the commercial agora, as well as several streets and private residences. Today the Turkish town of Seljuk occupies the site of ancient Ephesus.
Religiously, Ephesus was prominent in pagan worship such as the worship of Artemis (Diana) and the businesses that thrived from it (not unlike today). This was the environment that ministers, such as Paul, had to deal with when presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**IMAGES OF Ephesus**

![Image 7 - The ruins of the commercial Agora (from https://magical-steps.com/ephesus-map/commercial-agora_th/)](https://magical-steps.com/ephesus-map/commercial-agora_th/)

![Image 8 - Latrines (public baths) at Ephesus (from http://www.ephesus.us/ephesus/latrines.htm)](http://www.ephesus.us/ephesus/latrines.htm)


Figurative and Applause

EPHESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

PAUL AND EPHESUS

Paul stopped at Ephesus at the end of his second missionary journey, left Priscilla and Aquila there, and then returned to Antioch (Acts 18:18-21). Apollos preached in Ephesus soon thereafter and met Priscilla and Aquila who “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). Paul, on his third journey, spent more than two years in Ephesus teaching and preaching in the synagogue and in the hall of Tyrannus. The success of his preaching at Ephesus triggered a riot headed by the silversmiths who feared that their business of selling miniature replicas of Artemis (Diana) or her temple would suffer severely (Acts 19:24-41). After the town clerk quelled the disturbance, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia. At the end of this missionary endeavor, on his way back to Palestine, Paul stopped at Miletus and sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus so that he might speak with them (Acts 20:17).

Ephesus is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:32, where Paul noted that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus. Many commentators understand this statement to be only a figurative reference to strong and dangerous opposition. At the close of 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote that he would remain at Ephesus until Pentecost “for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (Acts 16:8-9).

EPHESUS ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Elsewhere in the New Testament Ephesus appears as the location of one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation (1:11; 2:1). Ephesus, the leading city of Asia Minor, is appropriately the first of the seven churches. In the opening verse of the letter to the Ephesians some manuscripts describe the recipients of the letter as the saints who are “at Ephesus.” The earliest and most reliable manuscripts, however, do not include the reference to Ephesus. In 1 and 2 Timothy, Ephesus is mentioned three times. Timothy was urged to remain at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3); reference is made to Onesiphorus and “in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus” (2 Tim. 1:16-18); and the writer stated that Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).

Christian tradition from the second century and later claimed that the apostle John moved to Ephesus, and after living to an old age, died a natural death there. Another, more dubious tradition states that Mary the mother of Jesus also died in Ephesus.
ABOUT THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE WRITTEN: Around 61 A.D.

The Epistles Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are sometimes referred to as the Prison Epistles because they were written during Paul's Roman imprisonment (Ephesians 3:1; Philippians 1:7; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 9). Whether he was imprisoned once or twice in Rome is debated, though two imprisonments seem to fit the facts better. During the first, Paul was kept in or near the barracks of the Praetorian Guard or in rental quarters at his own expense for two years (Acts 28:30), during which these epistles were written. He anticipated being released (Philem. 22), and following his release he made several trips, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was rearrested, and wrote 2 Timothy.

It is believed that the Ephesian letter was most likely a circular letter for the churches in Asia Minor, since no specific issues or people of the Ephesian church were addressed in the letter.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

CHAPTER 1

Ephesians 1:1 (NKJV) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul identifies himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. It is true that Paul did not walk with Jesus as the 12 disciples did. However, Paul was directly called by Jesus to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He was therefore an apostle of Jesus Christ just like the disciples.

An apostle is someone that is sent to complete a task and has the authority of the sender.

The word saints mean Holy ones, consecrated to God, sacred. All Christians are therefore, saints, even though some religious organizations designate "special" people to be saints.

Paul begins this letter with a doxology (an expression of praise to God) from verses 3-14. Paul praises God for the redemption provided to us through Jesus Christ.

❖ Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV) 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,

God has blessed us, referring to saints, with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly realm (the heavens). In ancient times people did not think of the heavens the way we do as far as the earth’s atmosphere and outer space. They thought of the heavens as being divided into up to seven levels. The various spiritual beings (angels, stars, demons, etc.) lived in these different levels and that God (the purest being) lived at the top level, i.e., the highest heaven.

Note that we are blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing IN CHRIST. The importance of Christ is emphasized here and throughout this doxology. The word “bless,” from the Strong’s Concordance, means: to speak well of, i.e. (religiously) thank or invoke a benediction upon, prosper. It also is used as a means of praise expression as in “Bless the Lord” (e.g., Psalm 103).
The term “in Christ” is very important. The word “in” means to be within the bounds or area of, to or at a condition. The term “in Christ” refers to the source of the blessing that we have. This blessing is spiritual, as opposed to material blessings. What Paul is referring to here is the redemption provided by Christ, which is a spiritual blessing.

❖ Ephesians 1:4–6 (NKJV) — [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 made us accepted in the Beloved.

God choose us to be holy (sacred, set apart) and blameless (without fault or blemish) in Christ (not of our own merit or activities). God predestined us (those who are in Christ) to be reconciled to him.

We were separated from God because of sin and therefore, we belonged to the devil. However, those who are in Christ (the church) are reconciled to God and have been adopted as sons of God.

The predestination of God does not mean that God chose certain people to be saved. It means that God predetermined that all those who were in Christ (believers) would be saved. It’s like if I would say that anyone who becomes a member of this club will win $1000. I do not choose who will win, only that club members would win. Anyone can be a club member and win the $1000, but not all people will join. Salvation is for everyone, but not everyone will believe.

We see here that his glorious grace is imparted to us through the one he loves, namely Jesus Christ. We can partake in that love and the benefits of that love by being in Christ. When God sees you, he sees Christ (the anointing). Therefore, we are blameless because there is no condemnation in Christ (See Romans 8:1).

❖ Ephesians 1:7-8 (NKJV) 7In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

Three ideas are involved in the doctrine of redemption: (1) paying the ransom with the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians. 6:20; Rev. 5:9); (2) removal from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13; 4:5); and (3) release from the bondage of sin into the freedom of grace (1 Peter 1:18). Redemption is always through his blood; i.e., through the death of Christ (Col. 1:14).

The Ephesians were familiar with the Greco-Roman practice of redemption: Slaves were freed by the payment of a ransom. This redemption also provides us with forgiveness of sins. That is, God does not resent us because of the sins that we have committed. He does not hold a grudge against us for the things that we have done. The bible says,

Psalm 103:10 (NKJV) — [10] He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

❖ Ephesians 1:9 (NKJV) 9having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 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.

Paul uses the word mystery here to indicate something that was once hidden but is now revealed. The mystery that he specifically discusses here is that of God’s purpose to sum up all things in Christ.

❖ Ephesians 1:11-12 (NKJV) 11In 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, 12that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
The inheritance that we obtained, namely salvation, is in Christ and it was predestined by God to fulfill His purpose according to His will (See Romans 8:28). Obtaining this inheritance would allow us to bring praises to God.

An important thing to consider here is that the inheritance, our salvation, is in Christ and not because of what we have done or will do. The salvation is completely because of God's will and not our performance.

Christ--The word, Christ, comes from a Greek word (Christos) that is a translation of the Hebrew word that is rendered “Messiah.” The word “Christ” (Greek Christos) means anointed or anointed one, and is an epithet of Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph (Yeshua Ben Yosef). Incidentally, the name “Yosef” (Joseph) means, Jehovah gives/adds increase. Jesus is the anointed one, chosen by God the Father, to save us from our sins (See Matthew 1:21).

Anoint--The word anoint means to cover or smear the body or an object with oil or an ointment. It was used as a means of consecration or to choose someone or something for a divine purpose.

❖ Ephesians 1:13 (NKJV) 13In 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,

There are a few points that we gain from this one passage.

1. We (those who are saved) trusted in Jesus (to obtain salvation)
2. The gospel (good news proclaimed) of our salvation is the word of truth
3. We trusted in Jesus after we heard the gospel, the word of truth (See Romans 10:14)
4. We who believe in Christ, are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise

SEAL

A seal was a small engraved object widely used in the ancient Near East to produce an image in soft clay.

Its functional use was to serve as signals of protection. An unbroken seal proved that the contents had not been tampered with, whether on a document, a granary door, or a wine jar. The lions’ den into which Daniel was cast was sealed with the King’s signet and those of his nobles (Daniel 6:17). Jesus’ tomb was secured by sealing the stone (Matthew 27:66). The seal also served as a mark of ownership or as a trademark (e.g., placed on pottery before firing). It was also used to validate documents (letters, bills of sale, government documents, etc.). In the New Testament, the word “seal” was used to designate God’s personal ownership (as here in Ephesians 1:13)

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is given to us as a mark of ownership by God. We belong to God when we are in Christ, i.e., when we are saved.

GOSPEL

The word, gospel is derived from the Anglo-Saxon (Old English) word, godspel (good + news/tale/talk). The Old English (and subsequent Middle English) word “spel” referred to a tale or talk that was considered to have magic power, i.e., the spoken word was more than mere words, but was alive so to speak. The Old English, godspel was itself a translation of the Latin bona annuntiatio, which in turn is the rendering of the Greek euangelion (eu = good; angelion = message), which means “good message.” Note that this Greek word contains

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the word angelion (message), which looks a lot like the word angel. Angels were messengers. This Greek word is itself a translation of the Hebrew word basar, which referred to a proclamation, preaching, or to proclaim).

Godspel (or goodspel) soon meant "the story about god" and was used because the story about Jesus Christ was Good News (a good message). Later as English developed, the word Godspel was shortened to gospel and the original Anglo-Saxon meaning was lost with this change.

The gospel is more than merely good news since being notified that you won a prize is good news. The gospel is the story about Jesus Christ, which is itself the good news.

**SALVATION**

The word salvation comes from the Greek word soteria which means to rescue or safety: —deliver, health, salvation, save, saving. Therefore, the “gospel of our salvation” is the good news or message of our deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ. Some argue that this salvation extends to the complete human being: mind, body, and soul, and that all must be received by faith.

- **Ephesians 1:14 (NKJV)** 14who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

The Holy Spirit is a type of deposit (down payment) guaranteeing our inheritance until the full redemption of those who belong to God (see Romans 8:23). The salvation that was purchased for us through Jesus Christ is guaranteed and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

- **Ephesians 1:15 through Ephesians 1:17 (NKJV)** 15Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17that 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,

The word love is from the Greek word, agape, which means affection or benevolence; specifically (plural) a love-feast: charity, feast of charity, charitably, dear, love.²

The word “faith” is translated from the Greek word pistis, which means persuasion, i.e., credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself—assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.³

Spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of Him: The word spirit is the Greek word pneuma, which means wind, breath, or spirit. It can refer to the inner essence of human life. It can also may also refer to an attitude or mind, or spiritual state, especially when influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom is the quality of discerning what is true, what is ethically right, and what should be done in different situations.⁴

Paul prays that they would receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they would know God better. We should desire the same.

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² From the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Updated Edition, G26
³ From the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Updated Edition, G4102
❖ Ephesians 1:18 through Ephesians 1:21 (NKJV)  
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 power  
20 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.

The three things that Paul prays that the enlightening of the Ephesians’ understanding would reveal are:

1. The hope (expectation – from the Greek, elpis) of God’s calling
2. The riches (abundance) of His glorious inheritance (possession transferred to us) in us, the saints
3. The exceeding greatness of His power towards those who believe

This refers to the greatness of salvation. The salvation provided to us by God through Jesus Christ is an incredibly powerful thing. That power brings us from death to life so that we would be with God forever.

❖ Ephesians 1:22 through Ephesians 1:23 (NKJV)  
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.

Everything is under Jesus’ authority and Jesus was given to us as the head of the church, which is the fullness of Him.

CHAPTER 2

VERSE 2:1-3

We were all spiritually dead before we put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and was made alive by the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. The Greek word for sin (hamartia) means to offend, a breach of a social or moral code, a violation of law. The Holman Bible Dictionary defines sins as actions by which humans rebel against God, miss His purpose for their life, and surrender to the power of evil rather than to God. We are all therefore dead without the life of God.

Notice that Paul also states that they used to follow the ways of the world and the Devil. Why? Because they possessed the sinful nature which originates from the Devil. The word ‘world’ comes from the Greek word kosmos and means orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication. the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively. adorning, world.

Paul also states that the ruler of the kingdom of the air is the spirit that works in all the disobedient, i.e., those who are dead in their sins.

We all at one time lived according to the sin nature and thus submitted to the desires of that sin nature by pursuing all that it wanted, which was evil. We were indeed the objects of God’s wrath since God is sternly against and opposed to the sin nature.

VERSE 2:4-5

God still loved us and offered us salvation though we were submitting to the sinful nature. God is rich in mercy and God has great love for us, and because of God’s great love for us and the fact that he abounds with mercy, we were made alive with Christ if we believe. God could have dealt with us according to our sins and condemned us all, but because of his love for us, he didn’t do that. The bible says:
(Psalms 103:10 NIV) *he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*

Note also the profound statement Paul makes at the end of verse 3. He says that we were saved by grace. God provided salvation freely to us, which means that it is not because we deserved it or earned it. We aren't saved because of what we did, but rather because of what God did through his great love and grace towards us.

The word grace used in this scripture comes from a Greek word that means *graciousness* (as gratifying). *the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude*: --acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy). Grace, in this context, is God’s unmerited favor toward us.

The bible says:

*Titus 3:5 (NKJV) — [5] not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

*Romans 4:5 (NKJV) — [5] But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

*Romans 5:8 (NKJV) — [8] But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

VERSE 2:6-7

How could we have been raised up with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms? If we are in Christ, then we were raised up with him. We were made alive with Christ since we were in Him. So, when God sees us, the saints, he in a sense sees Jesus Christ because we are in Him.

The greatness of God’s grace and kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus, will be evident in ages to come

VERSE 2:8 - 9

We were saved by grace through faith (in Jesus Christ), and not because we earned it or deserve it. This point is not only fundamental, but also critical to the understanding of the Christian faith. We have done nothing to deserve it salvation and we can do nothing to earn it. Our sins must be accounted for else we will die for our own sins (we are already dead as we discussed previously). In the Old Testament, God instituted the sacrificial system where the sins of the people were dealt with by sacrificing animals. In the New Testament our sins have been paid for by the death of Jesus Christ and we simply need to believe that (and that he rose from the dead by the power of God) for us to be saved and made alive in Christ. Even the faith that we use to receive this salvation is also a gift of God (See Romans 12:3).

VERSE 2:10

We are God’s workmanship (creation, work) that were created to do good works, i.e., generous or good deeds. These good works that we are to walk in, were prepared in advance by God for us to do. We have basically been predetermined by God to accomplish the good things that He wants, i.e., his will or his purpose.
VERSE 2:11-13
Paul tells the church to remember that they were at one time without God (gentiles). The word gentile means *People who are not part of God's chosen family at birth and thus can be considered “pagans.”* By implication it referred to those who were non-Jewish or those not part of the Jewish nation by birth.

Paul also hints on the insignificance of circumcision. He stated in another scripture (See 1 Corinthians 7:19)

The gentiles (nonbelievers) have been bought near to God through the blood of Christ. Jesus did the work for us so that we can be saved, namely, he gave his live as a sacrifice for our sins.

VERSE 2:14

The Greek word for peace is also translated prosperity, quietness, rest, set at one again.

What has Jesus made one? See John 17:11. We are all one in Christ. We are one body in the same way that Jesus and the Father are one. This is the same union that Jesus spoke of when he said that the husband and the wife are one flesh (See Matthew 19:5). Paul was most likely speaking of the Jews and non-Jew Christians. As you may know from Paul's letter to the Galatians, some Jewish believers were teaching that the law must be followed in addition to faith in Christ to be saved. The law that they referred to was circumcision, which implied that they believed that a person must become a Jew first to be saved.

Note also that Paul calls the barrier the dividing wall of hostility. It is very unlikely that this barrier referred to here was the barrier between God and man because of sin (though that barrier exists). The barrier referred to here, appears to be within the body of Christ namely the barrier between the Jew and Gentile. Even today there are dividing factions within the church that cause strife within the church. Some of these divisions are as silly as worship methodology, type of music, etc.

VERSE 2:15-18

How did Jesus remove the barrier? By abolishing the law in his flesh with all its regulations and commandments. By doing this he made Jew and gentile one (those who believe). Therefore, the Jews could not brag or could not exalt themselves as something special because Jesus abolished the commandments and regulations in His body.

Note that Jesus Christ did not negate the law.

*Matthew 5:17 (NKJV) — [17] “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

The law is no longer a stumbling block to salvation, since Jesus abolished them (the stumbling blocks) in his flesh. He did not abolish the law, but rather abolished the reason for division between Jew and gentile. We can all be saved by grace through faith because this salvation is not dependent on the law, merit, or works.

See also Romans 4:15, 5:20, 8:7

Jesus took the separating effect of the law away so that we could be one with God: Colossians 2:14. It was substituted by the law of love.

See also Matthew 19. The rich ruler was not told that keeping the law was sufficient for eternal life. He had to sell his possessions and follow Jesus so that he would receive that eternal life.
Abolishing the law, in this context, does not mean that the law is of no effect. It means that its requirements along with its separative effects have been placed in Christ and fulfilled. Consider also that the law was much more than the 10 commandments. We do not keep the law anyway.

Jesus reconciles the joined man (Jews and Gentiles) to God. See 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 for more information on reconciliation.

Paul said that Jesus slew the enmity by the cross. The word enmity comes from a Greek word that means hostility or by implication a reason for opposition. What this tells us is that Jesus Christ has removed the reason for opposition between the Jews and the Gentiles and can therefore be one in Christ Jesus. longer need to be hostile with each other.

Jesus preached peace to the Jews and the Gentiles (those near and those afar off). The word peace comes from a Greek word that implies prosperity: –one, quietness, rest, + set at one again). Now both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father by the one Spirit.

**Verses 2:19-22**

Because all have access to the Father, the gentiles are no longer considered foreigners or outsiders. Gentiles are now children of God, citizens of his household, just as the Jews proclaim to be.

Jesus Christ is called the cornerstone.

The cornerstone (or foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.

In Christ the whole building is joined together and rises (matures) to become a holy temple for God’s dwelling.
CHAPTER 3

VERSES 3:1-6

Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ. This illustrates his commitment and conviction for the purpose that was set before him. He was bound to Jesus Christ for the sake of the Gentiles. He was bound to complete the task that was set before him.

Paul received the mystery of Christ for the Gentiles (See Acts 22:17-21, 26:12-18). The mystery was that the Gentiles where joint heirs with the Jews and members together of one body, and share together the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. That is that the Gentiles had access to God and all of the promises that the Jews had through the Gospel preached by Paul and other apostles.

VERSES 3:7-11

Paul calls himself a servant of the Gospel here. His mission, as he says was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles and to make plain to everyone the administration (the workings or participation of the mystery) of this mystery.

We also note that this mystery (hidden revelation) was not given to people of times past. It is the purpose of the church (body of Christ) to make known the manifold (multifaceted - as the many facets of a diamond reflect light) wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

There is a lot that we don’t know especially about God. We know little about the universe, but yet there are many men who think they know a lot. As time passes, we discover how much we didn’t know in the past. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that what we know now is only a small amount of what will be known tomorrow.

We do not know the full will of God. We do not know the full scope of his plan except what he has revealed to us through Jesus Christ. We know that if we believe in Christ, then we are saved. How that happens, we don’t know. We know that the Spirit of God quickens our spirit and makes us a new creation in Christ. It is only through Christ that these things are possible.

God used Paul to not only preach to the Gentiles, the Gospel of Christ, but also to reveal a previously undisclosed facet of God will, namely that the Gentiles has access to the same salvation that was thought to be only for the Jews. Therefore, all people have access to the Father through Jesus Christ. All people have the opportunity to receive the grace of God and by faith, receive the redemption provided by Jesus Christ.

VERSE 3:12

Ephesians 3:12 (NKJV) — [12] in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

In him refers to the absolute provision made possible by Christ and exists by Christ. It is one thing that the provision is available, and it is another thing to act on what is necessary to experience that provision. For example. You may have great abilities to play the piano. However, if you don’t have faith in your abilities, then you will not act and therefore not play. All sufficiency is in Christ. However, if we don’t have faith in Christ then we will not experience the full grace of God in salvation.

So, In Christ and through faith in him (which will cause us to act) we can approach God with confidence. See Hebrews 4:14-16
VERSE 3:16
Note that the power (might, ability) comes from God’s Spirit and works in our inner being.

VERSE 3:17-19
Note that the power that resides in our inner being will enable Christ to remain in our hearts by faith. Also, according to Paul, in order to comprehend the love of God (by the Spirit), we must be rooted in love. Paul also indicates that the love of God surpasses all knowledge. The power of God must reside in us in order to comprehend the love of God and this power is acquired when we are established in love according to Paul.

WHAT IS LOVE?
The topic of love is well beyond the scope of this study because it is enormous in scope and context. However, I stumbled upon a rather interesting article on the topic at https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/love. Below is an excerpt of that article.

Love is a complex set of emotions, behaviors, and beliefs associated with strong feelings of affection, protectiveness, warmth, and respect for another person. Love can also be used to apply to non-human animals, to principles, and to religious beliefs. For example, a person might say he or she loves his or her dog, loves freedom, or loves God.

Love has been a favored topic of philosophers, poets, writers, and scientists for generations, and different people and groups have often fought about its definition. While most people agree that love implies strong feelings of affection, there are many disagreements about its precise meaning, and one person’s “I love you” might mean something quite different than another’s. Some possible definitions of love include:

- A willingness to prioritize another’s well-being or happiness above your own.
- Extreme feelings of attachment, affection, and need.
- Dramatic, sudden feelings of attraction and respect.
- A fleeting emotion of care, affection, and like.
- A choice to commit to helping, respecting, and caring for another, such as in marriage or when having a child.
- Some combination of the above emotions.

There has been much debate about whether love is a choice, is something that is permanent or fleeting, and whether the love between family members and spouses is biologically programmed or culturally indoctrinated. Love may vary from person to person and culture to culture. Each of the debates about love may be accurate in some time and some place. For example, in some instances, love may be a choice while in others it may feel uncontrollable.

Love is indeed a very complex topic. We do have some clues as to what it means in the context of the Christian lifestyle or what it means to some extent to God.


- John 15:13 (NKJV) — [13] Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV) — [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
- **Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)** — [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

### CHAPTER 4

**VERSES 4:1-6**

Now that the people were saved, they were encouraged to live a life that is consistent with the salvation that they had received. They were encouraged to live a life that was worthy (to be associated with the regenerated Godly life) of the calling that they were called.

Paul tells them to practice the following: **1 Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV)** — [33] For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1. Complete humbleness (humbleness of mind, modesty)
2. Gentleness (humility)
3. Patience
4. Bearing on another in love

Paul also states that the bonds of peace is what keeps the unity of the Spirit. Peace is what will keep the church in a state of unity. Everything about God and the workings of his Spirit involves and requires unity (peace) The bible says:

**1 Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV)** — [33] For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. *(one hope)* - This refers to the one expectation of all Christians of life eternal with the Father.

*(one faith)* - This refers to one persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher:—assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity. Here Paul refers to the singular believe in Christ’s redemptive act for our salvation. **Ephesians 4:8 (NKJV)** — [8] Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.”

**VERSES 4:7-10**

Paul tells us in verse seven that Christ gives each person a certain amount of grace.

**Ephesians 4:8 (NKJV)** — [8] Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.”

Refer to Psalms 68:18 for the context of this verse. It says:

**Psalms 68:18 (NKJV)** — [18] You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there.

*(he led captives in his train.)* Paul uses an illustration from Psalms 68:18 in which the triumphant warrior is elevated when he returns with hosts of prisoners, receiving gifts from the conquered people and distributing gifts to his followers. Christ conquered Satan and all that had conquered us.
Verses 9 and 10 are parenthetical asides, to comment on "he ascended" and to prove that only Christ fits the description.

Note: "lower, earthly regions". Some translate this "lower parts of the earth" and understand it to mean that Christ descended into Hades between His death and resurrection. This translation only indicates what Jesus did during the period between his death and resurrection. But, as translated here, "earthly regions" is better understood as an appositional phrase (put next to lower), meaning that Christ descended (at His incarnation: The embodiment of God in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth) into the lower parts (of the universe), namely, the earth. This translation proves Jesus deity.

VERSES 4:11-13

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NKJV) — [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;

Christ gives us various gifts (distributed in the body of Christ) in order to prepare us for works of service.

Apostle: Persons sent to accomplish a mission, especially the twelve apostles Jesus commissioned to follow Him. An apostle represents the one sending and has authority to represent the sender in business, political, or educational situations.

Prophet: A person who declares a word (message) from the Lord through a direct prompting of the Holy Spirit. A prophet is a direct mouthpiece for God.

Evangelists: One who actively calls people to respond to the message of grace and commit themselves to God in Jesus Christ. An evangelist is a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pastor: The following definition is taken from the Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

The feeder, protector, and guide, or shepherd, of a flock of God’s people in New Testament times. The term “pastor” by this time in church history had not yet become an official title. The term implied the nourishing of and caring for Gods people.

Verse 13 implies that the body of Christ is constantly maturing into the fullness of Christ. The purpose of the gifts, and thus the offices in the body, is to continue to build the body of Christ up to maturity. Therefore, we have pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc. The whole concept is for edification resulting in unity. Unity in the Spirit is a direct consequence of total maturity of the body of Christ.

VERSE 4:4-15

The resulting maturity and unity discussed above will stabilize the beliefs of the believer. We will no longer be tossed here and there because of various teachings. We will no longer be swayed to believe this or that because we will know the truth.

VERSE 4:16

Ephesians 4:16 (NKJV) — [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.
We are all joined together, and we all grow, assuming we are maturing in truth. We are constantly maturing as we are built up in love. Each part does its work means that each person is operating in the capacity that they were gifted. That is all the parts of the body of Christ are doing what God has called them to do.

I want to also make mention of the fact that Paul says that the body builds itself up. God has purposed it and provided for it but it is up to the body to build itself up. God is not going to make it happen except provide all that is necessary for maturity to be accomplished. For without the power of God working in each of us there is no way that we could mature. So first the body of Christ has to want unity which means that all have to want the truth.

VERSE 4:17
"you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking."

The word Gentile here means comes from a Greek word that means a race (as of the same habit), i.e. a tribe; specifically a foreign (non-Jewish) one (usually by implication. pagan), heathen, nation, people.

Life without God is intellectually frustrating. The bible says in another place:

(Romans 1:21-23 NIV) For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. {22} Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

As in many places, Paul states that the Christian must live a life that is not of the world. We are to live a life in Christ and that life is far different from the life of the world. We also note that living this life in Christ is up to the believer. It is our responsibility to discover how we should live and then do it. It is the same principle as knowing the word of God and doing it.

VERSE 4:18

The understanding of a lifeless person (the life of God) is darkened. That is they do not understand the things of God because they are separated from God (they are not born again: See John 3:3,5). This separation is due to the fact that they (the unsaved) are ignorant (without the knowledge of God) because of their hardened hearts. This implies that if they would not harden their hearts they can receive knowledge and thus understanding unto salvation.

VERSE 4:19

Ephesians 4:19 (NKJV) — [19] who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

They have lost sensitivity to the things of God (God’s Spirit) and to proper moral conduct. They basically have lost sight of moral right and wrong. The word sensuality means to be preoccupied with the gratification of physical appetites, especially the sexual appetite, Not spiritual or intellectual, physical, having no moral or spiritual interests, worldly.

The sensual lifestyle of the Gentiles causes them to do all types of things unrestrained and insatiably.
VERSE 4:20 - 24

In verse 21, Paul is referring to the truth that abides in Jesus of Nazareth when he “the truth in Jesus.” When Jesus said that he was the truth

It is interesting here that Paul says that the people had to be taught to put off the old self. That is, we must be taught to live a life in Christ and to refrain from living the life we used to live in sin. What corrupts us? According to Paul we are corrupted by our deceitful desires. These deceitful desires are a direct result of the sin nature (the old way or old man). The desires are deceitful because they may appear harmless, but they ultimately lead to death because the sin nature that is not eradicated will lead one to death.

It appears that the Ephesian Christians were not living a life in Christ, at least not completely. This is probably why he tells them that they must be made new in the attitude of their mind. This is consistent with what Paul said in another place.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) — [1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The way that we become new, as far as life style is concerned, is to renew the way we think in our mind. A person who is bound will remain bound even if he is set free if he believes that he is still bound and not free. Therefore, though the fact is that a person is born again and filled with the Spirit of God, they must be taught in the ways of LIFE and they must renew the way they think about themselves relative to LIFE and DEATH.

VERSE 4:25

We see that the Christians here must have had a problem with lying or deceit since Paul tells them to speak to their neighbor (most likely fellow Christians) truthfully. This shows that a Christian is not a flawless sinless entity living on the earth. Though we have been born with an new Spirit, we still have much to learn and much to live according to the will of God.

VERSES 4:26-27

Paul tells the Ephesians not to sin in their anger. The word angry here comes from the Greek word orgizo (pronounced or-gid’-zo) which means to provoke or enrage, i.e. become exasperated (irritated, wroth):—be angry (wroth). Note that he didn’t say that anger was a sin. However, the results or consequences of anger may result in you sinning. There are two ways to apply this scripture, both being taught in the bible.

The first way is to interpret this scripture as instruction or advise not to sin if we are angry and to therefore diffuse that anger as soon as possible. The bible says,

See Matthew 5:22-27.

In the above scripture we can see what can happen if anger is allowed to kindle. It can cause sin or at the least it can cause you trouble. See also Matthew 18:15-17. This particular scripture records Jesus’ teaching or resolving problems between to people. The priority is to be reconciled with each other.

Another way to look at Ephesians 4:26 is revealed in Psalms 4:4 which says:

Psalm 4:4 (NKJV) — [4] Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah
The word awe (translated angry in the NIV) comes from the Hebrew word ragaz, (raw-gaz’) which means to quiver (with any violent emotion, especially anger or fear):--be afraid, disquiet, fall out, fret, move, provoke, quake, rage, shake, tremble, trouble, be wroth. Here we see that we may sin out of fear or anxiety of some situation we are facing. We may go outside of the will of God and into disobedience because of our fear (See the study The Effects of Fear for more information). So we can be afraid but do not go against God. Just trust him.

It is very possible to sin if we let the sun go down while we are still angry. Do not carry anger long at all. It is a negative emotional energy that affects our life in degrading ways. It could lead to resentment, unforgiveness, and sin. We give Satan an opportunity if we are angry and holding that anger. He can begin to speak things into our mind that will nurture the anger and cause it to grow until we do something that we later regret.

VERSE 4:28
There appears to have been an issue with theft in Ephesus. Paul instructs thieves not to steal but to work to earn wages so that they can help someone else who is in need (and perhaps keep them from stealing).

VERSE 4:29
A Christian’s talk should be edifying to others. This verse is usually applied to using profanity, however, it goes beyond that. It goes into the conversation of a believer. Does that conversation produce life (builds up) or does it produce death (tearing down). The bible says,

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) — [21] Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

That word power in the above scripture comes from the Hebrew word yad (pronounced yawd) and means a hand (the open one [indicating power, means, direction, etc.]. Therefore, not only can we be destroyed with our own speech but we can also destroy others as well.

VERSES 4:30-31
In verse 30 Paul indicates that the Holy Spirit can be grieved which implies that the Holy Spirit is a person. Just imagine the power that God has given the Christian and instead of doing good works we fight among each other over trivial insignificant matters.

Paul says for the Ephesians, which applies to us also, to put away:

- Bitterness
- Rage (wrath) - indignation
- Anger - From the Greek word orge (or-gay’) which means desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind), i.e. (by analogy) violent passion (ire [where the word Ireland comes from], or [justifiable] abhorrence); by implication punishment: --anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath. Note that the word anger here is different than the one in verse 26. Verse 26 refers to irritation or the emotional state of anger whereas verse 30 refers to the above definition.
- Brawling (clamor) - an outcry
- Slander (speaking evil of untruly or truthfully with the intent to destroy).
- Malice (evil, wickedness) - A desire to harm others or to see others suffer. Malice can easily from resentment (unforgiveness). We can resent a person so much that we will take joy in seeing them suffer, and some people may even take an active part in seeing them suffer. The bible says, however,

Proverbs 24:17 (NKJV) — [17] Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when
he stumbles;

Therefore malice can take many forms even of good and righteousness. However, the heart of the matter will reveal what the intent really is: life or death, good or evil. That is why the bible says,

*Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV) — [7] For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.*

**VERSE 4:32**

Forgiveness (not being resentful or holding grudges) sets the atmosphere for you to be kind and compassionate to others. Note also that God forgave us unconditionally and we should do the same being in his image.
CHAPTER 5

VERSES 5:1-2

We should imitate God as children imitates their parents. However, in order for us to imitate God we have to be with God. We can “be with” God to imitate him by knowing his word. We can learn how God operates and by what mode he operates and we can therefore operate the same way.

We are also to live a life of Love since God is love (See 1 John 4:8).

VERSES 5:3-5

There must not be any seed or hint of sexual immorality, any kind of impurity, or greed. Paul says that these are improper (not becoming of) a child of God. Paul also says in verse four,

(Ephesians 5:4 NIV) Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

• obscenity: The quality or state of being obscene (offensive to accepted standards of decency), indecency or offensiveness in expression, behavior, or appearance.

• foolish talk and coarse joking: This refers to dirty jokes and the like and not normal humor.

VERSES 5:5-7

An immoral, impure, or greedy person is an idolater because they put things of pleasure before God. The things that they lust after to please their flesh or greed becomes their god.

There is also a hint that people were trying to justify their lustful lifestyle and teaching people that the immoral things were all right. The words that these people speak are empty because they have no truth in them. The punishment of God comes on those who are immoral (disobedient) and we should therefore avoid entering into partnership with these people (See 2 Corinthians 6:14).

VERSES 5:8-10

See Matthew 5:14-16 and 1 John 1:5 for a reference to verse eight. Those things that come from the light are found in righteousness, goodness, and truth. Also note that he says we should find out what pleases God. See Romans 8:8 and Hebrews 11:6).

VERSES 5:11-14

Paul warns the people not to have anything to do with the vain deeds of darkness (evil), and that those fruitless deeds of darkness should be exposed, i.e., seen for what it is—sin/evil. This does not mean to expose people publicly because of their sins, since that will most likely have the opposite effect, namely they may go deeper in denial as they simply defend themselves from your attack. What is being exposed here is not people, but rather the sins that people commit. For example, if your friend drinks too much alcohol and gets drunk frequently, then you would expose his drunkeness to him so that he can see that he has a problem. You wouldn’t announce to everyone that your friend is a drunkard because overall you simply want him to stop being an alcoholic.

With that said, there are times that the person needs to be exposed if they do not receive the chastisement from others, but rather continues in their sin (See 1 Corinthians 5:1-7). These Activities going on in the church or even in your personal life should be exposed by the light which is in Christ.
The bible says,

*John 1:4-5 NIV*  *In him was life, and that life was the light of men. (5) The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

**VERSES 5:15-17**

There are two points to consider in these verses. The first is that we should live wisely making use of every opportunity we have to live according to God's standards of living. The second is that we must know what the will of God is to live according to his standards. It appears that Paul implies that knowing what the will of God is leads to wisdom.

**VERSE 5:18**

Paul says not to be drunk with wine and that drunkenness leads to debauchery. The word debauchery means *excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures.* It follows that a drunken person is not operating with the full capacities of his mind. The things that would be filtered resulting in refrain is allowed to occur. Drunkenness places the person in a different state of consciousness.

The Greek present tense is used to indicate that the filling of the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience. Repeatedly, as the occasion requires, the Spirit empowers for worship, service, and testimony. Being filled with the Spirit will result in the filled person being influenced by that Spirit just as being filled with wine will result in the person being influenced by that drunkenness.

**VERSE 5:19-20**

- **Psalm** - Set piece of music (sacred ode) accompanied by voice, harp, or other instruments
- **Hymn** - To celebrate, religious ceremonial music
- **Spiritual Songs** - spiritual chant or “ode”, a religious metrical composition.
- **ode** - A lyrical poem, often in praise of an object, person, or quality and usually marked by exalted style.

The emphasis here seems to be that of giving thanks to God in all things. I am not of the opinion that we should thank God for everything that happens to us since God is not involved with everything that happens to us. If I disobey God and suffer the consequences, I don't think that I should thank God for them. If anything I think we should thank God for those things that are from God or of God. We should thank God for getting us out of trouble or for the way out of trouble and not for trouble itself.

I must also add that Paul told the Ephesians to make melody in their hearts. The word heart here comes from the Greek word kardia (pronounced kar-dee'-ah) and it means the heart, i.e. (figuratively) the thoughts or feelings (mind). The word heart here is referring to the mind or soul as opposed to the spirit.

**VERSE 5:21**

Submission is the key thought for understanding Paul's view of proper personal relationships in a Christian household; the subjection is to be mutual and based on reverence for God. The differing responsibilities, if followed, bring harmony, but, if ignored, they bring difficulties. The word submit used in this verse means to make yourself subject to someone else. Our submitting to one another is done out of reverence (respect) for God.
Submitting, in my opinion, is a guard against pride and the pursuit of self interests above the whole. If we submit to each other than all of our needs are met and we are not stepping on people to get what we want. I must also say there that I do not believe that submission means that we blindly obey what others tell us. It is a mutual submission that, if followed or practiced, will bring peace and require balance to maintain.

**Verses 5:22-24**

Wives are to submit to the leadership of their husbands in the home they are to respect their husbands (see verse 33); they are to love their husbands (Titus 2:4) and live with them until death (Romans. 7:2-3). Submission here refers to yield your own rights. True biblical submission can only occur if both parties have been filled with the Spirit. Paul seems to give this association.

It is important for wives and husbands to know that submission does not mean obedience as in the military. This type of obedience is never referred to in the entire New Testament except in the case of children obeying their parents (Ephesians 6:1) and slaves (servants) obeying their masters (Ephesians 6:5).

**Verses 5:25-33**

Husbands are to love their wives, lead them, nurture them in the things of Christ, and live with them faithfully for life (Matthew 19:3-9). Husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loves the church and did the things described in verses 25-27 for it.

**Fallacy About Submission**

It is sometimes taught a wife submitting to her husband means that she has to obey him at all times. That is not what submission from a biblical sense means. Submission is done for reasons of trust and peace. The husband is not the boss of the house but the head (or leader) of the wife in the same way that Christ is the head (leader) of the church. Remember that Jesus died for the church. The husband in a sense sticks his neck out for the wife, so to speak. The husband covers his wife, protects his wife, and ultimately loves his wife, and the wife voluntarily puts herself under that covering, protection, and love. That is what submission really is.

I should also say that the husband in many ways submits himself to his wife for her benefit. Recall that Jesus said that the husband and the wife are one flesh (Matthew 19:5, Ephesians 5:31, Genesis 2:24). Therefore, since the wife is not inferior to her husband (she too was given dominion over the earth in God’s original creation), she can stand side by side with him as he leads. She will likewise protect him, cover him, and love him, and he will put himself under his wife’s covering, love, and protection.

Therefore, submission is a mutual act between husband and wife, so husbands do not rule the wife and the wife does not blindly obey or rule the husband. Rather, both look to God and both do the will of God practicing Godliness and peace in the relationship.

The word “love” used in these verses come from the Greek word agapao (pronounced ag-ap-ah’-o) and means to love (in a social or moral sense). The word love is defined as Unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for the well-being of another. Therefore, we see that the husband should have an UNSELFISH AND LOYAL CONCERN FOR THE WELL BEING OF THE WIFE. This state may manifest itself in many ways. A husband may make sure that the wife has all that she needs and desires (to the best of his abilities and resources). The husband may cook for her or make sure she is comfortable, etc.
I am not of the opinion that opening the car door, telling the wife she is loved as a rule is loving the wife. These things may be done for the benefit or sake of the wife to meet here emotional or personal needs. It also may just be the practice of Gallantry on behalf of the wife. See my study on *Marriage, Togetherness, and Relationship* for more information on this. To love is not the activity. The manifestation of this love will take on many forms or activities. This must be remembered else we can get into this rule or this formula in marriage relationships that may, in themselves, do more harm than good. The best way to strengthen a marriage is to strengthen togetherness (in my opinion). This togetherness requires that the husband and the wife get to know each other, especially how each other communicates. Enough of this for now.

Paul also equates loving the wife with loving the body. That is, a husband should love his wife in the same way he loves his own self, though the manifestation of such will be different. Remember that the love we are talking about is a concern for the well being of another. Therefore, just as a husband is concerned about the well being of himself, he should be concerned about the well being of his wife. It must be unselfish to his wife else he will only pursue self interests at the expense of his wife’s well being and thus the relationship.

Paul says that the union of Christ and the Church is not understood by the mind (it is a mystery). This also indicates that the type of oneness in marriage that is taught in the bible can only really occur if both parties are saved. There cannot be oneness if one is born again and the other is not. Darkness has no fellowship with light. Wherever one is the other is not. Therefore, a true marriage (a marriage ordained in heaven by God and according to God” will) is only realized when both are saved. Otherwise they cannot agree and if they don’t agree they cannot walk (live) together effectively. We see the following question in the bible:

*(Amos 3:3 NIV)* Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

This question, along with the others in *Amos 3:3-6*, were designed to show Israel how its sin had separated it from God. We also note that the wives should respect the husband (all done in love, i.e., mutual concern for each other).

**CHAPTER 6**

**VERSES 6:1-4**

Paul instructs the children to obey their parents. The word obey in verse one comes from the Greek word hupakouo (pronounced hoop-ak-oo'-o) and it means to hear under (as a subordinate), i.e. to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority:--hearken, be obedient to, obey.

We also note that the obedience to one’s parent is a doorway into doing well and enjoying long life on the earth.

**Should a child obey ungodly parents?**

Paul says that children should obey their parents. What if the parents are not saved and they tell the child to do ungodly things? Should the child obey? Consider this before you answer. You will always be your parent’s child. Some believe that the child should obey the parent no matter what. Where do you draw the line? Can the child draw the line? Let’s look at what God said relative to child-parent relationship and protocol.

*(Exodus 20:12 NIV)* "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

*(Leviticus 19:3 NIV)* "Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God."
(Deuteronomy 21:18-21 NIV) If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, {19} his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. {20} They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." {21} Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

You can see from the above scriptures that obeying the parents is very important to God. There were great consequences for being a stubborn child who would not receive instruction. However, the basis of the original question is not properly placed. That is, it is not the child’s responsibility to know when he/she should obey and when not. It is the responsibility of the parent to give sound instruction during the years of the child’s youth and remain a good example in the child’s older and adult years.

Therefore, the original question “Should a child obey ungodly parents” is not applicable. Who else is the child going to obey. A child is empty in the beginning and has an affinity to be filled by his/her environment. The parent should be the main source of that filling. If not then someone or something else will!

In verse four Paul instructs the fathers not to exasperate (irritate to a high degree, provoke to rage) their children. Instead they are to raise them in the training and instruction of the Lord. This is important since a child is molded from the crib. All that a kid becomes was determined by the influences in his/her life while growing up. Therefore, the child will be naturally with God, as with all other things that he/she experiences while growing up, and will live a life according to the Godly instruction that he/she received. The bible says in another place

(Proverbs 22:6 NIV) “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

VERSES 6:5-8

Now Paul shifts his attention to servants (slaves). Paul encourages the slaves (servants) to obey their masters as unto the LORD. He tells them that they should do their jobs with integrity and not only when they are or think they are being watched. This applies to us even today on our jobs and work that we do for others.

**SERVANT**

Person totally responsible to and dependent upon another person.

Slavery was prevalent and widely accepted in the ancient world. The economy of Egypt, Greece, and Rome was based on slave labor. In the first Christian century, one out of three persons in Italy and one out of five elsewhere was a slave. Huge gangs toiled in the fields and mines and on building projects. Many were domestic and civil servants. Some were temple slaves and others craftsmen. Some were forced to become gladiators. Some were highly intelligent and held responsible positions. Legally, a slave had no rights; but, except for the gangs, most were treated humanely and were better off than many free persons. Domestics were considered part of the family, and some were greatly loved by their masters. Canaan, Aram, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia had fewer slaves because it proved less expensive to hire free persons. Still, the institution of slavery was unquestioned. The Stoics insisted that slaves were humans and should be treated accordingly; Israel’s law protected slaves in various ways; Christian preachers called upon masters to be kind, but only the Essenes opposed slavery. See Essenes; Jewish Parties.

A person could become a slave as a result of capture in war, default on a debt, inability to support and "voluntarily" selling oneself, being sold as a child by destitute parents, birth to slave parents, conviction of a crime, or kidnapping and piracy. Slavery cut across races and nationalities.
Manumission or freeing of slaves was possible and common in Roman times. Masters in their wills often freed their slaves, and sometimes they did so during their lifetimes. Industrious slaves could make and save money and purchase their own freedom. By the first Christian century, a large class of freedmen had developed. There was even a synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9).

Slavery in the Old Testament Slavery laws appear in Exodus 21:1-11; Leviticus 25:39-55; and Deuteronomy 15:12-18. Most of these concern humane treatment and manumission. A Hebrew sold to another Hebrew or a resident alien because of insolvency was to be released after six years of service and given provisions to start over. If he had come with a wife, she and any children were also released. If the master had given him a wife, she and the children were to remain. If, however, the slave wanted to stay with his wife and children rather than be free, he could enroll himself as a slave for life. A Hebrew who sold himself to another Hebrew or resident alien was to be released during the Jubilee Year. See Year of Jubilee. A slave could be redeemed at any time by a relative. A Hebrew girl sold by her father to another Hebrew to become his wife was to be released if that man or his son did not marry her. A slave permanently maimed by his or her master was to be freed (Ex. 21:26-27). A fugitive slave—presumably one who had escaped from a foreign owner—was not to be extradited (Deuteronomy 23:15-16). Foreigners could be enslaved permanently, but they had the right to circumcision (Ex. 12:44-48), Sabbath rest (Ex. 20:10), and holidays (Deuteronomy 16:11,14). One was to be punished for beating a slave to death (Ex. 21:20-21).

Slavery in the New Testament Paul and Peter insisted that Christian slaves be obedient to their masters (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:18-21) and not seek freedom just because of conversion (1 Corinthians. 7:20-22). Masters were urged to be kind (Ephesians 6:9; Col. 4:1). Slave trading was condemned (1 Tim. 1:10). Paul claimed that in Christ human status was unimportant (Gal. 3:28). But neither Jesus nor the apostles condemned slavery. Why? Because slavery was so much a part of their society that to call for abolition would have resulted in violence and bloodshed. That is not the Christian way! Rather, Jesus and the apostles set forth principles of human dignity and equality which eventually led to abolition.

Notice that Paul says that God would reward those who do good. See Matthew 16:27 and Colossians 3:24.

VERSE 6:9
Paul now instructs the masters (those who owned slaves) to treat their slaves in the same way that he instructed the slaves to treat their service. The masters were not to threaten them. The master of all does not show favoritism and all will have to answer for his/her acts. See Matthew 18:22-35 (examine the way the master treated the servant and how God treated the master of the servant for his acts to the servant).

VERSE 6:10
(Ephesians 6:10 KJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Unfortunately this is one of those familiar scriptures and familiar scriptures are usually the one that is usually not understood. Therefore, let’s analyze this scripture to get its full meaning (converging on what Paul most likely was saying).

The word strong comes from the Greek word endunamoo (pronounced en-doo-nam-o’o) and means to empower:—enable, (increase in) strength, be (make) strong.

The word power here comes from the Greek word kratos (pronounced krat’-os; perh) and it means vigor [“great”] (lit. or fig.):—dominion, might, power, strength.
The word might comes from the Greek word ischus (pronounced is-khoos’) and it means forcefulness (lit. or fig.):—ability, might, power, strength.

Compiling these definitions we see that Paul was saying:

“Be made strong, increase in strength and empowered in the Lord and in the dominion (realm) of God’s ability and power.”

Notice that Paul says to “be strong.” How can we ‘Be strong.’ This is similar when God said ‘Be Holy as I am Holy.’ (See Leviticus 11:44-45). I believe that the next verses tells us how to be strong I the Lord.

VERSE 6:11

I believe that we can be strong by putting on the whole armor of God. Putting on this armor enables us to stand against the Devil’s schemes. Therefore, putting on this armor in some way strengthens us to take a stand.

Why should we be strengthened in the Lord and not just strengthened? The next verse answers this question.

VERSE 6:12

Who do we fight? Do we fight men? No! our battle (struggle) is not with flesh and blood. Our battle is with evil beings in the unseen realm of the world and with spiritual forces in the spirit realm. Therefore, we must realize that the person who is against us is only against what we stand for. Satan is opposed to the things of God. and therefore, will be opposed to your good works. Our battle is a spiritual battle. What is necessary effectively stand in the spirit realm? Paul answers that question next.

VERSE 6:13

I really like the way the Amplified Bible words this verse.

“Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand you ground on the evil day [of danger], and having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place].” - AMPLIFIED

With the armor of God on you will be able to resist the schemes of evil. Remain standing even after you have done all that is necessary. The reason we put on God’s armor is because our battle is not with flesh and blood but in the spirit realm.

VERSE 6:14-18

The armor of God, according to Paul, consists of the following:

**Belt of truth buckled around your waist** - The first thing that is necessary to fight is integrity (truth). This truth holds everything else together for battle. The believer’s integrity is directly linked to righteousness which will protect his heart like a breastplate. This righteousness refers to a right-standing with God the father.

**Gospel of Peace** - The readiness and preparedness to stand comes from the Gospel of peace. The word peace here means to set at one again, prosperity. I like to think of it as putting back into agreement. This agrees with the ministry of reconciliation. I believe that this element of the armor is important because the bible says

*(Romans 1:16 NIV)* "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."
The shield of faith - The shield of faith will allow the believer to extinguish all of the fiery arrows of the evil one. Note that the shield of faith is held above the armor (in addition to). The shield is mobile allowing you to defend yourself against the advances of the evil one. The word faith here comes from the Greek word pistis (pronounced pis'-tis) and means persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God).

The important thing about faith is that 1) it operates on hope (which must remain alive and active) and 2) It allows the believer to overcome all of the obstacles and trials that are faced. Faith is not dependent on the circumstance except that it is activated directionally (used for a particular purpose). Without faith the believer is likely to succumb to the circumstance and fall.

Helmet of Salvation - The word salvation in this verse comes from the Greek word soterion (pronounced so-tay'-ree-on; neut) and means defender or (by implication.) defense. Therefore, part of the armor is a defense against the evil one.

Sword of the Spirit - The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. The offensive weapon of the believer is the word of God. How do we use the offensive weapon? That is next.

(Ephesians 6:18 NIV) "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

I believe that the method of our fighting is through prayer. After all prayer is our link to the spiritual realm. Our prayers should be in line with the word of God. Therefore, when we pray we fight. When we are against oppositions we pray to eliminate the offender. I must also add that the Greek word translated to pray in this verse also means to worship. Therefore, our worship has power as a sword.

Paul also says to watch (stay awake, be sleepless as on guard). Your armor and weapons will be useless if you are not aware and alert.

Summary of the Armor

I believe that Paul was simply saying that the Christian should have integrity (truth), righteousness (and a revelation of such), always ready (the power of which is the Gospel), Faith, a defense (salvation), and the word of God, and to always pray to activate the fighting (offense and defense).

A Word about the Sword of the Spirit.

The sword of the spirit is called the word of God. Is this referring to the Bible? No. Recall that there was no bible (New Testament) as we know it. Therefore, Paul could not have been referring to the Bible. What was he referring to. Paul was simply referring to the spoken (and written) word of God. We have to be ready at all times to hear God's voice and act on his voice. Therefore, not only is it necessary to know the written word of God as it is revealed in the Bible, we must also be sensitive to his voice within us at all times so that we will be able to act on that as well as any situation deems necessary.

Verse 6:19-20

Though Paul is considered as one of the greatest apostles that have ever lived, he asks for prayer so that he will continue to speak the word of God fearlessly. Though Paul was a great man of God he still needed prayer. There is power in prayer.
RESOURCES USED

The following is a list of the resources that were used in creating this study guide.

2. Ephesians by Walter L. Liefeld (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series)
3. The Student Bible Atlas by Dr. Tim Dowley