



# By Grace Through Faith

## Paul's letter to the Ephesians

*“—to bring everything together in the Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.”*  
Ephesians 1:10 [HCSB]

Paul's letter—shared with the Ephesians, and now with us—reveals to us the wonder of how Jesus Christ is the lynch pin of time and eternity, heaven and earth, creature and creator, Jew and Gentile, and Salvation and discipleship. This is a letter that highlights once more the grace of God received through faith resulting in life lived anew with God. Over the next 6 weeks Figtree Anglican will study the 6 chapters of Ephesians through Sunday teaching and LifeGroups.

	Sunday Focus	Study Focus
<b>Week One</b>	Ephesians 1:1-14	Ephesians 1 (15-23)
<b>Week Two</b>	Ephesians 2:1-10	Ephesians 2 (11-22)
<b>Week Three</b>	Ephesians 3:1-13	Ephesians 3 (14-21)
<b>Week Four</b>	Ephesians 4:1-16	Ephesians 4 (17-32)
<b>Week Five</b>	Ephesians 5:1-21	Ephesians 5 (1-21)
<b>Week Six</b>	Ephesians 5:22-6:9	Ephesians 6 (10-23)

### Helpful Resources

O'Brien P.T. | The Letter to the Ephesians (out of print)

[Lionelwindsor.net](http://Lionelwindsor.net) | 'Lift your eyes' writing and exegetical podcasts on Ephesians

FAC Sermons | [www.youtube.com/figtreeTVstream](http://www.youtube.com/figtreeTVstream) | Series starts 21 August 2022



## Study One | Ephesians One

Think about the clothes you chose to wear today. What influenced the decisions you made in selecting them?

### Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. Paul opens his letter by confirming God's grace to His people:
  - a. What does it mean to be *"blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens"* [HCSB]? (verse 3)
  - b. How have we come to be in Christ? (verse 4)
  - c. What motivated God's choice for us to be in Christ? (verses 4b and 5)
  - d. What was the cost of God's grace? (verse 7)
2. Consider again verse 4. What is God's desired outcome in choosing us?
3. How do you understand these outcomes?

### Optional Extension Assignment

In Christ (In Him) is a common phrase in Paul's letters. It speaks to our union with Christ. Examine Ephesians 1:1-14 and list the blessings of being 'In Christ'.

For further study on Union with Christ:

- *Constantine R. Campbell | Paul and union with Christ.*
- *Figtree Anglican Sermon series search 'United' at [figtree.church/sermons](http://figtree.church/sermons)*

4. Considering what we have investigated, how does this inform your understanding or feeling about God's grace?

### Read Ephesians 1:15-23

5. Paul begins the next section *'for this reason.'* What is the reason?
6. What is it Paul gives thanks for? In verse 15 there are two things, how does one influence the other?
7. Paul's prayer is twofold, what are the two major elements? (Verses 16-17)
8. What does Paul ask of God for the Ephesians?

### Reread verse 18

9. Hearts don't have eyes! – so what do you suppose is being said in this image language?
10. When you reflect on what is being said in verses 18-19, how do you come to understand what it is to be saved?
11. In moments of theological dispute, a popular phrase is 'This is not a salvation issue.' Based on what you have learnt how is this phrase both helpful and limited?
12. Once again Paul is speaking about God in verses 20-23. Now it's about God's power! What do you understand of God's power from this?
13. How does reflecting on a gracious and powerful God, influence Faith?
14. What areas of your life do you think growing in faith in God's grace and power can change?

# Study One | Leaders Notes

## How to use:

Before we get started, please understand the study is simply a tool for meeting the Lord together in the scriptures. It's not a test! Therefore, you don't need to complete all the questions to have success! At the same time sometimes we feel we don't want to get bogged down in plain 'comprehension.' The truth is sometimes we need to do that most basic of work, and do it together. Its hard to come to unified mind on what the text means, if we don't have a united mind on what it says. To this day I believe one of the best things about being trained (And not very good) in New Testament Greek, is it simply slows me down, and causes me to read carefully.

The pastoral skill in leading your group is to discern which questions will work best for your group – there may be more than you need. A mentor of mine describes a bible study booklet as like a lawnmower. 'Its quite powerful, but its only effective if you push it in the right places.'

You know, or are getting to know your group, ask the Lord to equip you in making choices about how this study works best for them.

God bless as you lead and learn,  
Shane

## Think about the clothes you chose to wear today. What influenced the decisions you made in selecting them?

An opening question is a 'mic check', a chance for all to test out the sound of their voice in the group—this can help with more substantial contributions later in the study. This one will help people see a little of one another's personality from the fashion monger to the pragmatist. You will also observe together some elements that will

surface in the reading. These are the idea of 'choosing', just as we have agency and choice over clothes, so does the Almighty. Just as our choice can be influenced by both what we are inclined toward (i.e. I really like the colour red) and the outcomes of choices (i.e. I wore long sleeves so I would not be cold) so we will see some of what lies before and comes from God's choosing. Don't get too serious, have a giggle together.

## Read Ephesians 1:1-14

### 1. Paul opens his letter by confirming God's grace to His people:

#### a. What does it mean to be "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens" [HCSB]? (verse 3)

The Holman Christians Standard bible above is a little clearer than the NIV at this point. The blessing we have received is truly out of this world, it is the best of Heaven come down to us. God has truly held nothing back, and as we will see this is through our union with Christ, this is what all the 'In Christ' language is about.

#### b. How have we come to be in Christ? (verse 4)

God has pro-actively chosen us.

#### c. What motivated God's choice for us to be in Christ? (verses 4b and 5)

His love. God's choice was based on his affection rather than our merit or action or any other thing we can claim.

#### d. What was the cost of God's grace? (verse 7)

Grace came at the cost of Jesus life, the shedding of his blood.

### 2. Consider again verse 4. What is God's desired outcome in choosing us?

Just like choosing a long sleeve jumper might be to keep me from the cold, or a uniform

# Study One | Leaders Notes

might be because I was going to school or work, so God chooses because of his love for the purpose that we might be Holy and blameless in his sight.

NB this is in His sight, we can fool the world, and conversely the world can unfairly condemn but this a matter of an audience of one. 'In his sight.'

### 3. How do you understand these outcomes?

God has saved us in Christ to a new life, or as will come up in later chapters a new 'walk.' It is important to consider these words that are related but not synonyms 'Holy' and blameless.'

**Holy**—When was the first time people are called holy in scripture? See if your group knows? Its Exodus 19:6. The first Holy people are the nation of Israel. How did they become holy? God chose them, that's it. Astoundingly here once again God has chosen, but not only Israel. God has chosen beyond Israel, those who are in Christ to be Holy. Holy is be set apart for the Lord, it's a new status, and a new way to be. Its purely a work of the Lord.

**Blameless**—Sometimes we think perfect but that's not how blameless is used in the OT. There is a bit of a cluster of its use around the wisdom literature. Job is described as blameless. That does not mean he never sins, that's only true of Jesus. The psalms encourage a blameless life, Proverbs likewise. Perhaps a helpful way to understand blameless is with the word integrated. That is calling, status (Holy), and walk or life fit well together. You may think of words like consistency, or as an antonym Hypocrisy.

### Optional Extension Assignment

Verse 10 really demonstrates the importance of Jesus beyond the personal saviour category. He is the cosmic lynch pin holding the God's kingdom together.

To be united with Christ is perhaps the most profound of concepts in the story from creation to new creation.

**In Christ (In Him) is a common phrase in Paul's letters. It speaks to our union with Christ. Examine Ephesians 1:1-14 and list the blessings of being 'In Christ'.**

### 4. Considering what we have investigated, how does this inform your understanding or feeling about God's grace?

Grace is not consolation love, the love you get when you failed to be lovable. God's grace is God's proactive—it's the love according to his own heart that provoked his choice. WOW!

And so yes we say grace is undeserved.

God's grace is the best heaven has to offer, being beyond this world we should not be surprised to be astounded and wrestle to fully comprehend. It's by definition not natural. It will take an eternity to wrap our minds around.

Importantly we understand Grace is always costly for the grace giver (by his blood) and freely received by the grace receiver.

Gods grace is inexhaustible

God's grace which led to his choosing, is irresistible.

### Read Ephesians 1:15-23

### 5. Paul begins the next section 'for this reason.' What is the reason?

God's grace as expounded in the previous section

### 6. What is it Paul gives thanks for? In verse 15 there are two things, how does one influence the other?

Their Faith in the Lord

Their love for all God's people.

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It would seem that trusting (Faith) in a gracious loving God, has reshaped them (blameless) to be imitators and love all God's people who surely are not always all lovable! Faith in the Lord influences godliness, so when we truly trust a loving God, we will actively love others.

## **7. Paul's prayer is twofold, what are the two major elements? (Verses 16-17)**

Thanks giving and requesting

## **8. What does Paul ask of God for the Ephesians?**

The Spirit of wisdom and revelation—That may be understood as the spirits leading to live skilfully—not just to have information but wisdom the ability to apply what we know to avoid folly. Revelation that God would continue to show himself his work to them.

Also see next question.

## **Reread verse 18**

## **9. Hearts don't have eyes! – so what do you suppose is being said in this image language?**

This request is linked to the request for revelation. The heart (in Greek 'Kardia'—think cardiology) is in the New Testament not the place we feel, so much as the seat of conviction. The place where we hold our deep beliefs. The request is that they would not be blind believers but informed by God's revelation they would have a deep understanding of the belief and the hope that they have.

## **10. When you reflect on what is being said in verses 18-19, how do you come to understand what it is to be saved?**

We rightly celebrate the one stop shop that is salvation—we are saved by Christ and made holy and righteous—game over. But also game not over, game just begun! We are saved just like those first 12 we read about in the gospels into a journey with Jesus, we

call the journey discipleship. It is a journey where the saved, righteous, saints walk with their Lord, learning to understand him more deeply, trust him more profoundly, by the power of His Spirit be conformed to his likeness. Salvation should never really be thought of or acted out as an end point, it's the end of 'following the prince of the air'. Ephesians 2:1-2, and have BEGUN to walk with the Messiah.

## **11. In moments of theological dispute, a popular phrase is 'This is not a salvation issue.' Based on what you have learnt how is this phrase both helpful and limited?**

The phrase is of course helpful when we understand it to mean "*this is not an issue that will prevent anyone from coming to meet the Lord.*" However, it is also reductionist. If we believe salvation is journeying with Jesus, the beginning of a discipleship journey, than in one sense everything is a salvation issue. Not an issue that would cost us our relationship with Jesus, but something that we wrestle with to truly discern as best we can where the Lord is leading and what His mind is on the issue. We seek His revelation, that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened.

## **12. Once again Paul is speaking about God in verses 20-23. Now its about God's power! What do you understand of God's power from this?**

The power of God is demonstrated in the resurrection. This is power over death, the great enemy of this life. However resurrection is not resuscitation, God has the power to raise humanity to a higher plain, a new status. Jesus is the first of the new creation, the new humanity that does not die and is not diseased by sin. ALL things, means all things, and they have been placed under His feet. Once again we see Jesus as the cosmic lynch pin who is powerful over all things on earth, in heaven, and under the earth. This leads to our final question where we start think about

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how we might face down those things we might either fear or disproportionately hope in.

## **13. How does reflecting on a gracious and powerful God, influence Faith?**

We are now reflecting on a God who is benevolent (all good) and Omnipotent (all powerful). Our God is gracious for us, and our God is able, surely this truth increases our willingness to trust in him.

This song means a bit to my personal journey in this area, I offer it you and maybe your group as a reflection piece as you consider these final questions.

[https://youtu.be/n\\_aVFVveJNs](https://youtu.be/n_aVFVveJNs)

## **14. What areas of your life do you think growing in faith in God's grace and power can change?**

A paradigm setting book for me was Tim Keller *Counterfeit gods*. In summary Keller argues that most of us seek a combination of power/influence, comfort, approval, and control and seek various ways in different ways to satisfy our desire to attain these.

i.e. the great Aussie dream of buying a home may be to satisfy the need to CONTROL our future or gain security, or it could be to satisfy a COMFORT need, or as it is a cultural right of passage in Australia to gain APPROVAL.

These sort of categories may help in thinking about the areas that we do or don't or have not yet realised we can trust God in.

Tim Keller's lecture on Counterfeit gods available here

[https://youtu.be/\\_mK65lpveSM](https://youtu.be/_mK65lpveSM)



# Study Two | Ephesians Two

What primary school did you go to? What did you love or not like about it? Is there something beyond your education from that school that still shapes you today?

## The message so far...

Who	What happened?
<b>God</b> Verses 2-3	A gracious and praiseworthy <b>God</b> (verses 1-3) has demonstrated His grace by pouring out heavenly blessing
<b>Us/We</b> Verses 3-7, 9 and 11-12	and choosing <b>Israel</b> to be His holy and blameless (verse 4) people. He redeemed (verse 7) them when lost, by the blood of His Son, their Messiah – Jesus.
<b>You</b> Verse 13	Now God’s grace has extended further (verse 13). By trusting in Christ, <b>the nations</b> have been sealed with the Holy Spirit into God’s holy and blameless people.
<b>Our</b> Verse 14	So <b>all</b> (verse 14) receive the heavenly blessing through union with Christ. God demonstrated his power (verses 20-23) to bring all things together by raising Christ from the dead. There is not a boundary beyond God!
<b>Paul</b> Verses 15-19	<b>Paul’s</b> prayer is that all of this may be clearly understood with deep conviction in order that <b>all</b> God’s people might grasp the great hope God has given them (verses 16-19).

## Optional preparation study

This will be useful if you missed Sunday’s message

## Read Ephesians 2:1-10

1. Based on your understanding of chapter 1 (note verse 1:13) who is the ‘You’ Paul is addressing now? (Verse 2:1)
2. What does he tell them? (verses 1-2)
3. After telling everybody the good news of salvation (verses 1:13-14), why do you suppose Paul is now rehashing old wounds?
4. Who does Paul insist people are following before coming to Christ?
5. What is the outworking of this brand of ‘discipleship?’
6. Scan verse 3, has Paul shifted who is in focus now? What does he say of those in focus?
7. ‘People are basically good.’ How does this statement sit alongside verses 1-3?
8. How has God Intervened? verses 4-10
9. What do we learn about the nature of God?
10. Discuss faith, based on verses 1-10. Where do you suppose it begins, where does it lead, how does it change us?



## Study Two | Ephesians Two

### Read Ephesians 2:11-22

1. *'Therefore'* (verse 11) assumes we have come to a mind on something. What is it that Paul assumes we have now understood? (verses 3-5 are helpful)
2. Paul seems to have already established the need humans have for rescue. How does he further explain the difficult origins for non-Jews (gentiles)? verses 11-12.
3. Verses 11-13 once more give us a chance to pause and reflect upon the character of God. Think and discuss how his activity teaches us what he is like?
4. Reflect – By now we have established that God's grace is undeserved, is proactively loving, and costly to him. In what ways can a *'free to good home'* sign be both appropriate and inappropriate when thinking about God's grace?
5. Paul draws a wonderful conclusion regarding salvation of gentiles and Jews in Christ (verses 14-17). As we consider God's mission to save, do you feel there is comfort and encouragement we can take away from this?
6. How can we understand verses 15-18 considering Jesus' own statement in Matthew 5:17-20? What is being said, and what is not?
7. Regardless of our origins, how does Paul's insistence on taking his readers to the beginnings of their salvation journey influence our sense of belonging in God's family?
  - a. And what about God's church?
8. Where then does verses 19-22 challenge and encourage our concepts of what makes a member of God's church?
9. Could there be a distinction between friendship and fellowship?
10. What do you suppose Paul is trying to stress about members of God's household?

# Study Two | Leader's Notes

**What primary school did you go to? What did you love or not like about it? Is there something beyond your education from that school that still shapes you today?**

Ephesians 2 will visit origins stories. Paul prayed in verses 15-19 that his readers would gain revelation, wisdom, and indeed understanding. And so in Chapter 2 he will remind them where they have come from. Our mixer question above is one you can't get wrong, and a chance to get to know each other's story, but also learn a little about how our origins can shape us, and help understanding of our journey. I went to a small primary school that rarely did sport. Often, we would have 'folk dancing' [we all hated it] when it was sport time. When I finally got out of that school, and to a school that had proper sport, I grabbed opportunities, and possibly still do. It's also given me at times an unfair bias against schools that don't prize sport. Unfairly I import childhood memories and think perhaps they don't value it at all, if they don't celebrate it – which I'm sure is not actually the case. But as you can see my origins or perception of them tend to influence my perspective.

## **Optional preparation study**

This will be useful if you missed Sunday's message

## **Read Ephesians 2:1-10**

### **1. Based on your understanding of chapter 1 (note verse 1:13) who is the 'You' Paul is addressing now? (Verse 2:1)**

Based on what we have understood from chapter one, and Paul's context and use of pronouns, it seems best to understand Paul as addressing non-Jewish Christians here.

### **2. What does he tell them? (verses 1-2)**

He speaks of their previous condition. Dead in both accidental transgression, and wilful sin. They were aligned to world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

### **3. After telling everybody the good news of salvation (verses 1:13-14), why do you suppose Paul is now rehashing old wounds?**

Consistent with his prayer in verses 1:17-23 Paul is helping his readers see where they came from, and the work God has done. He has no desire to shame them, but to amplify the grace of God. Often it is not until after we have been rescued that we are granted eyes to see the peril that we were actually saved from.

### **4. Who does Paul insist people are following before coming to Christ?**

The ruler of the kingdom of the air. This is a brilliant turn of phrase by Paul. At one level without the law of God, the non-Jews follow the ruler of the air kingdom—the nothing. Filling it with all kinds of ideas and idols. However, Paul does not back away from naming the demonic realm in this letter. Behind the empty kingdom, is the deceiver. The one who stands behind every false object of worship, he is the devil.

### **5. What is the outworking of this brand of 'discipleship?'**

This discipleship, or following of the devil results in disobedience, and death. We see that there is no neutral ground, false worship is rebellion to God.

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## 6. Scan verse 3, has Paul shifted who is in focus now? What does he say of those in focus?

As we have seen in the previous chapter Paul now speaks of 'us', that is the people he comes from, Israel. After explaining how lost the gentiles were, he now explains that even God's holy people lived among the nations and were just like them! They did exactly the reverse of the call in Deuteronomy to not be like the nations, and instead went about gratifying the cravings of the sinful nature. Paul's argument is similar to that of Romans 1:18-3:20—once again he shows the culpability of all humanity, Jew and non-Jew alike.

## 7. 'People are basically good.' How does this statement sit alongside verses 1-3?

We may choose to say people are basically nice, we may choose to say people do many good things. However the popular thought that people are basically good does not stand up to biblical examination. People are basically bad. This understanding of our origins is critical to understanding what God has done, is doing, and will do. Today many thoughts and conversations are distorted by a failure to receive and believe this inconvenient truth.

Francis Chan sums this up well in 5min here. <https://youtu.be/hlNx7m1KW7Y>

## 8. How has God Intervened? verses 4-10

Verse 4 begins with the most significant of 'buts' We see that rather than pour out his wrath and give us the punishment we deserve (mercy—holds back that punishment that is deserved), God gives us what we don't deserve (grace is unmerited love) – he gives us salvation.

His love is demonstrated in mercy and grace. A trend of society is to seek punishment. Often today when the public hears a person has crossed a line, they demand punishment. That the person be fired or cancelled or whatever. Often apologies are not deemed sufficient. They must pay is the mindset. Here we see that that was not God's perspective, his grace and mercy triumph.

## 9. What do we learn about the nature of God?

We see his justice, we see his wrath, we see his capacity to judge and that these are not small. At the same time we see that he delights more in grace and mercy, and for sinners to come to repentance and be saved. We see his love and power in salvation.

So we should not be surprised that the same God will condemn those who are not saved as he is just, and we should not be surprised that for *'the vilest offenders who truly believe, that moment a pardon from Jesus receives.'* (To God be the Glory Lou Fellingham)

## 10. Discuss faith, based on verses 1-10, where do you suppose it begins, where does it lead, how does it change us?

We see faith has its origins with the God who made us alive when we were dead. Even faith is a gift that starts with God, it's not a work – there is no boasting. I am no more in the kingdom after 90 years of faithfulness than the newborn child to Christian parents. Faith leads us to trusting in the hope that we have been raised up with Christ in the heavenly realm and will enjoy the new creation with Him at this return. Further we are changed in that faith redirects passions

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and worship. God's grace received through faith has caused us to be holy, it is faith that directs us into a new walk, it is here where we begin to live the blameless life God has chosen us for (verse 1:4.)

## Read Ephesians 2:11-22

### 1. 'Therefore' (verse 11) assumes we have come to a mind on something. What is it that Paul assumes we have now understood? (verses 3-5 are helpful)

Paul has explained that Jew and gentile alike were both dead, and objects of God's wrath. Paul has explained that both have been made alive in Christ. We have a story of utter helplessness, to a gracious divine intervention, resulting in salvations, received in faith, and causing the faithful to live a new life.

### 2. Paul seems to have already established the need humans have for rescue. How does he further explain the difficult origins for non-Jews (gentiles)? verses 11-12.

The gentiles were outside of God's covenant people. So they were separated from God, the promised Messiah (Christ), and kept apart from God's chosen people. God has set his affection on Israel, they were the chosen (verse 1:4, cf Exodus 19:5-6). They were without hope, they knew nothing of a plan for them to part of the Kingdom of God, and nobody knew how that could come to be, or seemed to care. The key word in these verses is 'Excluded'.

### 3. Verses 11-13 once more give us a chance to pause and reflect upon the character of God. Think and discuss how his activity teaches us what he is like?

If it has not been a talking point already, God's capacity to choose is often a wrestle for people. We cannot offer a conclusive answer

on why God chooses as he does. (Romans 9:14-29). However we can well understand that just as we creatures are capable of choice, and choice that impacts others, all the more the Creator has the agency of choice. Some things we see of God:

- Power to save, and to choose.
- Relational capacity
- Mercy – he holds back wrath
- Grace – he pours out love and gifts salvation
- Sacrificial love – His love cost him
- He is wrathful
- He judges truthfully
- He is not one of us – nor like us (though He became one of us v14)

### 4. Reflect – By now we have established that God's grace is undeserved, is proactively loving, and costly to him. In what ways can a 'free to good home' sign be both appropriate and inappropriate when thinking about God's grace?

This is a real discussion. In many ways we celebrate and see God's power and love to overcome any boundary. We see that he pays the cost, and even faith is a gift. So 'free to good home' is a sign we might place on God's grace.

However, God's grace is not something placed out the front of the gates of heaven with a sign meaning anyone can drive past and pick it up. Yes it's free, but its relational. That is because grace is not a substance but the love of God – so God is involved whenever it is received. So as we have seen, God like anyone chooses his relationships. He opens himself up to be known. Salvation is not just getting out of a place called hell to get into place called heaven, salvation is to be rescued by somebody, from following the ruler of the kingdom of the air, to be made alive In Christ, to come into a new relationship. When we understand God's grace as being a relationship he calls us into,

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through the blood of His son, than despite being freely received, a free to good home sign may not be fitting.

## **5. Paul draws a wonderful conclusion regarding salvation of gentiles and Jews in Christ (verses 14-17). As we consider God's mission to save, do you feel there is comfort and encouragement we can take away from this?**

Seeing God overcome so many boundaries, for those far off, surely encourages us that nobody is beyond the realm of God's power to save. We should never give up on anyone, there is no heart too far, none. Likewise because we are all undeserving we can never think another is too bad for us to pray God's mercy for.

## **6. How can we understand verses 15-18 considering Jesus' own statement in Matthew 5:17-20? What is being said, and what is not?**

Jesus clearly says he has not come to abolish the law. However what does his work do to fulfil the law? Jesus fulfils the law's demand for justice. Because of Jesus the consequence of law, that is condemnation has been satisfied. The law no longer has power to condemn. And as the law no longer has power to condemn, it has also no longer the power to exclude the nations from the people of God. In Christ the nations are made holy. So here we understand that the law's effect of exclusion has been abolished. The law stands as wisdom, but not as law that can condemn.

A brilliant work on Paul and the law is by Brian S. Rosner *Paul and The Law: Keeping the commandments of God*.

## **7. Regardless of our origins, how does Paul's insistence on taking his readers to the beginnings of their salvation journey influence our sense of belonging in God's family?**

It really magnifies God and humbles us. In

being humbled, the pressure is also off. Salvation was never ever going to work if it was on us. It is God the Father of the family, who has made us alive in His Son. In overcoming all things in His strength and love to do this, what could ever unsettle it. Hopefully in reading and considering where have come from, and what God has done, Paul's prayer in verse 1:17-23 is being fulfilled affirmatively. We belong because He made it so.

### **a. And what about God's church?**

The same! Belong to God, belong to his church. Everybody is a gold member in His church. Not time, not service, not influence, not position, not family history, not connections, not giving, not anything can make anyone more a member of God's church than anyone else in Christ. Our membership is a sure as our faith is in Him.

## **8. Where then does verses 19-22 challenge and encourage our concepts of what makes a member of God's church?**

At many times in the ancient church and evident in books like Romans, Acts and perhaps Matthew's gospel there was a bit of squabble as to who really belongs. Do the gentiles really belong? But verse 19-22 point to one linchpin of belonging to God's church and his family, union with Christ. Nothing else, nothing.

## **9. Could there be a distinction between friendship and fellowship?**

Yes, there needs to be. Friendship is union that is shared between two or more people. It is a direct relationship based on interest, familiarity, affection etc. On a larger scale we call this community – unity through commonality.

Fellowship (Koinonia) is different – though similar. Fellowship is is a union that will always require 3, and it is not direct. Jews

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and gentiles were not friends as a people group. However by both being united with Christ they are in fellowship and one people. Fellowship brings two or people together not directly but because they are united to the one Christ.

Therefore we may be strangers who can have fellowship. Likewise we could be friends but don't have fellowship. The concept of fellowship changes how we might think about:

- What really is community at church?
- What level of importance do we put on finding ourselves with Christians we don't know
- Hospitality
- How we handle a break-up between a Christian couple
- Who would I start a business with?
- Who would I share a house with?
- Who should I date / marry?
- What is happening in the Lord's supper?
- Attending a gathering of Christians
- And about a billion other things.

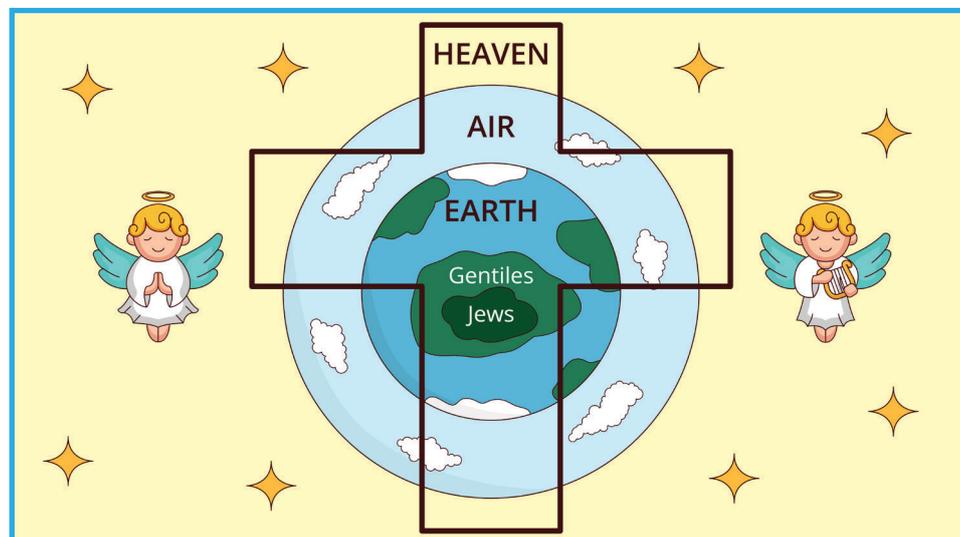
## **10. What do you suppose Paul is trying to stress about members of God's household?**

Because of their union with the one Christ they will be united with one another.



## Study Three | Ephesians Three

1. Pair up and use the picture to the right to jog your memory and retell the first two chapters of Ephesians (with your bible closed)
2. Come back together as a group – share your thoughts together to recall the message in the first two chapters.



### Read Ephesians 3

Paul takes delight in continuing the work of Christ, the true Israelite who preached peace to the non-Jews. He celebrates the grace of God given to him to serve in this way. Along with this, the grace of knowing that in Christ, Gentiles are heirs together with Israel as one body. The immensity of what God has accomplished in Christ delights Paul so much that he asks that his hearers not be discouraged at his sufferings – it is their glory that God would lavish them with grace, demonstrated by the death of a Jewish Messiah, and the suffering service of a Jewish apostle.

### Now focus on verses 14-21

3. What is it that gives Paul confidence to pray? How does his physical posture illustrate his spiritual posture?
4. What do you think is meant by *'from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name'*? (verse 15)
5. **Reread verse 16**
  - a. How do you see Paul's prayer as being consistent with the character of God so far demonstrated in the letter?

- b. What does Paul ask for his Gentile readers?
  - c. How does Paul's prayer for the united (Jew and Gentile) people of God contrast with Israel's failed mission. Reference Jonah 1:1-3 for a representative snap shot.
  - d. Consider the letter so far – how do we see a revelation of the width, length, and depth of the love of Christ. (recall also Ephesians 1:10)
  - e. In what ways has God equipped his people to make Him known?
6. How does Paul's confident prayer challenge the boundaries you may have, or are wrestling with? (verse 20-21)
  7. Think about God being glorified in the church.
    - a. How do you think God is glorified in the church, and what may rob his glory?

# Study Three | Leader's Notes

## 1. Pair up and use the picture to the right to jog your memory and retell the first two chapters of Ephesians (with your bible closed)

It's very important to encourage your group not to see this as a pop quiz or a test. It's an opportunity to recall and encourage one another with the things that God has spoken.

## 2. Come back together as a group – share your thoughts together to recall the message in the first two chapters.

Remember this is not about perfect reconstruction, at the same time it is useful, if as a leader you have revised the two chapters and can help fill in gaps. Be careful not to lecture. Be patient. Try to ask questions or point to areas of the picture to try and jog memories if something you think important has been overlooked.

Recall 1:10 as a programmatic verse for the book. In Christ the realms of heaven and earth engage, blessings stream from heaven, humanity is lifted up, Jews and gentiles are united, we recall the desperate state of following the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Christ is the wonderful expression of God's love, His mercy and His grace.

## Read Ephesians 3

You may wish to investigate verses 1-13 or discuss the message you heard on Sunday which will focus on these verses. However, the study will now centre on Paul's prayer verses 14-21.

## Now focus on verses 14-21

## 3. What is it that gives Paul confidence to pray? How does his physical posture illustrate his spiritual posture?

Paul has celebrated God's great love. Expressed in His mercy (the holding back of His wrath), His grace (His favour beyond merit) and His power in the resurrection of Christ. Paul has most recently celebrated God's grace that has overcome the boundaries of

Jew and gentile and created one people from the two. He understands that gentiles have received full access to the promises of God.

It's well worth a moment's reflection on Paul's posture. It would be easy to think this is the posture of the beggar – after all, lived experience often says that one on their knees is in a posture of trying to win the favour of one in power. This, however, does not do justice to the text we have been reading. For God's full favour (grace) is already poured out, he delights in '*blessing us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing*' it seems a posture to influence more favour from God is redundant. Instead, what may be on display is the humility of a faithful man who recognises the majesty and kindness of a great God and delights to be on his knees before him. That is, he delights in being humbled and dependant on the Lord, he models faith in the Lord's grace.

## 4. What do you think is meant by 'from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name'? (verse 15)

This simply means that God is the creator of all. Jew or gentile, or even angel it is God who creates.

## 5. Reread verse 16

### a. How do you see Paul's prayer as being consistent with the character of God so far demonstrated in the letter?

This prayer demonstrates why praying the scriptures is so important for our prayer life. This is where what God has revealed of himself leads us in how we respond to him.

Paul's prayer focuses on God the family creator who has now made a family from two people groups. (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Paul's prayer reflects his earlier declaration of God's power in the resurrection (Ephesians 1:19-23)

Paul works hard in Ephesians 2:1-10 to

# Study Three | Leader's Notes

establish God's love received by faith

God's holy people have come about because of a God who has blessed from the heavenly realms, overcome the depths of death, and overcome the wide divide of Jew and gentile. Indeed, God has revealed the mystery untold, or at least not understood previously, by doing more than anyone could have understood or known in his salvation of all people in Christ.

**b. What does Paul ask for his Gentile readers?**

See Ephesians 3:16-19

**c. How does Paul's prayer for the united (Jew and Gentile) people of God contrast with Israel's failed mission. Reference Jonah 1:1-3 for a representative snap shot.**

In the promise to Abraham, it was always intended that Abraham (as distinct from his previous name Abram) would be a father of many nations. Israel had a responsibility under God to be the nation where the living God could be seen. The fruitfulness of this peaked when the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon to hear his wisdom. However, the broader reputation of Israel is certainly not exemplary. Israel failed in its call to be blameless, and instead became like the nations. The responsibility to show the nations God fell over both from their failure to be blameless, and an apparent apathy for the nations to know the Lord. Jonah and his rebellion to his call serves as an example of the history of Israel. Now Paul prays that this united Holy people might be filled to the measure – grasping his boundary breaking salvific love and overflowing as a blessing to all.

**d. Consider the letter so far – how do we see a revelation of the width, length, and depth of the love of Christ. (recall also Ephesians 1:10)**

See notes on 5a.

**e. In what ways has God equipped his people to make Him known?**

All of what Paul prays and asks for these people has been revealed by God. The one-time mystery has been made known in Christ. God has demonstrated His character and shown His plan for salvation in Christ. To make Christ known is to make God known, and Christ has been revealed.

**6. How does Paul's confident prayer challenge the boundaries you may have, or are wrestling with? (verse 20-21)**

This is a reflection question, we must understand that God has shown His capacity to do more, and his willingness to give more.

**7. Think about God being glorified in the church.**

**a. How do you think God is glorified in the church, and what may rob his glory?**

God is glorified when Churches place Christ, as he is revealed, at the centre and exist for him. When churches adjust the revelation of Christ he is robbed. When Churches place people and their concerns, needs, or feelings, central over Christ, God is robbed of His glory.



# Study Four | Ephesians Four

**Speed Intros:** Set a timer and take 1 minute each to introduce yourselves to another member of the group. Work through everyone. But here is the catch, you are not to use your name as you try to authentically introduce yourself.

Following the exercise, talk as a group about some of the intros and ways of identifying that you heard.

## Read Ephesians 4

1. Paul has taken us on a quite a journey already. Considering Ephesians 1:13, 2:3, 2:19-21 and 3:6, who does Paul now address in Ephesians 4:17?
  - a. How does Ephesians 4:17 assume a new identity and a fresh beginning?
2. Consider again Ephesians 2:2 against 4:17-19. In what ways do you understand God's grace being an opportunity for repentance?
  - a. How can we understand God's grace as different to simply ignoring a problem?

### Reflection Time

Re-read verse 19 – where do you feel you may have lost 'sensitivity'. Pause to pray over the areas that arise.

3. Verses 20-24 speak of the new and the old you. Use the silhouettes above and your knowledge of Ephesians along with knowledge of yourself to mark the elements of the old, the new, and the areas in tension / progress.




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4. Ephesians 4:25 is quite a list! How does this differ from just another 'law'? Use your knowledge of Ephesians thus far to help explain your reasoning.
5. Scan the list in verses 25-32. As you review your journey from old to new in the outlines above, is there anything you would like to bring before the Lord, or share for encouragement and help to grow in?

### Optional Extension Question

Where is the Holy Spirit seen at work in Ephesians? Based on His work and the context of verse 30 How do you suppose we might 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God?'

# Study Four | Leader's Notes

**Speed Intros:** Set a timer and take 1 minute each to introduce yourselves to another member of the group. Work through everyone. But here is the catch, you are not to use your name as you try to authentically introduce yourself.

**Following the exercise, talk as a group about some of the intros and ways of identifying that you heard.**

The exercise above is hopefully fun and helps group members find their voice. The idea is also to begin to re-imagine beyond the old label, who we are?

## Read Ephesians 4

Our focus today will be on Ephesians 4:17-32

### 1. Paul has taken us on a quite a journey already. Considering Ephesians 1:13, 2:3, 2:19-21 and 3:6, who does Paul now address in Ephesians 4:17?

The references noted are part of Paul's demonstration of how God has removed the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and non-Jew and made one people. Paul has specifically addressed Jews (we/us), non-Jews (you) through the letter. As chapter 4 opens a commonality seems to have been well established in both need for salvation and incorporation to the one people of God. It would seem now he addressed all his hearers collectively.

#### a. How does Ephesians 4:17 assume a new identity and a fresh beginning?

As Paul addresses the whole group, he calls them to no longer live like the gentiles do. In his group are gentiles, and Jews who lived no different to them (Ephesians 2:3). Now he seems to say, You are a new people, a new people in Christ, so even if you were a gentile, or merely lived like one, live according to the new calling you have - holy and blameless. (Ephesians 1:4)

### 2. Consider again Ephesians 2:2 against 4:17-19. In what ways do you understand God's grace being an opportunity for repentance?

At one time there was 'dead discipleship' - a following of the ruler of the kingdom of the air. But God made us alive in Christ because of his grace. We were accepted whilst we were called whilst going in the wrong direction, made alive when we were dead. With the new life received by grace through faith there is a call for a new following, a living discipleship. To no longer trust and follow what you did but to repent, to change your mind and trust and follow Jesus.

#### a. How can we understand God's grace as different to simply ignoring a problem?

Grace should never be understood as God ignoring wrong. By costly love (the shedding of Christ's blood) we are forgiven and granted a new beginning despite being wrong. It's not that God says, "don't worry, that's not a problem," but instead he says, "that's a big problem and I'm going to pay for it joyfully." Grace is a fresh start and an opportunity to be changed and to change.

### 3. Verses 20-24 speak of the new and the old you. Use the silhouettes above and your knowledge of Ephesians along with knowledge of yourself to mark the elements of the old, the new, and the areas in tension / progress.



The letter has established things that are now part of our new status. We are alive, we were dead. We are now holy/saints, etc What else is of the new and old?

At the same time there is work in progress as we seek under God to be blameless and live anew. To think we can obtain sinless perfection in this life is to have an 'over

# Study Four | Leader's Notes



realised eschatology.' To not recognise our now status of being made Holy is to have an underrealised eschatology. Spend some time working out what is old, what is new, and what's in progress for you.

**4. Ephesians 4:25 is quite a list! How does this differ from just another 'law'? Use your knowledge of Ephesians thus far to help explain your reasoning.**

In Christ, law loses its power to condemn. However, it remains as wisdom from God. Here is a similar way Paul give us gracious instruction on how to live our new life. So, in a sense it is truly like the Torah (instruction) yet remember that this instruction for the calling to new life that we have already. The list does not have the laws power to condemn.

**5. Scan the list in verses 25-32. As you review your journey from old to new in the outlines above, is there anything you would like to bring before the Lord, or share for encouragement and help to grow in?**

## Optional Extension Question

**Where is the Holy Spirit seen at work in Ephesians? Based on His work and the context of verse 30 How do you suppose we might 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God?'**

You will notice that the Spirit's work is to unite or to seal us in Christ (Ephesians 1:13), and to make Christ known to us (Ephesians 1:17). The Spirit has not only united the believer to Christ, but in Christ has united God's people with one another beyond boundaries (Ephesians 2:22). Further, the Spirit is the one who reveals and confirms the message of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5)—this is readily on display in the book of Acts. Note as the testimony to Christ brought by the apostles has been confirmed, we do not need further confirmation by signs and wonders. Of course, if God choses to do these that is clearly within His power. Once more it is the Spirit who strengthens the believer in the inner being by testifying to the truth (Ephesians 3:16). Once more the union with Christ that the Spirit brings is confirmed to result in the union of God's people (Ephesians 4:3-4). It may be that to *'grieve the spirit is to break unity with what he has brought about.'* Not only to separate oneself from Christ and His truth, but particularly in this context to be in conflict and remain in division from His people.



## Study Five | Ephesians Five

**Complete this sentence:** If I could be like any superhero I'd be like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Ephesians 5:1-20

1. How do you think we can distinguish between being a 'student' and a 'disciple'?
2. Can you find a pattern of discipleship evident in verses 1-2?
3. Now developing upon your thoughts above, what might this add to your views on being a disciple and a disciple making disciple?

A term we will hear more at Figtree Anglican is '*Disciplication*'. Disciplication is the multiplication of disciples, and a simple way to explain the Matthew 28:19-20 commission to be disciple making disciples.

### Team learning and teaching activity

Divide the group into three groups:  
*(If your group is small, you may choose to assign group tasks to individuals.)*

**Group 1** are to focus on Ephesians 5:3-7.

Study and prepare to report back to the whole group the significance of **holiness** in the walk of a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 7 helpful as a part of your discussion.

**Group 2** are to focus on Ephesians 5:8-14.

Study and prepare to report back to the whole group the significance of **light** in the walk of a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Acts 17:16-34, Jonah 4, and Amos 1 helpful.

**Group 3** are to focus on Ephesians 5:15-21.

Study and prepare to report back to the group the significance of **wisdom** as a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Daniel 2:20-23, Proverbs 9, and Psalm 1 helpful.

4. Report back to the group and share any reflections and questions.
5. Now synchronising your group work, how has Ephesians 5 given you insight into what it means to be '*saved by grace through faith—not by works*' and to be '*God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*' as expressed in Ephesians 2:8-10?

**Personal reflection:** as you consider these three elements of discipleship, where would you like to rejoice in God's work in you, and what would you like to bring before his throne of grace for timely help?

# Study Five | Leader's Notes

## Read Ephesians 5:1-20

### 1. How do you think we can distinguish between being a 'student' and a 'disciple'?

It may be accurate to say that one can be a student and learn information from a teacher whilst remaining unlike the teacher. The relationship between rabbi and disciple is quite different. It moves well beyond information transfer and education. This is often missed as education is so valuable and so well established in our society. It is not however the same as discipleship though being a part of it. For rabbi and disciple there is a deeper relationship. To be a disciple is to be patterned upon ones rabbi. You think like him, you would even walk and adopt his characteristics. Most importantly for us discipleship is about a reproduction of heart and character in another. Verse 1 immediately introduces the concept of 'example' and patterning.

### 2. Can you find a pattern of discipleship evident in verses 1-2?

It is quite evident here. The example of God's love and character is reproduced in the character of our Messiah, his son Jesus. We are given Jesus as the model on which to pattern our discipleship. We begin to see a pattern of passing on that is established in discipleship. Notably we are unable to see Jesus directly, we are dependant upon the testimony and conduct of disciples who have gone before. This is highly evident in chapter 4:9-13. Christ from the beginning has called his disciples to join him in disciple making.

### 3. Now developing upon your thoughts above, what might this add to your views on being a disciple and a disciple making disciple?

The significance of discipleship is increased in all dimensions.

1. Discipleship is more profound than leading. Discipleship is modelling how to follow.

2. Discipleship is not only imparting information or wisdom, more so it is also reproducing the work God has done in us in another.

3. True discipleship is given to disciple making.

If we follow Jesus, and he has reproduced his heart in us, and he has done this through his disciples, then we likewise are called to be disciple makers – taking the heart God has grown in us and cultivating it in another.

## Team learning and teaching activity

### Group 1 are to focus on Ephesians 5:3-7.

**Study and prepare to report back to the whole group the significance of holiness in the walk of a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 7 helpful as a part of your discussion.**

We should expect here to see holiness as being set apart for the Lord. Holiness can be understood as

1. Not common but set apart.
2. Proportional to proximity to the Lord.

You may recall the design of the temple; areas became more holy as they were closer to the space between the Cherubim on the Tabernacle. Expect this space to challenge, as it pulls us further out of common culture, it may even alienate. To be holy is to be uncommon, or to be the thing many Christians fear most, weird. But that's what Christians are called to be, abnormal. It's useful to observe the vice list (verse 4-5) but more also to explore the concept and challenge of being holy. The Deuteronomy reading is useful for thinking about what holiness may look like as we live beside others who are not holy.

# Study Five | Leader's Notes

## **Group 2 are to focus on Ephesians 5:8-14.**

**Study and prepare to report back to the whole group the significance of light in the walk of a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Acts 17:16-34, Jonah 4, and Amos 1 helpful.**

Whilst holiness may result in Christians in a holy bomb shelter huddled awaiting the second coming and minding their own business 'light' calls for more. Darkness does not overcome light, however light exposes and illuminates darkness. Light is also mostly seen where there is dark rather than where there is light. So, here Disciples are called to be participatory in dark places, not joining in but shining into and exposing. Perhaps history's wonderful example is Christians like William Wilberforce speaking against slavery in parliament. Today much darkness is proudly celebrated—so what should the disciple do? Against ridicule Paul spoke in Athens about the true God exposing the falsity and limitations of their spirituality and false gods, Jonah was chastised by a compassionate God who saw the people of Nineveh in dark ignorance, and finally God pronounced woes upon the dark neighbours of Israel—not accepting the concept that unbelievers are somehow immune to his kindness to command.

## **Group 3 are to focus on Ephesians 5:15-21.**

**Study and prepare to report back to the group the significance of wisdom as a disciple of Christ. You may find reading passages like Daniel 2:20-23, Proverbs 9, and Psalm 1 helpful.**

Disciples do not only walk according to what is right and wrong but discern wisdom from folly. Disciples do not ignore the grey areas but press into them seeking the Lord's leading for a life here and now lived well. You may suggest to the group 1 Kings 10 as another helpful reference—where Solomon's wisdom serves as an apologetic for the Queen of Sheba. Wisdom seeks after

the Lord, courting his guidance in all things, rather than being happy to simply stay out of trouble. Wisdom tells us that the life now counts too, and that we are to be careful in how we live it.

- 4. Report back to the group and share any reflections and questions.**
- 5. Now synchronising your group work, how has Ephesians 5 given you insight into what it means to be 'saved by grace through faith—not by works' and to be 'God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' as expressed in Ephesians 2:8-10?**

Work together as a group to understand the 'walk' God has graciously saved us too. How does faith and trust in him, bring change to the way we live. How does the broader concept of discipleship help us understand more of the good works and Christian life God has called us into?



## Study Six | Ephesians Six

You have been selected to be on the next space trip to the moon. What preparations are you going to make and why?

**Read Ephesians 6:10-24**

**Focus on verses 10-13**

<b>Action</b> (This I must do)
<b>So that</b> (For this outcome)
<b>Because</b> (For the reason that)

### Let's talk about our actions

1. What did you see? What did you notice?
2. Rewind to Ephesians 2:1, 4-5. Reflect on the consistencies you might observe.

### Let's talk about outcomes

3. What is the outcome we are to desire?
4. This outcome is noted four times in chapter 6, along with further allusions to it? What do you suppose it means?

### Let's talk about reason

5. What is the reason(s) we need to be intentional about our desired outcome?
6. Reflect and discuss where verses 12-13 shows we may encounter struggle?

### Focus on verses 14-18

7. Who's armour is it we are called to put on?
8. Are there any elements of the Armour of God you have questions about? – discuss.
9. Consider all Ephesians has taught us about being saved to be God's people. How do Paul's final remarks in verse 18-23 reflect this?
10. What have been significant insights, reminders, or revelations over the last six weeks as we have journeyed through Ephesians?

# Study Six | Leader's Notes

**You have been selected to be on the next space trip to the moon. What preparations are you going to make and why?**

Let's make a silly start. At the same time let's warm up our brains and voices to think about necessary actions to take (preparations) in order to secure an outcome (in this case a trip to the moon). The preparations will have reasons – I'll pack a camera because I'd like to bring back pictures, I'll update my life insurance because well, space travel...

**Read Ephesians 6:10-24**

**Focus on verses 10-13**

<b>Action</b> (This I must do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be strong in the Lord (verse 10)</li><li>• Put on the full armour of God (verses 11 and 13)</li></ul>
<b>So that</b> (For this outcome)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take your stand (verse 11)</li><li>• You may be able to stand to stand (verse 13)</li></ul>
<b>Because</b> (For the reason that)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our struggle is multi-faceted (verse 12)—there is bit of word play going on here, 'struggle' is also translatable 'wrestle'.</li><li>• Take your stand in the wrestle. There is a deceiver or devil behind this.</li><li>• Because a day/time of evil (misdirected and disproportionate passions) will come. (verse 13)</li></ul>

**Let's talk about our actions**

**1. What did you see? What did you notice?**

These imperatives are all in God's strength or resource. It's never independent, or sheer force of will. Strength comes in context of relationship.

**2. Rewind to Ephesians 2:1, 4-5. Reflect on the consistencies you might observe.**

When we were dead, God made us alive. In the same way as we seek to stand, it is the strength of God that once again we are to trust in. We may be reminded of the words of the hymn Amazing Grace; *'grace has brought me safe this far, and grace will lead me home.'*

**Let's talk about outcomes**

**3. What is the outcome we are to desire?**

To take our stand and stay standing.

**4. This outcome is noted four times in chapter 6, along with further allusions to it? What do you suppose it means?**

I found the language a bit unusual, it seems so prominent in this chapter without strong precedent. However, it may allude to having a space in Christ now, a place in the people of God, a place with a leader, a place of wholeness. The challenge is to hold the faith in this, or to take a stand and stay standing or trusting. Not tossed back and forth by false teaching, not following the prince of the air, not being like the rest, objects of wrath, but taking and holding position.

**Let's talk about reason**

**5. What is the reason(s) we need to be intentional about our desired outcome?**

Because it is not without test or struggle. The forces and authorities of this world, as well as the forces of the spiritual realm may push against us. The corruption of the day can deceive us in our affections. The struggle is the reason for intentional actions to take our stand.

**6. Reflect and discuss where verses 12-13 shows we may encounter struggle?**

Note the 'both realms' language. There are the forces of this world – the rulers and authorities. An interesting reflection point based on context, you can imagine at the

# Study Six | Leader's Notes

time of writing the rulers and authorities were a big threat. See the book of Revelation, or Hebrews for prime examples. At the same time this does not mean authorities and rulers are bad to have in general – that is biblically unsustainable. In our lived experience the rulers and authorities have often been very kind to the saints, and sometimes have been brothers and sisters. However, it is the case that rulers and authorities have often and can cause significant challenge to God's people and their faith. Alongside this are the deceptive forces of the evil one in the spiritual realm. An understanding of this is important. Firstly, the realm exists, and does its best work when it is completely ignored. Secondly, the realm has been conquered and does its best work when its defeat is not realised. Again, we recall that Christ is Messiah over all peoples, realms and times. He has power to help us take our stand, he has truth to keep us from being received.

An excellent resource on the demonic realm is *'Living With The Underworld'* by Peter Bolt.

## Focus on verses 14-18

### 7. Who's armour is it we are called to put on?

It's the armour of God. Do you think that means armour from God? Armour that is God's? Armour made out of God (Armour of gold)? Armour that originates with God? Or a combo of things?

### 8. Are there any elements of the Armour of God you have questions about? – discuss.

Encourage discussion – don't assume – you may need to go first in sharing questions.

### 9. Consider all Ephesians has taught us about being saved to be God's people. How do Paul's final remarks in verse 18-23 reflect this?

These comments reflect *'bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.'* Ephesians 1:10. The comments demonstrate powerfully a unity in the gospel, and a unity in moving God's kingdom forward.

### 10. What have been significant insights, reminders, or revelations over the last six weeks as we have journeyed through Ephesians?

It would be wonderful to hear how the last six weeks have served in the revelation of God.