

Table of Contents

Introduction

Introduction & How to Use	1
Emphasis of Ephesians 4-6, Hopes & Connecting Ephesians 1-3 and 4-6	2

Living the Gospel – 4-6	4
--	----------

Unity and Diversity in the Spirit – 4:1-16.	4
--	----------

4:1-3 - A Call to Unity.	4
4:4-6 - The Source of Our Unity	7
4:7-13 - Various Gifts Are Given for the Unity and Growth of the Body	8
4:14-16 - The Results of Maturity.	10

Old Self and New Self – 4:17-25	12
--	-----------

Living as the New Self – 4:26-32	14
---	-----------

Live and Walk as Children of Light – 5:1-7	23
---	-----------

Live and Walk With Wisdom – 5:15-21	25
--	-----------

Relationships Within the Body of Christ – 5:22-6:9

5:22-24 - Wives	27
5:25-33 - Husbands	29
6:1-3 - Children	31
6:4 - Fathers	33
6:5-9 - Employees and Employers.	34

The Armor of God – 6:10-17	36
---	-----------

Prayer Requests – 6:18-20	40
--	-----------

Final Thoughts – 6:21-24	42
---	-----------

Bibliography & Additional Resources	45
--	-----------

Snapshots of Spiritual Friendship

Ephesians 4-6

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this *Going Deeper* Bible study. These studies are designed to help us go deeper into knowing God and applying His Word. *Core Classes* address our core beliefs and practices, *Going Deeper* studies explore all of Scripture—seeking to help us know and live out the whole counsel of God.

This study is on Chapters 4-6 of the Book of Ephesians. If you'd like to explore Chapters 1-3, check out the previous *Going Deeper* book, *Making Spiritual Friends: Laying the Foundation for Spiritual Friendship*, online:

Go to **BibleCenterChurch.com/resources/study**

- Click on ***Made for More (Ephesians)***
- And scroll down to the heading, "**Series Resources**"
- Click on the *Making Spiritual Friends* book cover (shown here)



HOW TO USE

This devotional can be used for personal or group study. Sections are marked in the outline and then each section begins at the top of a new page. This is not an exhaustive study of Ephesians, more could have been said in each section. The goal is to have enough information for each section to be studied (personally or corporately) in about one or two sittings or group times.

Often, statements and questions will begin by clarifying the meaning and purpose of the passage. After making sure we understand the main point of the passage, the intention is then to ask questions that will help us apply the passage to our heads, hearts, and hands.

Read the text a couple times and then think through and answer the questions in the booklet. Often discussing thoughts and applications will help you remember what you have learned. Hearing others' thoughts and responses will often deepen our understanding and personal application of the text. Enjoy!

Outline of Ephesians

- I. Knowing the Gospel 1-3
- II. Living the Gospel 4-6

Outline of Ephesians 4-6

- Living the Gospel 4-6
 - Unity and Diversity in the Spirit 4:1-16
 - A Call to Unity 4:1-3
 - The Source of our Unity 4:4-6
 - Various Gifts Given for the Unity and Growth of the Body 4:7-13
 - The Results of Maturity 4:14-16
 - The Old Self and the New Self 4:17-25
 - Living as the New Self 4:26-32
 - Walk in Love without Immorality 5:1-7
 - Walk and Live as Children of the Light 5:8-14
 - Walk in Wisdom 5:15-21

Relationships within the Body 5:22-6:9
Wives 5:22-24
Husbands 5:25-32
Summary 5:33
Children 6:1-3
Fathers 6:4
Employees and Employers 6:5-9
The Armor of God 6:10-17
Prayer Requests 6:18-20
Final Thoughts 6:21-24

EMPHASIS OF EPHESIANS 4-6

By grace through faith in Jesus, He has saved us (Jesus Saves). But that is only the beginning of the story. Jesus not only saves us, but also transforms us (Jesus Transforms). This second half of Ephesians discusses this process of becoming more like Jesus.

The process of becoming more like Christ is described frequently in Ephesians as “walking” (NASB) or “living” (NIV) in a certain way. The Greek word, *peripateo*, is literally translated “walk.” It is used to describe Jesus and others physically walking (Matthew 9:5, 11:5...). Figuratively, it describes a way of life. I will emphasize both aspects of this word as it is a major theme throughout the second half of this book (4:1, 17, 5:8, 15).

We are taught that there is a journey before us and through consistent steps in the same direction we take this journey together. We don't simply ‘arrive’ as believers, we grow, move, and change. Paul calls us to ask the questions - Are we moving in the right direction? Are we moving at all? Is my next step in line with the Gospel? How will this decision shape my journey and direction?

HOPES

I want us to love with God through His Word. The Bible gives wisdom, peace, and joy because its words are literally God's Words to us. To slow down and enjoy God's Word is to slow down and enjoy God Himself. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word, illuminates our hearts, and convicts us of our areas that need growth and change. The Word is considered our spiritual food. Meals are often more enjoyable when we eat them with family and friends.

CONNECTING EPHESIANS 1-3 AND 4-6

Try to summarize what was learned in Ephesians 1-3:

In the first part of the book, Paul emphasized our position in Christ. The second half of the book is about the life and practice of the Christian.

4:1-3 (NASB)

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...

What is the first word of Chapter 4 in the NASB version?

A “therefore” signifies that everything that came before is the “why,” and everything that comes after is the “what.” Some “therefores” simply connect two phrases, others connect sentences; this “therefore” connects the first and second half of the book together.

Because Ephesians 1-3 is true, we must “therefore” live / walk in a manner worthy of this calling. We must know the Gospel before we live out the Gospel.

What happens if we focus on “what we do” for Christ before we focus on “who we are” in Christ?

Ephesians calls us to be Gospel-centered.

To be Gospel-centered, we must understand our Gospel identity in Christ and then how to live out this Gospel in our everyday life and relationships.

What happens when we expect **Gospel-living** before someone understands their **Gospel-identity**?

Living the Gospel – 4-6

Chapters 4-6 could also be summarized as **“Walk in a Manner Worthy of your Calling.”** “Live” in verse 4:1 could also be literally translated as “walk.”

The Greek word, **peripateo**, is literally translated ‘walk’. It is used to describe Jesus and others walking (Matthew 9:5, 11:5...). Figuratively, it describes a way of life. Many prefer this more literal translation, but either translation gets the point across well. I will present both translations as we go so that we do not miss the concept of putting one foot in front of another in a common direction as the Christian life. Throughout this section we will see the word **peripateo** (walk or live) emphasize major concepts and expectations.

- 4:1 **Walk / Live** a life worthy of your calling
- 4:17 Do not **walk / live** as the Gentiles do
- 5:2 **Walk / Live** in love
- 5:8 **Walk / Live** as children of the light
- 5:15 **Walk / Live** in wisdom

Unity and Diversity in the Spirit – 4:1-16

4:1-3 - A CALL TO UNITY

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live [peripateo—to walk] a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

4:1 - What do we learn about Paul?

What is he asking them to do?

The NASB highlights the literal meaning of **peripateo** by translating the above phrase: “walk in a manner worthy of your calling.”

What comes to your mind when you hear **“walk in a manner worthy of your calling?”**

Throughout these chapters, Paul continues to reference the idea of “walking” (in wisdom, in love, in a manner worthy...). Why do you suppose he uses this verb / concept?

Why is it important for us to understand our faith as a journey?

What happens when we no longer see progress as a series of steps?

How might this concept of progress, in both Christian growth and right living, change the way you parent? Talk to your spouse? Encourage your friends?

How, then, do we walk in a manner worthy of our calling? Paul does not leave us hanging. In the same sentence he marks **three inward qualities and two outward expressions** of “walking in a manner worthy of our calling.”

What are the three inward qualities expected?

Are these easy or difficult qualities to possess?

Which most describes you and which least describes you?

The first expression: “**showing tolerance** for one another in love.” When is this the most difficult for you to live out?

When you are struggling with “showing tolerance for one another in love,” what does this teach you about yourself?

What is your next step in living this out better and more often?

The second expression: “make every effort to keep” (NIV) or “**being diligent to preserve** the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (NASB). Are we told to create unity?

Who gives us this unity?

Why is it so important to understand the difference between preserving and maintaining unity versus creating and making unity?

4:4-6 - THE SOURCE OF OUR UNITY

4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

According to 4:4-6 what is the basis of our unity?

What are some things that often create division within the church?

What does it say about our priorities and personal preferences when those things become more important than our commonality around one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father over all?

What happens when we major on the minors instead of majoring on the majors?

What would be considered the “majors”—the things that cannot be negotiated, nuanced, or changed as a Christian?

How then do we practically maintain unity in a church with people who differ in their opinions and persuasions (minors that are often mistakenly referred to as convictions)?

4:7-13 - VARIOUS GIFTS ARE GIVEN FOR THE UNITY AND GROWTH OF THE BODY

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. **8** This is why it says:

*“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”*

9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? **10** He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) **11** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The most important things about who we are and what we believe are the things that the Spirit provides as an established foundation for our unity. The Body of Christ is designed to function like a family —each member is distinct and unique while unified together under the same Name. As we live united in these unchanging truths, we can:

- Recognize and celebrate our differences
- Benefit from one another's gifts
- Rely on another's strength in our areas of weakness
- Learn interdependence on one another

“Paul now transitions from speaking of the unity of the body to describing it in terms of its diversity. But this diversity has nothing to do with the various ethnicities, backgrounds and natural talents of the individual members. It has to do with Christ's sovereign distribution of divine gifts and abilities among the different members” (Arnold, 243).

4:7 - Christ has apportioned grace to all that have believed. The word “grace” (*charis*) that is used here is equivalent to the word *charisma*, which means “spiritual gift.” In 4:16 it is clearly taught that all of us have a unique contribution (gift) to give to the whole.

How might this concept challenge, change, or contribute to your view of your brothers and sisters in Christ?

4:8 - This is a quote from Psalm 68. Psalm 68 emphasizes the victory of God over his enemies. Here it is an emphasis of Christ as the conquering warrior who bestows grace and gifts on his children.

Paul quotes the Psalm differently than is read in most English translations. Paul is likely “seeking to bring out the full meaning of the text of Psalm 68 by not simply citing it verbatim” (Arnold, 252).

Many would argue that the “captives” that Christ took were the *principalities powers, and authorities* from Ephesians 1:20-22 and Colossians 2:15. On the cross and in His resurrection, Jesus defeated all of His enemies rendering them powerless.

What happens when we forget that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and Satan?

4:9-10 - Jesus after His time on earth ultimately ascends to take His place beside the Father. Jesus will fill all things! His presence is everywhere!

How can this reality help our prayer life?

Ephesians 1:10 teaches that all things will fall under the authority of Christ. Ephesians 1:23 says that Jesus fills all things in every way. The omnipresence and complete authority of Jesus is clearly taught throughout Ephesians.

Do you think the people in your life fully understand the presence and power of Christ?

How might it change our perspective and actions if we truly believed He was always with us and always in control?

11-12 - Everyone receives grace and gifts, what are the particular gifts that are listed in verse 11?

What is the purpose of these gifts?

What happens if a church's culture and tradition is for pastors and evangelists to do the work of the ministry?

What are some ways that a pastor can equip a congregation to do the ministry?

What happens to a church if the congregation chooses not to do the ministry?

13 - What would be the consequence of the church not functioning in the way that God designed?

What are some next steps for the church? Your group? For you?

4:14-16 - THE RESULTS OF MATURITY

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

If church leaders equip the members of the church for ministry, then the church as a whole will experience growth and maturity.

Verses 14 and 15-16 teach us about maturity—there are certain things that maturing Christians will no longer do and there are certain things that they will do and experience.

4:14 - What is the significance of Paul using the word "infant?"

What are some ways that our spiritual growth mimics our physical growth?

How would you assess your spiritual maturity? What measures should we use to make this judgment?

What are some of the "waves" and "wind" that we deal with everyday?

How does the proper working of the church protect us and help us from swaying and falling in these moments?

4:15-16 - Give an example from your life of truth spoken without love:

How can we do a better job speaking the truth in love to others?

We often think of our own spiritual maturity or the maturity of another individual. Here, Paul is discussing the maturity of the church as a whole. Describe the church's relationship to Christ:

What happens if a body becomes detached from its head?

Our most crucial connection is, of course, to Christ, but it is not our only connection. We are also connected to one another—"joined and held together by every supporting ligament." How, then, is your growth and maturity connected to the growth and maturity of your brothers and sisters in Christ?

How might it change our perspective and actions if we saw our maturity as interconnected with the spiritual maturity of those around us?

"As each part does its work"—the grace and gifts that we were given were not given for our own sakes, but for the sake of the body as a whole. How can a church help individuals figure out their spiritual gifts?

In a puzzle, there are corner pieces, sides, and all the ones in the middle. Every piece is distinct, important, and has a particular space to fill to complete the puzzle. We are all parts (pieces) of the overall body. We are distinct and important with a particular role to play. What happens when we do not contribute and play our role?

Why would God design us to be interdependent upon one another?

It is a radical thing for a church to fully understand and live out its dependence upon Christ and interdependence on one another. When we look at one another and realize — "I need you!" — the value we place on one another will greatly increase.

Are you playing your part? How can you better play your part?

How are you helping others to play their part?

Old Self and New Self – 4:17-25

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live [walk] as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. **18** They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. **19** Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. **20** That, however, is not the way of life you learned **21** when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. **22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. **25** Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Paul has a “who you were / who you are” conversation with the Ephesians. All of us drift and struggle with our old identity. Our old perspectives, motivations, decisions, and relationships haunt us in our present pictures, stories, thoughts, desires, and tendencies. We are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17) still living in the same bodies, in the same world, and in many of the same relationships. Therefore, there will always be a fight to not return to our old selves including its corruption and ungodliness.

4:17-19 - This section of Ephesians is a summary of the same truths taught at length in Romans 1. Sometimes we lessen the reality of the rebellion of the world against God. Often we forget the depths of our own sin, rebellion, and hatred of God before we were saved. What does Paul want us to understand and remember from these verses?

What should be our response to the truths taught in these verses?

How desperate we were when we were “separated from the life of God!” To return to this kind of life is like a dog who returns to its vomit. Paul paints an accurate and grim picture of the world and therefore of our “former selves.”

4:20-22 - Paul draws a hard line between our former selves and our new selves. We are a new person in Christ. What they were taught about life in Christ is wholly different than their former way of life.

How do we “put off” our old selves? Is it as simple as changing behavior?

4:23-24 - Much of our battle is in our hearts and heads (desires and thoughts). Our hearts are desire factories. We will always have desires. Everyday choices we make concerning scheduling, eating, and relational connections are based upon our desires. Actions are based upon desires. What must happen when we try to remove particular action without addressing the desire?

Removing an action is like picking a fruit off of a tree. Removing a desire is like pulling the tree out by its roots. Some desires are wicked and should be removed, while some are simply misdirected. How do we know the difference?

Removing desires will quickly create a vacuum that must be filled. In wisdom Paul instructs them to “put off” and “put on” desires. There is a replacing of desires that must take place. Diets do not work if you merely take all unhealthy food out of someone’s diet. One must also insert healthy foods into their meals—the body can’t go without food and the heart will not go without desires.

How do we help fill our hearts with right desires?

The “put-on / put-off” mindset is an ongoing process for us. What can we do to help us continually engage in this fight?

Everyday we take off clothes and put on fresh clothes. This can become a natural reminder for us. As you take off your clothes, consider desires that you had that day that reflect your old self. Ask God to help you remove those desires, as you put on clothes ask God to fill you with desires to love and honor Him more.

4:25 - Paul gives us a clear and tangible example of putting off and putting on. We are to “put off falsehood” and “speak truthfully to our neighbor.” Falsehood is put off and truthfulness is put on. List several other examples of things we put off and put on:

Living as the New Self – 4:26-32

26 *“In your anger do not sin”*: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** and do not give the devil a foothold. **28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. **29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Paul continues in this section to teach us what it looks like to walk in a manner worthy of God by putting off our old self (with its actions and desires) and putting on our new self in Christ.

4:26-27 - How is letting the sun go down on our anger connected to giving the devil a foothold?

Picture negative emotions like overripe fruit: It might taste sweet with that first bite, but it is only hours away from turning rotten and sour. Quickly it turns to rotten fruit that looks bad, feels bad, and tastes bad, but it all gets exponentially worse the longer we keep the bad fruit.

The enemy knows this and the power of temptation grows as we carry anger, bitterness, or frustration with us over longer periods of time. To avoid confession, repentance, and forgiveness in our relationships is to invite the devil himself to destroy our relationships with those we love.

What often prevents us from resolving anger?

What advice do you have for those who simply want to stay quiet and avoid conflict and the expression of their anger?

What advice do you have for the person who always views themselves as “right” and therefore views themselves as having just cause for their anger?

How do we create healthy enough relationships to have these kinds of discussions?

4:28 - What are we to put off in this verse and what are we to put on?

Perhaps we do not steal, but how have we positioned ourselves to always have something to share with others?

It is not unusual for us to enjoy friends who have more wealth and "stuff" than we do and reap the benefits of their generosity. This is not stealing by any means, but how do we make sure we are also living out 4:28?

There are many in our society who simply cannot work due to health issues, age, and complex family situations. But we also have many in our society that simply choose not to work. How might this verse speak to them?

4:29 - How long is your list of swear words that shouldn't be used? How did you make your list?

Who decided if those words were "good" or "bad" / wholesome or unwholesome?

This is one of the classic "do not use swear words" verses. Many will appeal to this verse as God's command to never use a cuss word. Others would suggest and argue that it is not the word itself that is wholesome or unwholesome, but the use of the word.

We can destroy someone through gossip, slander, put downs, and the intentional verbal degrading of their character. All of these things can be done without using an official swear word.

4:29 actually gives us principles we can use to determine if our speech is wholesome or unwholesome. Often, I think we get so wrapped up with swear words that we miss the incredible expectations that God spells out for us here regarding all our words.

What are the principles given?

OUR WORDS MUST BE: (NIV / NASB)

1. *"Helpful for building up others" / "good for edification"* - How do we determine if we meet this standard?

If our words will not meet this standard, what should we do?

2. *"According to their needs" / "according to the need of the moment"* - Describe the importance of *timing* in our discussions:

So often, we want to make our point, prove we are right, and make sure we are heard. According to this verse, we must assess the needs of the person to whom we are talking. What is the best timing for them? Is this the right moment, should we talk about this later, or not at all?

How do we determine if this is the right moment, if we have a right assessment of their present needs?

All of these verses are to be lived out in relationships. Asking questions is crucial to know others at a level necessary to know how best to love them!

3. *"That it may benefit those who listen" / "that it may give grace to those who hear"* - We have a bit of a self-obsession in our relationships. We are often more focused on our own wants and needs rather than the wants and needs of others. How does this verse reset our perspective?

How can we phrase this verse into a "put off" and "put on" conversation?

What must you put off in order to do a better job loving others with your words?

4:30 - We are reminded here that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, consistent with what we were taught in 1:13. Both verses emphasize that this sealing of the Holy Spirit is a guarantee pointing to our final day of redemption. Great hope is found in this incredible truth!

Yet, this is more than a theological transaction. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is a living and active Person. He knows us fully and completely. He is aware of our desires, longings, intentions, thoughts and actions. It is the Holy Spirit who is convicting us and empowering us to put off our old self and to put on our new self.

Seeing 4:30 in context, what kinds of things would grieve the Holy Spirit?

Should it bother us to know we are grieving Him? Why would Paul take the time to teach us this reality? What outcome is Paul expecting?

4:31-32 - How would you describe what is happening in these two verses? How is it consistent with what Paul has been discussing?

Which of these is the hardest for you to put off?

When was the last time you were angry? What caused the anger?

Is there anyone in your life (could be from years ago) that still frustrates you when they come to mind or maybe makes your stomach turn when you hear their name?

Once we put those things off, what must we put on?

Describe a compassionate person:

How can someone become more compassionate?

What do we learn about compassion in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4?

Would your co-workers describe you as kind? Would your children? Your postal worker?

What level of forgiveness are we called to give others?

What can happen if we choose not to forgive? How might this be similar to 4:26-27?

Live and Walk in Love Without Immorality – 5:1-7

1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and walk [live] in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **3** But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. **4** Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. **5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. **7** Therefore do not be partners with them.

5:1-2 - Paul returns to his "live / walk" language. Again we are called to put one step in front of another in a particular direction. Before the command, Paul reminds them of their standing before God "as dearly loved children." Why is it important for us to remember this reality as we seek to follow God's example?

What is the call and expectation given in these verses?

If you haven't felt challenged up to this point, this command challenges every part of our being. Our standard is Jesus Himself. Our love and sacrifice should reflect His love and sacrifice. When you think back through Jesus' life, what are some examples of His love that come to mind (in addition to the cross)?

How did Jesus show love in His everyday interactions?

In Jesus' ultimate show of love, He sacrificed His life for ours. What are some small ways that we can sacrifice for others?

5:3 - Paul, again, refers back to our old selves and our sinful struggles. We are not to even have a hint of sexual immorality. What are some sources of sexual immorality that are available to the average person on a daily basis?

How do we negotiate social media, the internet, the workplace, the gym, our neighborhoods, and our friendship circles without having a hint of sexual immorality?

James teaches us that outward sin starts with internal desires (James 1:13-15). What are some of our internal desires that can lead to sexually immoral decisions?

What happens if we remove our screens, questionable relationships, and outward temptations, but do not acknowledge and address our inward desires?

Are all sexually oriented desires bad?

Is it possible to recognize another's attractiveness without it being sin?

How can good desires become twisted or a source of temptation?

What are the ways that loneliness, broken relationships, woundedness, pain, past abuse, or sorrow can contribute to our sexual temptation?

How can we work on our external and internal world to remove sexual, immoral thoughts, desires, and actions from our lives?

We are called to purity so we must rid ourselves of impurity. Impurity is a large, general term that refers to anything and everything that does not reflect God's holy character or standard. How do we identify and put off immorality?

Greed may be one of the trickiest sins. Rarely do you find someone who views themselves as greedy. How do we judge if we are greedy?

Are we quick to share and give to others?

What perspective is necessary to increase our generosity?

Do your resources, checking accounts, and possessions show that you value others more than yourself?

5:4 - What do we learn about our speech in this verse?

What is the difference between appropriate humor and what is described in verse 4?

In all speech we must consider the purpose, the situation, and the outcome of our words. If our words, humor, or comments are inconsistent with thanksgiving then perhaps our words are not meeting God's standards.

What implications does this verse have on your speech?

5:5 - Those whose lives are characterized by impurity, immorality, and greed are not presently nor will they ever be considered God's children or share in His inheritance. If there is never a change from our old self, then perhaps there is no new self.

"Those who have given themselves over to immorality, impurity, and greed, even if they call themselves Christian, show that they are excluded from eternal life" (O'Brien, 363).

“In a parenthetical comment, Paul describes the greedy person as an idolater. Some commentators believe that Paul is applying the term 'idolater' to all three nouns, but the singular of the relative pronoun means that it should be applied only to the final noun 'greedy person'” (Arnold, 324).

Why would Paul connect greed to idolatry?

Greed places ourselves at the center of our universe: “My stuff and I are what is most important.” We bury our talons into our possessions and hold on tight. We and our stuff become the idol. If we view our things, resources, and finances as the Lord’s—a gift from Him and His to control—then we give freely with open hands. Our Christ-centeredness and others-centeredness can often be seen and measured by our generosity. Who is the center of your universe?

Does your checkbook agree with your answer?

5:6-7 - Paul emphasizes his point in these two verses. If someone argues or tries to persuade others that immorality, impurity, and greed are not a big deal, they are wrong!

Not only are they a big deal, we should avoid partnering with those who are characterized this way.

There is a tricky balance here. We do not expect non-Christians to live up to Christian standards, but Christians who participate willingly in this kind of lifestyle are held to a stricter expectation (1 Corinthians 5:9-11).

How do we follow this instruction when a brother or sister begins living in this way?

5:8-14 - Live and Walk as Children of Light

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live [walk] as children of light **9** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) **10** and find out what pleases the Lord. **11** Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. **12** It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. **13** But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. **14** This is why it is said:

*“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

“Live” (*peripateo*) in this verse takes on the same concept as “walk” does in the previous verses. As a Christian we have a new trajectory, a new life, and we walk a new path. Paul is describing and discussing this new path in light of the old path we used to walk.

According to these verses, how is our old path described?

How are we described in verse 8?

Often Paul uses an indicative (present tense verb describing what is true) before he gives an imperative (a command). What is the indicative and imperative in verse 8?

When we are called to live as children of the light, we are being asked to live out our truest identity because we already are “light in the Lord.”

5:9-10 - What does it look like to live as children of the light?

5:11-14 - What happens when light interacts with darkness? How is this described in these verses?

Previously, we learned that we must put off the old self and put on the new self. Here, Paul presents a similar concept with a slightly different nuance. Our light (as children of light) will expose deeds of darkness. We are to produce fruit of the light and to have nothing to do with deeds of darkness.

How do we expose deeds of darkness?

What happens with deeds that are not exposed?

James 1:17 - How will our deeds reflect our Father?

5:15-21 - Live and Walk With Wisdom

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. **18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, **20** always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul continues presenting the dichotomy of our Christian life: old self / new self, walking in love / walking in immorality, light / dark, and wise / unwise.

According to this passage, how do the wise live?

How do we make the most of every opportunity?

Give an example of making the most of an opportunity and an example of not doing so:

How might these “evil days” impact our ability to make the most of every opportunity?

How, when, or where do we find out the Lord's will?

What can happen if we become overly focused on searching for a divine, personalized will for each person?

Those who do not know His will are considered foolish. Ephesians 4-6 is an example of knowing God's will. He clearly communicates how we are and are not to live. God's will for all His children is clearly communicated. As we follow His clear direction and commandments we will be living within His will for our lives. The home we live in, the car we drive, or the career we pursue are not as important as (and will never be clearer than) making the most of every opportunity, being filled with the Spirit, and always giving thanks to God.

How can you counsel someone who seems overly concerned about a personalized plan from God?

Rarely are we fully living in God's clearly expressed will for our lives. This is where we need to focus. We each have unique giftings, passions, and personalities, but we don't each receive a personalized written plan. We will never have a personalized will outside of God's expressed will for all Christians.

5:18 - Drunkenness is a clearly stated sin. The antithesis to being controlled by alcohol is to be filled and controlled by the Spirit of God. Being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing daily command—how do we live out the command to be filled with the Spirit?

5:19-20 - These verses are a description of what someone looks like who is filled with the Spirit. Someone who is filled with the Spirit is thankful and filled with God's Word—speaking in psalms, hymns, and songs that come from the Spirit. Likely, this is a reference to Psalms from Scripture. How can someone be thankful in every circumstance (good or bad)?

5:21 - In the following verses there will be multiple discussions about submission. Depending upon certain relationships and stations in life, we are called to submit. Ultimately, we all submit to Christ.

What does this verse teach us about submission?

It is very important to learn from this verse that in everyday life and in everyday relationships we submit to one another.

Our goal is not to get into a position where others answer to us. We intentionally go out of our way to serve others and submit our wants, needs, and desires for the sake of others.

How can we practically submit ourselves to others?

Relationships within the Body of Christ 5:22-6:9

5:22-24 - WIVES

22 *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

In 5:21, it has already been taught and established that we are all to submit to one another in normal circumstances. Paul now jumps into specific circumstances, situations, and relationships.

In the next section, the husband is called to love his wife as Christ has loved the church. In our relationship with the Lord, we submit while knowing that we are fully loved—a love that Christ has demonstrated through tremendous sacrifice. The husband is to mimic his Savior in his relationship with his wife.

Why is it difficult to submit to someone you do not trust?

What changes when you begin to trust someone, knowing they will put you first and they begin to act with your best in mind?

Verses 5:22-24 precedes the section on the husband, but is to be understood in its larger context of the marriage as a whole. How have you seen these verses misunderstood, mistaught, or incorrectly lived?

Is there anything here that teaches that **all** women should submit to **all** men?

In any and every context each person seeks to serve everyone around them regardless of gender. No one is to seek the seat of power, rather we get on our knees.

Jesus is the Lord and Creator of all things, but He did not use the Last Supper to demonstrate His power or crown Himself King. Rather He got on His knees and washed the feet of His disciples.

We must also be quick to our knees and slow to reach for crowns!

What might this commitment to serving and submitting to others look like for you on a day to day basis?

In a relationship, the role of both parties is incredibly important. To emphasize submission without emphasizing love leads to failure. Emphasizing love and leadership without also teaching respect and

submission will also lead to problems.

Describe a godly wife who submits to her loving husband:

Submission doesn't mean not heard, voiceless, or powerless. It does mean that in the final decision, she honors her husband's choice (knowing he has her best in mind). The husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will go out of his way to talk with his wife, listen, and the majority of the time will make a decision that best meets her needs and wants, not his.

Power is not for self-serving, but for serving others, just as Christ demonstrated throughout His life.

5:25-33 - HUSBANDS

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, **27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— **30** for we are members of his body. **31** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **32** This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Describe Christ’s love for the church: How is it practically demonstrated throughout His life? How is it ultimately demonstrated?

What are practical ways that a husband can demonstrate this same kind of love on a daily basis?

Jesus gave everything, even His very life for the sake of the church. There is no limit to how much the husband is to love and sacrifice for their wife. Jesus’ love was demonstrated moment-by-moment by his selflessness. If a husband watches his wife do all the dishes, pick up his dirty clothes, and change the dirty diapers, how is the husband doing with selflessness?

Selflessness is not dictated by traditional gender roles or responsibilities, it is seeing needs and making the effort to help and support your spouse regardless of your preference. When this mindset takes over, the husband is beginning to more clearly reflect the Savior. If you were a husband, what might be some of your next, daily, practical steps you can take to better selflessly love your wife?

5:26-30 - What is the result of Jesus loving the church?

What might be the illustrative connection here between the church and a wife? The church is blessed and transformed by the love of Jesus, how might the wife be blessed and transformed through the love of the husband?

We are one body with Christ as our head. In the same way, the husband and the wife are one (as illustrated and taught in the OT quote in 5:31). How might a husband think and act differently if he viewed his wife as his own body?

5:32 - Marriage is incredibly important to the Lord, its importance is grounded in the reality that marriage reflects Christ's relationship to the church.

How might this picture and living illustration impact the way we view marriage?

How can the church do a better job at honoring and supporting marriages in the church?

How can groups play a role in supporting marriages?

5:33 - This verse is a summary of the entire section on marriage. How would you summarize what you've learned in this section on husbands and wives?

Respect is an appropriate response for a wife to have towards a husband who is sacrificing anything and everything in order to love her like Christ loves the church. Respect is not born out of the husband's demand, but out of the husband's demonstration of love.

6:1-3 - CHILDREN

1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*

The Bible is for everyone. Even children are called to read, learn, and obey God's Word.

6:1 - The subject (children) is followed by the imperative (obey) along with the object (your parents). "In the Lord" emphasizes and amplifies the importance of the imperative to obey. The ground or reason for this obedience is because "this is right."

The first reasonable question may be: At what age is one no longer considered a child? It is difficult to give a definitive answer; the Bible does not define an age and the Jewish or Roman culture of Paul's day does not define that age for our culture or day.

It might be based upon age, level of independence, or other cultural or familial factors. Who decides?—a particular culture, the government, when one can legally drink, when one can serve in the military, when one can pack up their belongings and move to college, or when they are considered financially independent?

What do you think? How should we answer this question?

Obedience is the command and expectation. The context of this obedience is the Christian home that has been described in the preceding and following verses. In many homes there is abuse, mistreatment, and godless ways of living. How does a child handle these difficult situations?

How does "in the Lord" help you answer the above question?

Colossians 3:20 - calls children to be obedient to the Lord "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." Ephesians finishes the sentence with "for this is right." With both of these verses in mind, this obedience is not only morally right, but God sees it and derives pleasure. How should we include this reality into our conversations with our children about obedience?

6:2-3 - A promise given in the form of a proverb follows this command in the Old Testament and is reiterated here. Understanding literary genre is essential for knowing what the Bible is saying. A proverb (like in the book of Proverbs) needs to be understood as a holy probability not a certainty. How then do we articulate or teach this to our children?

There are those who obeyed their parents and yet, have experienced hard and or short lives. But there is a much greater likelihood that things will go well for those who obey their parents. Why do you suppose that is?

6:4 - FATHERS

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

“Exasperate’ - The NASB translates it ‘provoke your children to anger,’ and it can also be translated ‘make your children angry’” (Lincoln, 406).

6:4 - Paul uses a negative / positive format (much like the “put off” and “put on” language from earlier) and calls fathers not to anger their children but to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

How might a father anger, exasperate, or provoke their children to wrath?

The opposite of provoking them to anger seems to be instructing them in the Lord. Does this change or add to your answer from the above question?

What happens when we add expectations to our children that are not from the Lord?

Jesus often describes Himself as the Shepherd. How should this example of leadership affect fathers as they raise their children?

6:5-9 - EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Paul is not describing slavery like experienced in America and many other countries and societies. These are people willingly committing themselves into positions of service in order to receive a wage, housing, and provisions. Both in Paul's day and today bosses and employees can act in godly or ungodly ways in their stations in life.

How should an employee work for their employer?

Does this seem consistent with the work ethic of today?

Does it seem consistent with your work ethic?

Ultimately, who are we working for? How should this impact our motivation and effort?

For employers, what might be an example of an ungodly threat?

Throughout this section we see the reality of submission in most of our relationships. Ultimately, we are all in submission to Christ.

5:21 - we all live in subjection to one another

5:22 - wives live in subjection to husbands

6:1-3 - children live in subjection to parents

6:5-7 - employees live in subjection to employers

Life is not about climbing the ladder or attaining power, but stooping low to serve as many as possible. Life is about serving others and subjecting ourselves to the needs of the people in our lives. We choose our words in a way that benefits others (4:29), we use our resources to help others (4:28), and we sacrificially love others like Christ has loved us (5:2).

Jesus, our example, did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life for others (Mark 10:45). In John 13:1-17, Jesus gets on his knees and washes the feet of His disciples as an example for how they and we are to serve one another.

Submission and service are major themes of the life of Jesus and book of Ephesians. What are your next steps for serving more people?

6:10-17 - The Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Christianity is illustrated in many ways: as farming, athletics, and warfare. Battle, defense, offense, strategy, and attack are all parts of our faith. Success in battle is determined by armor and weapons. This passage discusses both!

6:10 - From where do we derive our strength?

What happens when we look to an alternative source for our strength?

In this passage battle lines are drawn. Our enemies are declared and described. A call is given to be strong, arm ourselves, and stand firm. Arrows have been launched, we are certainly already under attack. The enemy is unseen and powerful. Is your shield raised? Is your sword ready for use?

6:11 - How much of our armor should we put on? What could be the outcome if we do not take each piece seriously?

Who is identified as our enemy in this verse?

Is he a new enemy? Where do we first see his assault on humanity and God's creation?

6:12 - What additional details do we learn about our enemy?

In Daniel (Chapter 10) there are several interesting verses with discussions about angels and demons. The “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece” seem to be references to satanic forces that rule and lead these nations (10:13, 20). They actually seem to have the power to slow the movement of angels (10:13). We know God holds sovereign power, but this is described by God’s Word as a real battle with real consequences. To not take this seriously is to not take God’s Word seriously.

In every way, this battle—beyond the Marvel universe, *Lord of the Rings*, and all great stories—is the greatest, most significant, and most universal war, touching and impacting every person and soul everywhere for all time until the final battle, the last day, and the beginning of the eternal state.

How must one battle spiritual forces?

6:13 - In response to the reality of this war, what are we called to do?

Is it possible to only put on part of the armor of God?

What is the “day of evil?” Do you think there is only one?

6:14 - This passage connects standing firm to putting on the armor. What is the first piece and how is it described?

The belt holds the whole outfit together and in place. How is this also true of this first spiritual piece of armor?

What is the main function of a breastplate?

How is righteousness connected to this function?

Righteousness describes our right standing before God. Jesus took on our sin and died on our behalf and then gives His holy right standing before God to those who place their faith in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

What causes us to doubt our right standing before God?

The enemy is called "the accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10). What types of accusations do you think he makes against us?

Guilt and shame can cause us to distance ourselves from God. God says that His doors are always open and we are invited into His throne room at all times (Hebrews 4:12). Yet, often we view God as having a frowning face. When ongoing shame and guilt speak louder than the cross, then arrows have struck and pierced through the chinks in our breastplate.

How can you help someone who is struggling with shame and guilt?

6:15 - What happens if we forget to put on the readiness of the gospel?

Why would the Gospel be considered a part of our armor?

Why would "readiness" be connected to the Gospel?

How does the Gospel protect us?

The Great Commission calls us to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20). We must have a readiness to share with all who are in our life. How do we make sure we are ready?

6:16 - How does faith help protect us? Why would it be the piece of armor used to extinguish the flaming arrows of the devil?

How do we build our faith and strengthen our shield?

6:17 - Much like a helmet on a football team visibly aligns a player with his team, the helmet of salvation shows that we are on His team—eternally secure in His love (Romans 8:38-39) and in His family (John 1:12).

What types of attacks do you suppose the enemy might direct towards our minds / intellect?

How might your point of view of God's Word change if you viewed it as a weapon?

Notice that the Spirit of God and the Word of God are united together in this phrase. Without the Spirit, the Bible becomes just words on a page—It is the Spirit who inspired the words, illuminates the words, and applies them to our lives. How did Jesus respond to the devil during his time of temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)?

Can we use it in the same way today against temptations?

How can you be more prepared for battle?

We don't learn the Bible by accident. It takes planning, intentionally, and hard work. What is your next step for better learning the Word of God?

List several verses that you plan on memorizing this month:

6:18-20 - Prayer Requests

18 *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 Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

This passage closely reflects Paul's request for prayer in Colossians 4:1-4 (please read).

When are we to pray?

What are we to pray for?

How are we to pray?

What does it mean to "be alert?" How can we be alert in our prayers?

How do we pray in the Spirit? How is this connected to the descriptions of prayer in the text?

We must be careful to not over-spiritualize the concept of praying in the Spirit. The text itself drives us to what the Lord (the Spirit) wants us to be praying for and how we are to pray. This is not a mystical endeavor, though the Holy Spirit can certainly bring people to mind, guide our thoughts, convict us, and empower us to continue in prayer.

How is prayer connected to sharing the Gospel in this section?

How should we incorporate prayer into our evangelism?

Who are the non-Christians that you are consistently praying for? Who will you add to this list?

As we pray for our non-Christian friends, we should pray that opportunities are given to share with them. Here and in Colossians 4:2-4, Paul prays:

- That a door would be opened for him for the Gospel to be shared
- That he would be able to speak it clearly
- That the Spirit would give him words
- That he would share the Gospel fearlessly

Are you praying these prayers for yourself? How can you begin faithfully praying these prayers for yourself and your spiritual friends? (Identifying when and where you will pray usually increases the likelihood that you will follow through.)

How might the church be changed if all of us were praying this way?

Many of our greatest fears are mentioned in these prayers. I often hear, "I won't know what to say," or "I'm afraid I won't make any sense," or even "I'm scared to share the Gospel." These prayers above speak directly to many of our greatest fears and hindrances to sharing the Gospel.

6:20 - We may not be imprisoned like Paul, but are we considered ambassadors like Paul?

2 Corinthians 5:20 - What does it look like to take our role as ambassadors seriously?

What are our next steps to becoming a praying church?

6:21-24 - Final Thoughts

21 Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. **22** I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. **23** Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

What do these final thoughts tell you about Paul's relationship with the Ephesians?

Why is he sending Tychicus?

What does this tell you about his relationship with Tychicus?

Paul concludes with a benediction requesting that they would have peace, love with faith from God, and grace.

6:24 - How would you describe your love for Christ?

How can we have an "undying love?"

Bibliography & Additional Resources

Arnold, Clinton. *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Bruce, F.F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.

Hoehner, Harold. *Ephesians, An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.

Lincoln, Andrew. *Ephesians*. WBC. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990.

O'Brien, Peter. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.



BIBLE CENTER | CHURCH

Glorifying God by producing more maturing followers of Jesus