




RICH
◆ IN CHRIST ◆

A STUDY OF EPHESIANS



In Him we have redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses,
according to the RICHES of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7

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Get a Running Start

Each lesson in our study of Ephesians begins by asking you to meditate on the passage of Scripture you are studying that week. But what does it mean to meditate on Scripture? How do you make observations about a passage in the Bible? And why is this an important place to start your study of God's Word?

Making Observations in Scripture

Being an observer of God's Word is no different than sitting on a bench at a busy park and noticing all the people there. Who are they? What are they doing? Who is with them? How are they relating to one another? Why are they there? When you take time to look and listen, there are so many things you can observe. The same is true of God's Word.

Observation is the act and art of noticing details. In its simplest form, it is asking these seven basic questions: who, what, when, where, why, how and wherefore? And with that initial understanding, we can be effective observers of God's Word if we are patient and disciplined to do so. If you are in a hurry or are just trying to complete a lesson you will miss out on seeing exciting details in God's message to you. Stop, slow down and see what is not obvious to the casual reader. Make observation of God's Word a habit you enjoy.

Meditating on a Bible Passage

Meditation is the act of pondering or thinking deeply. In the case of a believer, it is reflecting on the meaning, implication and application of a particular Bible passage. It provides the foundation for study by allowing God to reveal key verses, repeated words, phrases or ideas that point us to the message He has for us. Meditation comes naturally for some and is more difficult for others; but we are all called to meditate on God's Word often.

The challenges we face today are the many distractions and stresses in our daily lives. In order to effectively meditate on God's Word, we need the Holy Spirit's help in allowing us to block out worldly cares and to focus solely on His Word and its implications for our lives. Think of meditation as the quieting of your life to listen to God's voice. You may need a special place in your home that is away from others, or a particular time of day when no one else needs your attention. Either way, meditation does not just happen because we want it to. Just like effective observation, it must be intentional. Make meditation a priority and see what God can do in your life as you allow His word to sink into the very fibers of your soul.

LESSON 1

EPHESIANS 1:1-14

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

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

1. Meditate on Ephesians 1:1-14. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. What does it mean to be blessed with every spiritual blessing? (See also 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:9-10; 3:3; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 1 John 5:20.)
3. From verses 3-14, list the blessings believers have in Christ. (See also Romans 8:28-29; Titus 3:4-7.)
4. Reflect and meditate on these blessings. Which one stands out to you most? Why?
5. What response should we have to these blessings? (See Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 1:12.)
6. According to Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14, what is the ultimate reason God has blessed us? (See also Romans 11:36; Galatians 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18.)
7. How should these blessings impact your view of your current circumstances? List some practical ways you can live to the praise of God's glory.
8. How are the riches of Christ described in the following verses: Ephesians 1:7-8, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Colossians 2:2-3? How do these verses encourage or challenge you?
9. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

LIFE-CHANGING PRAYER

1. Meditate on Ephesians 1:15-23. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. Paul heard of the Ephesians and other churches' faith and love. What actions might demonstrate this to others so that it would be well known? (See also Romans 1:8; Colossians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3.) How do your actions demonstrate faith and love to others?
3. What is Paul's response to this news? How is this an example for us to follow? (See also Colossians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18.)
4. List what Paul prays for the believers in Ephesus. For what additional things did Paul pray for believers? (See Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.)
5. What is Paul's emphasis in prayer for other believers? What role does the Holy Spirit have in our prayer life? (See Romans 8:26.)
6. What stands out to you in Paul's prayer? How will you apply these to your own prayers for believers and unbelievers?
7. How are God's power, greatness, and his position expressed in this passage? (See also Philippians 2:5-11.) How does this truth give you hope?
8. How is Christ described in verses 20-23? How will this impact your prayers?
9. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

GOD'S IMMEASURABLE GRACE

1. Meditate on Ephesians 2:1-22. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. From verses 1-2 describe the spiritual condition of an unbeliever. (See also Ephesians 4:17-19.)
3. According to verses 4-10, what has God accomplished on behalf of sinners to save them from the consequences of sin? (See also John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Colossians 2:12-13; Titus 3:4-7.)
4. From verses 8-9 how is a person saved? What part does God play, and what part does man play? (See also Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13; Titus 3:4-7.)
5. What do verses 8-9 teach you about works in the life of the believer? (See also Matthew 5:16; Galatians 2:15-16; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Timothy 6:18; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Titus 3:8.)
6. In Ephesians 2:11-22 how did Paul describe Gentiles before they were in Christ? How did he describe them after they were in Christ?
7. How do verses 11-22 relate to Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-23? (See also Galatians 3:28.) What does this reveal to us about relationships with other Christians?
8. What truths about Jesus Christ do you find in verses 13-22? What is your response to these truths?
9. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

PURPOSEFUL MYSTERY

1. Meditate on Ephesians 3:1-21. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. What do you learn about Paul and his ministry from this chapter? (See also Acts 9:1-22; 13:1-3, 44-48; Colossians 1:24-26.)
3. What is the mystery Paul refers to in Ephesians 3:1-12? Why would this be considered a mystery? (See also 1 Corinthians 4:1; Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:25-27; 2:2-3.)
4. According to verses 10-11, what is the purpose of the revelation? (See also John 17:20-23; Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 2:22.) How does this encourage or challenge you?
5. How is Paul's prayer in verses 14-21 connected to the mystery revealed in verses 1-13?
6. What do you ask God for most in your prayers for yourself and others? How do your prayers compare to Paul's prayer?
7. For what did Paul pray for the Ephesian believers? In light of Paul's prayer, how are you encouraged to pray for yourself or others?
8. What other Scriptures have you or could you incorporate in your prayers?
9. What truths do you learn from the closing words of Paul's prayer in verses 20-21?
10. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

IN THIS TOGETHER

1. Meditate on Ephesians 4:1-32. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?

2. How is walking in a manner worthy of your calling described? (See also Colossians 1:10-12; 2:6-7.)

3. How do we learn to walk in this way? (See also John 15:4-5; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:6-8; 2 Peter 1:3.)

4. According to Ephesians 11-16, who has God put in place to equip us to walk worthy of our calling and WHY? (See also John 10:10-11, 16:13; Romans 8:5-6; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 12:4-7.)

5. What are some practical ways that we know we are growing up in Christ? (See also Psalm 63:1-4; Philippians 4:8; 1 Pet 2:1-3.)

6. According to Ephesians 4:17-32, what are some of the characteristics of the:
 - a. Old Self? (See also Colossians 3:5-9; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17.)

 - b. New Self? (See also Matthew 6:33-34; Philippians 2:1-4; 4:4-9; Colossians 3:12-17; Titus 3:8; 2 Peter 1:5-8.)

7. What does Ephesians 4:25-32 tell us we need to do to focus on the new self and deny the old self? What changes will you choose to make beginning today?

8. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

BELOVED CHILDREN

1. Meditate on Ephesians 5:1-21. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?

2. What does it mean to be an imitator of God? In what ways are we to imitate God? (See also Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 18:13; Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:36; Philippians 2:3-8, 3:7-14; 1 Peter 1:13-16.)

3. Describe what walking in love looks like in verse 2 and in the following passages: Deuteronomy 10:12; Matthew 5:44, 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 John 4:21, 5:2-3.

4. How is it possible for a believer to imitate God and walk like Christ in love? (See John 15:4-5; Romans 5:5, 6:10-11; Galatians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 2:24.)

5. According to Ephesians 5:3-14, what does it mean to walk in the light? (See also Matthew 5:14-16; John 8:12; Romans 13:12-14; 1 John 1:5-7, 2:10.)

6. How is walking in wisdom described in verses 15-16? (See also Proverbs 9:10, 13:20; Colossians 1:9-10; James 3:17.)

7. According to verses 17-21, what right choices does a wise person make? (See also Colossians 3:12-17.)

8. How is a believer's walk supposed to be different than those around them? How is your life and conduct, reactions to circumstances, and focus different than unbelievers?

9. Reread Ephesians 5:1-21. What in your life needs to change so your walk in Christ glorifies him? (See Colossians 3:17.)

10. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

COLOSSIANS 3:18–4:1

For further reference, similar passages have been included.

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¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

¹ Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

1 PETER 3:13–4:7

For further reference, similar passages have been included.

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¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

¹ Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ² when they see your respectful and pure conduct. ³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

GOD-DESIGNED RELATIONSHIPS

1. Meditate on Ephesians 5:21-6:9. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. What is a wife's behavior toward her husband supposed to be and WHY? (See also 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-4.)
3. What is a husband's behavior supposed to be toward his wife and WHY? (See also Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7.)
4. What do verses 22-33 teach about Christ and the church?
5. What behavior is crucial for children and WHY? (See also Colossians 3:20.)
6. What can a parent do or not do to help a child learn obedience?
7. How do we apply Ephesians 6:5-9 addressing slaves and masters to our own lives today? (See also Colossians 3:22-4:1.)
8. What is the Lord teaching you about your role in the family and church? How will this influence your prayers? (See Mathew 20:25-28.)
9. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

VICTORY IN JESUS

1. Meditate on Ephesians 6:10-24. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?
2. What does it mean to be strong in the Lord? (See also Psalm 1; 27:1-3; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Philippians 4:4-7; Hebrews 11:6.)
3. Why are we to put on the whole armor of God? (See also James 1:13-14; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:15-17.)
4. How do we stand firm in the Lord? (See also 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Hebrews 10:35-39; 12:1-3; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Revelation 2:1-7.)
5. List the full armor of God. What does each piece represent? (See also Romans 13:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.)
6. Which pieces are defensive armor, and which are offensive?
7. What action verbs does Paul use in verses 10-18? What do these verbs teach you about handling struggles in life?
8. What can you do to make your armor stronger?
9. Where does prayer fit into our defense? How does it fit in for you? (See also Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1.)
10. What does Paul ask for prayer for himself? (See also Colossians 4:3-4.) Do you ever ask others to pray for you? Why or why not?
11. What does this passage teach you about God? (See also Psalm 18:1, 30-35; 1 John 4:4.) What does it reveal about you? How will this make a difference in your life?

REFLECTION OF EPHESIANS

1. What are the greatest truths you learned about God from the book of Ephesians?
2. What have you learned and applied personally concerning a believer being rich in Christ?
3. What other truths stood out to you in the study of Ephesians?
4. In what ways has your attitude and/or outlook on life changed after learning these truths?
5. How has your walk with Christ changed as a result of this study?
6. How would you like the group to pray for you over the holidays regarding what you have learned from the study of Ephesians?

