Ephesians

college version
Welcome to our study of Ephesians, a book that highlights the high calling and conduct of the church, the corporate body of Jesus Christ. Throughout this rich book, we will learn about the church’s inherited stewardship, multi-ethnic identity, distinct lifestyle, and spiritual opposition.

The eleven lessons in this packet are designed to walk us through this challenging book of the Bible. During the first lesson (Survey), we will look at the overall message of the book of Ephesians. The next nine lessons will focus on studying key passages in detail. Then, in our last lesson (Synthesis), we will summarize what we have learned for future reference.

In studying each passage in detail, we will be learning and using a number of basic Bible study methods. These methods fit under three fundamental skills that are meant to be practiced in order each week - **observe, interpret, and apply**. These skills are summarized on the next few pages, which are designed as a “Quick Reference Guide” that you can flip back through during your study. There are also advanced Bible study skills in the Appendix for those who want to go deeper in their study.

As you use this packet to study Ephesians, please keep in mind a couple of things. There are more questions than you may have time to answer in any given lesson. So focus on the questions that seem most significant to understanding the passage’s meaning. And make sure that you don’t skip your own observations of the passage as this is the most important step of Bible study.
Observation Task 1: Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

- **Underline all verbs.** A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action takes place (“He came ... to you”) or that a state or condition exists (“you ... have been brought near”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.

- **Circle key words or phrases.** These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “grace” in 2:8) or thematically set the theme or main idea of the passage (like “made us alive” in 2:5).

- **Highlight repeated words or phrases.** Include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “trespasses” and “sin”). You’ll want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages (such as “riches” found in 1:7, 18).

- **Box connecting words.** These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:
  1. **COMPARISON:** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so (e.g. “humility AND gentleness” 4:2).
  2. **CONTRAST:** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however (e.g. “one God and Father of all ... BUT to each one of us” 4:6-7).
  3. **PURPOSE:** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that (e.g. “I pray ... SO THAT you will know what is the hope of His calling” 1:18).
  4. **RESULT:** very similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that (e.g. “Christ ... gave Himself up for her SO THAT He might sanctify her” 5:25-26).
  5. **CAUSE:** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for (e.g. “excluded from the life of God BECAUSE of the ignorance that is in them” 4:18).
  6. **EXPLANATION:** what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word for (e.g. “FOR we are His workmanship” 2:10).
7. **INFERENCE**: provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: *therefore, for this reason* (e.g. “THEREFORE be imitators of God” 5:1).

8. **CONDITION**: presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e. it could be hypothetical). Key word is *if* (e.g. “IF indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him” 4:21).

**Observation Task 2**: **List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week.**
A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth or command that the passage focuses on, such as “grace” in 2:1-10. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

**Observation Task 3**: **Write two or more observations per verse.**
Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

**Observation Task 4**: **Record your own interpretive questions.**
Here are a few examples:

**WHO is...**
...Paul talking about?
...accomplishing the action?
...benefiting from the action?

**WHAT is the...**
...meaning of this word?
...significance of this phrase?
...implication of this statement?
...relationship between these phrases?

**WHY did Paul...**
...choose this word?
...include this phrase, statement, or command?
...connect these ideas?
...not say ______?

**HOW...**
...was this action accomplished?
...will this situation occur?
Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study, **interpretation**. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions. Also, make sure to familiarize yourself with the three “Principles of Interpretation” that appear in the Appendix on page 121.

**Interpretation Method 1: Use the context.**
Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow Paul’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead in Ephesians for clues.

**Interpretation Method 2: Compare multiple translations.**
This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and are thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at [www.biblestudytools.net](http://www.biblestudytools.net).

**Interpretation Method 3: Look up key words.**
While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto [www.biblestudytools.net](http://www.biblestudytools.net), and as an example, type in “Ephesians 2” in the “search for:” box, set the “using:” box to “NAS with Strong’s Numbers” and click “Find.” All of Ephesians 2 will appear on the screen with most of the words highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will explain the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament (NT). Click on any of the other NT books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”) and get a display of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word. To refine your understanding of Paul’s use of a word, look at some of his uses in his other books, such as Romans or Philippians.

**Interpretation Method 4: Study cross-references (Xrefs).**
XRefs are simply other passages in the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as we seek to understand our passage. You can find a few XRefs in the margins of most Bibles, but you can find many more by logging onto another helpful website: [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org). In the top left of the screen under “Display Bible,” choose “Ephesians,” then the chapter you are interested in, and then click “Go.” A new screen will appear with the NET Bible translation of the chapter you requested. Click the “XRef” tab at the top of the screen, and this will take you to an extensive list of XRefs for every verse in this chapter based on the classic book *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. Clicking any of these will bring up the single verse, but you can then click “context” to see the verse in the midst of its surrounding context.
Interpretation Method 5: **Look up background information**

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall, but you can also find the older *Int’l Standard Bible Dictionary [ISBE]* online for free ([net.bible.org/dictionary.php](http://net.bible.org/dictionary.php)). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is an excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

Interpretation Method 6: **Tackle tough questions step-by-step.**

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four step process: **(1) LIST ALL THE OPTIONS.** Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question. **(2) LIST PROS AND CONS FOR EACH OPTION.** See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology. **(3) CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY OPTION.** Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option. **(4) DECIDE ON YOUR CERTAINTY LEVEL.** Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct... 60% = this solution is just a bit more likely than the others!) Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.
Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And lest we underestimate the value of this last step, remember that in God’s eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obeys His Word that truly loves Him (See John 14:21). So how do we apply a passage to our lives? Application involves the following two tasks:

Application Task 1: **List potential principles from your passage.**

A “principle” is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g. 1 Timothy 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g. “do not leave Jerusalem” in Acts 1:4). An example from Ephesians 1 would be, “God’s blessings in our life should lead us to praise Him.” It is often helpful when listing principles to consider the following questions:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

Application Task 2: **Choose one principle, and create a plan to apply it to your life this week.**

Once you complete your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (Do not just choose the easiest to apply!). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the principle God is leading you to apply. Once you have chosen a specific principle, answer these two questions:

- What exactly will I do differently this week to apply this principle to my life (Be specific)?
- Whom, other than the Lord, will I ask to help me follow through with this application?
See the Big Picture

EPHESIANS SURVEY
Pray

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

SURVEY: What is the big idea?

Surveying a book like Ephesians allows you to grasp the big picture and the overall storyline of the book before getting caught up in the details. This survey provides a helpful road map to guide your study during the coming weeks. So begin this crucial first step by taking the next thirty minutes to read straight through Ephesians without stopping. Then answer the questions below before moving on to the next page.

1. How would you describe Paul’s relationship to these believers?

2. What are the major themes or big ideas in this book? (Hint: Look for repeated words and ideas.)

3. Now that you have read through the entire book, what are Paul’s purposes in writing it? Be as specific as you can.

4. Based only on Ephesians, how do calling and conduct relate to one another?
AUTHORSHIP

Paul was born in Tarsus into Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28) and later educated under the illustrious rabbi, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Zealous for the Law, Paul became the chief persecutor of the early church until his conversion when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Immediately, Paul began to proclaim Jesus as Savior, eventually focusing several missionary journeys to the Gentiles throughout Asia Minor. During his journeys, he traveled to Ephesus and ministered there for almost three years (Acts 20:31). After Paul departed from Ephesus, he left Timothy behind to combat false teaching (1 Timothy 1:3). At some later point, Paul wrote this letter while in prison either in Caesarea or Rome as one of his many “Prison Epistles” in A.D. 60-62. Despite recent debate that the book was written by someone who did not use his own name but instead claimed to be Paul, there is no strong reason to reject Pauline authorship of the book.

RECIPIENTS

Ephesus was a leading city on the west coast of Asia Minor. It essentially linked the western and eastern portions of the Roman Empire on the main highway and even possessed the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia. Due to its location within the Empire, Ephesus exerted great influence culturally, economically, and religiously. With a population over 300,000 people, Ephesus contained a theatre that seated an estimated 25,000 people. It became the center for worship of the goddess Artemis (Diana in Roman mythology), which often included temple prostitution. Her temple ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and became not just a center for worship but also the primary banking institution for all of Asia Minor. As a result, Paul’s apostolic ministry that turned people to Christ and away from Artemis represented a significant financial threat to temple-related businesses like that of the silversmith, Demetrius (Acts 19:23-41). Ephesus also became a center of occult practice as many used magic, witchcraft, and sorcery to manipulate hostile spiritual powers to their advantage (Acts 19:11-20).
PURPOSE

Paul’s letter to the Ephesian believers does not seem concerned with any particular heresies as we see in Galatians and Colossians, nor with any particular occurrences of immorality as 1 Corinthians. Rather, Paul’s purposes are to declare the glory of God and the extravagant riches given to the Church. Paul focuses on the call, identity, and conduct of the Church, the body of Christ, throughout this rich epistle.

Outline the Book

Having read the background article on the book of Ephesians, now skim through Ephesians one more time and create your own title for each of the major sections below (you can divide these into smaller sections, each with its own title, if you wish). Do not use the titles in this packet or in your Bible. Create your own titles that capture your understanding of the main idea of each section.

My Ephesians Outline...

- 1:1-14
- 1:15-23
- 2:1-10
- 2:11-22
- 3:1-13
- 3:14-21
- 4:1-16
- 4:17-32
- 5:1-14
- 5:15-33
- 6:1-9
- 6:10-24
Why does this matter?

Facing the likely prospect of impeachment in 1974, President Richard Nixon became the only U.S. President in history to resign from office. America had learned that our 37th President had been a willing participant in a campaign of deception to cover up a break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic Party at the Watergate hotel in a scandal that would become known as “Watergate.” Not only had the President lied, but also tapes of private White House conversations revealed that he swore and made anti-Semitic comments to his staff as well.

While public opinion turned strongly against him, it is important to notice a couple of things about this scandal. First, it followed years of faithful and effective service to the nation. In fact, history has proven that Nixon was a capable and even brilliant leader particularly in the realm of foreign policy. He greatly improved relations with communist China and the Soviet Union and brought an end to the Vietnam War. Second, Nixon’s “sins” in the Watergate scandal were not all that uncommon. Most Americans have lied to protect themselves, many curse in private company, and many nurse racial biases. And yet, the vast majority of Americans condemned his actions and supported his resignation.

Why? Why did he face such harsh opposition from an American public guilty of his same transgressions? Simple: because he was our President. There is no vocational calling in our nation higher than that of President. When we elect a person to this most prestigious position, we expect a great deal from them. We expect their conduct to be above reproach, to lead with confidence and wisdom, and even to represent America to the world. The high calling of President demands a high standard of conduct!

Why is the calling of God on your life even higher than the calling of the President of the United States? Does your conduct reflect the high calling you have received?

In your own opinion, what is the relationship between calling and conduct?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Rejoice in Blessing

Ephesians 1:1-14

for you
in Christ
—God
Pray

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Memorize

Ephesians 1:5  |  Write it out to get your memorization started.

Why does this matter?

Tom loathed his menial job – reviewing returns nine hours a day for the IRS. By 2pm of any given day, he was desperate to grab his keys, sprint for the door, and never come back. He longed to take a few weeks off and travel to the fifty acres of undeveloped, forested land his father had left him. But there was no time. Between rent, crushing credit card debt, and never-ending bills, he had to work every hour he could spare to make ends meet. Life was downright hateful to Tom. Little did he know that the fifty acre plot, untouched by surveyors, farmers, or developers, sat atop a substantial pocket of untapped oil. Had he only taken off a day or two to explore his land and to see the small puddles of black liquid bubbling up in a few of its gullies, his whole situation would have changed. Day after day, he earned peanuts at a job he hated when nearly limitless wealth stood within his grasp.

If you inherited millions of dollars, what would you do with it? How would it change your day-to-day life?

What resources like money, possessions, talents, or education do you currently have that you are not taking advantage of? A boat you never go fishing in? A cabin owned by a relative you never visit? A degree you aren’t benefitting from? Skills you don’t ever get to use? What keeps you from taking advantage of these things?
Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, and it lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. We will learn a new observation skill each week to practice along with the others we have already learned. This week, simply read the passage below, and then write one or two observations for each verse in the box that follows. Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see. The first few have been done for you.

**Ephesians 1:1-14**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who 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 with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations

vv 1-3
- Paul identifies himself as "an apostle of Christ Jesus"
- Paul identifies his Ephesian audience as those "who are faithful"
- Paul states that these Ephesian believers have received "every spiritual blessing"

vv 4-7

vv 8-10

vv 11-14
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 1:1-14! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.
2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.
3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
Our observation of Ephesians 1:1-14 should have stirred up interesting questions like, “What is an apostle?” So how do we answer such a challenging question? Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for the answer (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions)! God desires that all of us become approved workmen, “accurately handling the Word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). To that end, **we will learn a new interpretive skill each week** to practice along with the others we have already learned. This week’s skill is the most important - **USE THE CONTEXT**. Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow Paul’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may also need to read ahead in Ephesians for clues.

**1.** List all of the “spiritual blessings” you see in this passage given by God to believers. What role does each Person of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) play in providing us these blessings?

**2.** What does it mean to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit” (v13)? What must a person do to receive this? How does this sealing relate to our inheritance and redemption?

**3.** According to 1:4-6, 11-12; and Romans 8:23-30 …

   What does it mean to be “chosen” or “predestined” by God?

   When did God predestine us?

   Why did God predestine us? In other words, what is the purpose of His choice?

   Why does any of this really matter? Is predestination just a big theological debate, or does it have a practical application to our lives?
4. What does it mean to be “holy and blameless”? Are we considered to be this way right now (see Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:21-23)?

5. Should we be looking for apostles like Paul to lead us today? Why or why not? To answer this question, look up 1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 12:28-30; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 2:19-22; and 3:1-7 and consider these questions:
   - What is the basic meaning of the title “apostle”?
   - What qualifications did an apostle need?
   - What were the responsibilities of an apostle?

Word Study

Try doing a word study on redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις). While this skill will be explained later in detailed instructions on page 43, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now! Just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at www.biblestudytools.net, determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
In God’s eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obey His Word that truly loves Him (See John 14:21). So our Bible study is only complete once we apply what we’ve learned. To that end, we will learn the first two steps in the process of application this week. First, start each lesson by answering a few reflection questions designed to demonstrate how each passage relates to our own lives. Second, step back and look at the passage as a whole and list potential principles. A “principle” is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g. 1 Timothy 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g. “do not leave Jerusalem” in Acts 1:4). A couple of examples are provided for you on the next page.

Reflect on your life

- Verse 3 makes an amazing assertion – that God has already given us every single spiritual blessing – He’s holding nothing back! But do you really believe it? Do you feel like God has already given you all good things? If not, what do you feel that you lack from Him?

- God means for the truth of predestination to affect our daily lives. How does it affect yours? Be specific.

- How should our status as God’s chosen and adopted children affect our day-to-day lives?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 1:1-14. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. God’s blessings in our life should lead us to praise Him.

2. We can find security for our future in God who chose us.

3. 

4. 

5. 

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.

Pray
Pray with Power

EPHESIANS 1:15-23 & 3:14-21
Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 1:18-19a | Write it out to get your memorization started.

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**Why does this matter?**

Many of us learned some of life’s most important lessons from a tall, yellow bird, a green grouch, and their cadre of colorful friends living on Sesame Street. In one such memorable lesson, the Cookie Monster (perhaps the greatest of all Sesame Street characters!) is granted three wishes by a powerful genie. What should he ask for? Cookies, of course! But first he needs something to hold all those cookies he plans to receive. No one wants to eat their cookies off the ground, after all! So for wish number one, he asks for a plate to hold his many cookies. With plate in hand, he moves to wish number two – time for cookies! Oh, but wait, a plate really isn’t that large when you think about it – not nearly large enough for the plethora of cookies a Cookie Monster can eat. So for wish number two, he asks for a big box with plenty of room for his cookie stash. But now, with box in hand, Cookie Monster realizes that a box isn’t big enough either. He wants enough cookies to last a lifetime. Without hesitation, he asks for a dump truck – surely that will hold enough cookies! And now, with a dump truck at the ready, he asks for enough cookies to fill it. “Sorry, no-can-do,” replies the genie who then disappears having fulfilled his promise of granting three wishes. He leaves behind a dish, a box, a dump truck, and one sad, but hopefully wiser, Cookie Monster.

Can you recall times growing up when you asked your parents for things that seemed important or fun at the moment, but were not satisfying in the long run?

Think about your current prayer life. What do you ask God for? Are you requesting the best, most important things or secondary things most of the time? How do you know what’s best to ask Him for?
Like last week, read the passage below and write down your observations in the box on the following page. This week, we will begin to write our own questions as well. Try to write out eight questions next to the relevant verses on the following page. This is probably the simplest skill of all, just record the questions that naturally come to mind as you try to understand and apply the passage! If you need help getting started, you can use these examples:

**WHO** is...
...Paul talking about?
...accomplishing the action?
...benefiting from the action?

**WHAT** is the...
...meaning of this word?
...significance of this phrase?
...implication of this statement?
...relationship between these phrases?

**WHY** did Paul...
...choose this word?
...include this phrase, statement, or command?
...connect these ideas?
...not say ______?

**HOW**...
...was this action accomplished?
...will this situation occur?

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**Ephesians 1:15-23**

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations - 3:14-21

vv 14-15

vv 16-17

vv 18-19

vv 20-21
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 1:15-23! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
Last week we learned to use the context to help us answer our interpretive questions. This week, we will add our second interpretive skill - **COMPARE MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS**. This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. As you tackle the questions below, look up the passage in other translations and compare to the NASB to look for helpful clues or clearer wording. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text, and therefore, quite accurate for Bible study. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and are thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). You can find and compare numerous English translations of any Bible passage at [www.biblestudytools.net](http://www.biblestudytools.net).

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 

   b)

2. Rewrite Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians in 1:15-23 in your own words. What, specifically, does he ask God for? (Hint: Try to define the meaning of phrases like “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation” and “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.”)

3. What do we learn about each Person of the Trinity in these prayers? Consider the following ...
   To which of them should we pray? Why (See 1 Corinthians 15:22-28.)?

   What role does the Holy Spirit play in our lives?

   Where is Jesus now, and what is He doing?

   What is the significance of being “at the right hand” of God (See Acts 5:31; Hebrews 1:3-13.)?
4. Why is it significant that Jesus Christ is exalted right now (See Acts 2:32-36; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:11-18)?

5. If Christ has already received all authority in heaven and earth from the Father, then why is this world still such a broken and evil place? Why does Satan still have such influence here (See Acts 1:6-7; 2:32-36; 3:17-21; and 1 Corinthians 15:22-28)?

Word Study

Try doing a word study on head (κεφαλή). While this skill will be explained later in detailed instructions on page 43, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now! Just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at www.biblestudytools.net, determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
As in the previous lesson, complete the reflection questions, and then list a few principles you learned from the passage. This week, we add a third application step - choose one principle, and create a plan to apply it to your life this week. Once you have completed your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (do not just choose the easiest to apply). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the one God is leading you to apply! Once you have chosen a specific principle, follow the directions on the next page to develop a realistic and specific plan to apply it to your life.

How does your own prayer life compare with Paul’s?

Are you currently praying for fellow believers? If so, how do you keep track of what you pray for and how God responds to your prayers? If not, list five names of believers in your life, and pray for each of them each day this week.
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

- Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Pray

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 2:8-9 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

Memorize

Why does this matter?

Three years into this teaching position and Sandra’s once indomitable optimism was beginning to wane. After graduating near the top of her class at Texas A&M, she had passed up coveted teaching offers at wealthy school districts to serve as a seventh grade math teacher in an impoverished school in one of the roughest parts of New Orleans. She had been motivated by a sense of great hope, hope that the education she offered could bring real improvement and restoration to a recently devastated city. She had heard the call to service from the President himself who said that education would be the “silver bullet” to fixing what ailed the nation.

Yet after two years the results were mixed at best. While she had connected with a few students, most remained distant and uninterested. Sadly, half the students from her first class of seventh graders had already dropped out of school. Worst of all, two of her favorite students from the previous year had been arrested during the summer for participating in a gang-related assault - just another senseless act of violence in a city plagued by it. All her hard work seemed to be having so little effect. Sure, some of the kids were learning at least a little bit about math, but their lives were, on average, just as broken as they were before they met Sandra. “How could that be?”, she wondered. If education really was the solution our nation so needed, then why were her efforts having so little effect?

What kind of improvement can education, economic development, environmental activism, or any other government program bring to the human race? What are the limitations of these programs?

Why are we so quick to engage in social activism, but so slow to share the gospel?
Like last week, read the passage below and write down your observations and questions in the box on the following page. You have probably noticed the “Themes” section that precedes the box for your observations each week. This is our third observational skill - **list out 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week.** A primary theme is a central idea, truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “wisdom” or “strength” in 1:15-23.

There are a couple of simple ways to identify these central themes. First, begin to **CIRCLE ALL OF THE KEY WORDS OR PHRASES.** These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “grace” in 2:8) or thematically set the theme or main idea for the passage (like “made us alive” in 2:5). Second, begin to **HIGHLIGHT REPEATED WORDS OR PHRASES,** such as “grace” throughout this passage. Also, include words and phrases that are closely related, even if not exact duplicates (such as “trespasses” and “sins”). You will also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages (such as “riches” found in 1:7, 18). Repeated concepts reveal something important to the author’s argument or provide clues to understanding his flow of thought. For example, notice how often Paul uses words like “mercy” or “grace” in Ephesians 2:1-10, a good indicator that this is one of the key themes of the passage.

**Ephesians 2:1-10**

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations

vv 1-3

vv 4-5

vv 6-7

vv 8-10
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 2:1-10! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.
2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.
3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
As you answer the questions below, continue using your first two interpretive skills (use the context and compare multiple translations), and add this third one - LOOK UP KEY WORDS (such as “grace,” “saved,” or “faith” in this passage). While doing so in English is helpful, looking them up in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy thanks to the internet. Simply log onto www.biblestudytools.net, type in “Ephesians 2” in the “search for:” box, set the “using:” box to “NAS with Strong’s Numbers” and click “Find.” All of Ephesians 2 will appear on the screen with most of the words highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the NT! You can even click on any of the other NT books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”) and get a list of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word! What used to take hours now takes seconds.

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 

   b) 

2. What does Paul mean by “dead” in 2:1? To answer this question...
   First, complete a word study on “dead” (νεκρός) according to the instructions above. (Pay particular attention to Luke 9:60; Romans 6:11-13; 7:8; 8:10; 1 Corinthians 15:12,42; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 3:1.)

   Second, look up these cross-references to get a biblical understanding of the concept of “death” – Genesis 2:16-17; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Timothy 5:6.

   Third, summarize in one sentence what Paul means by “dead” in 2:1.
3. Define what Paul means by each of the descriptions in verses 2-3. Then summarize in one sentence a person’s condition without Christ.

4. God’s salvation of us is described with three main verbs in verses 4-6. For each one, define exactly what Paul means, and then provide at least one cross reference where the idea is seen elsewhere in Scripture.
   “made us alive together with Christ”

   “raised us up with Him”

   “seated us with Him”

5. How would you define “grace” in your own words (see Genesis 6:8; Exodus 33:19; 2 Samuel 24:24; Romans 4:4-5)? What is it? Who grants it? On what conditions is it granted?

6. Can those who have placed their faith in Jesus (verses 8-9) choose not to do the good works that God prepared for them? In other words, how do our good deeds relate to our salvation? Provide scriptural support for your answer.
This week’s application section involves the same three steps as last week’s, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

If you were to stand before God tonight and He was to ask you, “Why should I let you into heaven?” what would you say?

How does God’s grace affect your daily life? How does it change the way you see yourself, the way you see others, and the way you act?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 2:1-10. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

- Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Invest in the Family

EPHESIANS 2:11-3:13
Pray

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 2:13-14 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

Memorize

Why does this matter?

For 100 days in 1994, the central African nation of Rwanda truly experienced “hell on earth.” In that short time, Rwandans of Hutu ethnicity executed approximately one million of their Tutsi countrymen, including men, women, and children. Those who were not shot to death were slaughtered with machetes or trapped in buildings, even churches, and burned alive. Thousands of Tutsi women were raped by Hutu soldiers in an attempt to eradicate the Tutsi race. In the aftermath, many Tutsi survivors armed themselves and retaliated against Hutus, even those who took no part in the genocide. More than a decade later, the emotional wounds remain raw for many who were affected by this tragedy. Even for many believers, forgiveness and reconciliation with members of the other race seems impossible. That’s where Celestin Musekura steps in, a Rwandan pastor who lost five family members to the violence. Celestin’s mission is to help pastors and churches throughout Central Africa become places where people of all races forgive one another and grow to love one another. He believes that knowledge of the work of Christ as revealed in Scripture can tear down the walls of division between groups of people even after decades of violence and conflict. Celestin himself had an opportunity to practice what he preaches when, a year after the genocide, he met the individuals who had killed his loved ones and, with little hesitation, offered them forgiveness.

Put yourself in Celestin’s shoes as he stood face-to-face with the men who murdered his family. What would you say? Would you be able to forgive them? Would you be able to actually love them? If they, too, were believers, would you be able to attend the same church as they do and serve in ministry together?

Can you think of other examples where the gospel has brought peace, healing, and forgiveness to two groups of people separated by years of violence?
Ephesians 2:11-22

11Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

12But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 13For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 14by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; 18for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 2 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 3 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 4 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 5 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 6 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 7 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 8 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 9 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 10 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 11 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

12 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.
List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

vv 1-3

vv 4-7

vv 8-10

vv 11-13
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 2:11-22! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that **there is not one “right” way!** In general though, remember these summarized rules...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
**INTPRET: What does it mean?**

Here is a fourth interpretive skill - **LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFO**. You can find very helpful insights about what a passage meant to its original readers by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary (best is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall, but you can find the older *Int’l Standard Bible Dictionary [ISBE]* online for free at [net.bible.org/dictionary.php](http://net.bible.org/dictionary.php)) or looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary (e.g. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener). Here is an example from *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* by Harold Hoehner on verses 14-15 that should help with question #4.

> “Others have thought [the dividing wall] refers to the Mosaic Law ... The law required the Jews to be holy and separate. Thus they could not eat with Gentiles or intermarry with them. Right within the present context the law of circumcision marked a real separation between Jews and Gentiles. This often led to a hostility of Jews toward Gentiles and was a cause of Gentile hatred of Jews ... Often an attitude of superiority crept in that in turn engendered hostility”

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a)
   b)


3. What does Paul mean by saying that in the past Gentiles, non-Jews like most of us, lived without hope and without God? To find out, answer the questions below. Use the following passages to develop your answers: Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Numbers 15:14-16; 1 Kings 8:41-43; Psalms 147:19-20; Isaiah 56:6-7; Acts 14:16-17; 17:24-31; Romans 3:1-2; 9:3-5.
   Did God care about Gentiles during OT times?

   Could Gentiles have a relationship with God during OT times? If so, what did God require of them?

   What exactly did Jews possess that Gentiles lacked?
4. Read Acts 10:9-29; 15:1-11; 21:27-28; Romans 7:4-6; 10:4 to answer the following questions regarding “the barrier of the dividing wall” in 2:14...
   What exactly was it? And why did it create hostility between Jews and Gentiles?

   How did Christ break down this wall (give a cross reference to support your answer)?

   What is the church’s relationship to this wall now?

5. Paul uses the analogy of a “body” in 2:19-22 to characterize this new community of Jews and Gentiles. What does this figurative language teach us about the church?

6. Has the church replaced Israel in God’s plan, or does God still have two distinct purposes for Israel and the church? What exactly is God’s purpose for creating the church (see 3:2-11; Romans 9:1-5; 11:1, 5, 17-29)?

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**Word Study**

This week, complete a word study on **mystery** (μυστήριον). Even though this skill was explained in detail on page 43, just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at [www.biblestudytools.net](http://www.biblestudytools.net), determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
As always, reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week. Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

Reflect on your life

Do you approach your spiritual life and your relationship with God primarily as an individual pursuit or as something you do in community with other believers? Why?

Paul has such a clear sense of his God-given calling and purpose in life. Do you have the same kind of boldness and clarity as to what God has called you to in this life?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 2:11-3:13. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

- Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Walk in Unity

EPHESIANS 4:1-16
As in previous weeks, read the passage below and write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Also circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases. This week, we will begin to **BOX CONNECTING WORDS**. We will learn four types of connecting words this week:

**COMPARISON:** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas, or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: **and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so** (e.g. “humility AND gentleness” 4:2).

**CONTRAST:** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: **but, rather, yet, however** (e.g. “one God and Father of all ... BUT to each one of us” 4:6-7).

**PURPOSE:** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: **that, so that, in order that** (e.g. “I pray ... SO THAT you will know what is the hope of His calling” 1:18).

**RESULT:** very similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: **that, so that, as a result, with the result that** (e.g. “Christ ... gave Himself up for her SO THAT He might sanctify her” 5:25-26).

**Ephesians 4:1-16**

1Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. 7But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.” 9(Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) 11And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations

vv 1-6

vv 7-10

vv 11-13

vv 14-16
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 4:1-16! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
How do we answer difficult interpretive questions when more than one option seems possible? This requires two skills, the first of which is **LIST ALL THE OPTIONS WITH PROS AND CONS.** Always start by brainstorming, listing every possible answer to your question. Be open-minded and creative, and do not rush this process. You will often find that your third option proves better than your first. Once you have created a list of possible options, list both pros and cons for each one. You are looking for all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology. Once you have thought about it for a while individually, feel free to talk with others and to check commentaries or references to see if you have missed any options (However, do not just assume that their favorite option is necessarily correct!) Having done that, we move on to the second skill ... **CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY OPTION AND DECIDE ON CERTAINTY.** Look back at all of your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight, unless the solution you are looking at contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you know that option is invalid. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy. (90% = I am very sure this is correct... 60% = this solution is just a bit more likely than the others!) Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 
   b) 

2. How does this passage relate to what came before it in Ephesians?

3. What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling”? What does a worthy walk look like according to Ephesians chapters 4-6? How does our calling motivate our walk?
4. What is Paul talking about in verses 9-10? When did Christ “descend” and to where did He descend? In order to answer such a challenging question...

   First, consider what possible options exist for the timing and place of His descent? (See Psalm 63:9-10; John 3:13; Romans 10:7; Philippians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.)

   Now go back to your list of options and add pros and cons for each possibility. As you weigh criteria, consider how verses 9-10 contribute to Paul’s argument in the passage.

   Finally, circle your preferred view and determine your level of certainty.

5. According to this passage, along with Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-30; 1 Peter 4:10-11...

   Create your own definition of the term “spiritual gifts.”

   What specific spiritual gifts are mentioned in the New Testament?

   What was Christ’s ultimate purpose in giving these gifts?

   Should we expect to see all of these gifts in our church today? Why or why not?

6. Looking at verses 12-16, restate Paul’s goal for the church body in your own words.
As always, **reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week.** Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

**Reflect on your life**

- We have received the highest of callings from God. Do you live “in a manner worthy of the calling” you have received? If not, what needs to change in your life?

- What are your spiritual gifts? In what ways are you using them to help others in the church grow? What else could you be doing to better utilize these gifts this year?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 4:1-16. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

魂 What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

魂 Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Memorize

Ephesians 4:1-2 | Write it out to get your memorization started.
End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Don’t Turn Back

EPHESIANS 4:17-32
Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 4:22-24 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

Why does this matter?

Annie was half-way through her two-week vacation in East Asia, and it was time to get some laundry done by the hotel service. The group of tourists she was traveling with were gathered around the front desk as Annie turned in her laundry bag. To her horror, the desk clerk began removing and holding up each piece of her laundry, including undergarments, diligently recording each one on a check-in sheet. “Oh man,” she thought, turning red with embarrassment, “I’m not in Kansas anymore!”

Annie’s not the first to experience culture shock or the disorientation felt when people must operate within a different and unknown cultural or social environment. Each culture possesses certain social norms and customs that distinguish what is appropriate and honoring from what is not. It is true for every culture and involves every facet of life from greeting to eating, and even to laughing.

Have you ever experienced culture shock? If so, what specific social customs or values differed between your own culture and the one you were visiting? How did you handle the difference?

Has walking with Jesus Christ ever felt like culture shock even within your own culture? What social customs or values differ considerably between our culture and the lifestyle the Scriptures call us to follow?
As in previous weeks, read the passage below and write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Also, circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases and continue to **BOX CONNECTING WORDS**. Here are four more types to box this week:

**CAUSE:** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: **because, since,** and sometimes **for** (e.g. “excluded from the life of God **BECAUSE** of the ignorance that is in them” 4:18).

**EXPLANATION:** what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, or why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word **for** (e.g. “**FOR** we are His workmanship” 2:10).

**INFERENC:** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: **therefore, for this reason** (e.g. “**THEREFORE** be imitators of God” 5:1).

**CONDITION:** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e. it could be hypothetical). Key word is **if** (e.g. “**IF** indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him” 4:21).

**Ephesians 4:17-32**

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE** of you **WITH HIS NEIGHBOR,** for we are members of one another. 26 **BE ANGRY,** AND yet **DO NOT SIN;** do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

Themes

My observations

vv 17-20

vv 21-24

vv 25-28

vv 29-32
Map the Passage

While this skill will be introduced and explained later by detailed instructions on page 84, you have the opportunity to begin practicing it now for Ephesians 4:17-32! This skill is a fantastic way to visually discover the author’s intended flow of thought. Remember that **there is not one “right” way!** In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
This week, we will learn to **STUDY CROSS REFERENCES (XRefs)**. XRefs are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such XRefs can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by logging onto another helpful website: [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org). In the top left of the screen under “Display Bible,” choose “Ephesians” and then “4” and click “Go.” A new screen will appear with the NET Bible translation of Ephesians 4. Click the “XRef” tab at the top of the screen, and this will take you to an extensive list of XRefs for every verse in this chapter based on the classic book *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. Clicking any of these will bring up the single verse, but you can then click “context” to see the verse in the midst of its surrounding context. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

1. Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 

   b) 

   c) 

2. What does it mean to be “renewed in the spirit of your mind”? To help answer this question, begin by completing the word study below on “mind.”

3. What is the significance of “therefore” in v25? In other words, how do the truths of verses 22-24 relate to the relational commands of verses 25-32?

4. From the context, how could we grieve the Holy Spirit? Does this “grieving” last forever (Hint: justify your answer from other verses in Ephesians)?
5. Verses 22-23 present a significant interpretive challenge. In Greek they can be translated either as commands (“lay aside the old self ... be renewed ... put on the new self”) or as factual statements of past realities (“you have laid aside the old self ... you are being renewed ... you have put on the new self”). The Greek allows either option, so you must decide from the context of chapter 4 (See also Romans 6:6 and Colossians 3:9). Which option do you think is best and why?

6. Based on your answer to the previous question, define the following terms, and determine whether they refer to an individual person or to a group of people. Provide at least one cross reference for each.
   “old man/self”
   “new man/self”

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**Word Study**

This week, complete a word study on *mind* (νοῦς). Even though this skill was explained in detail on page 43, just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at [www.biblestudytools.net](http://www.biblestudytools.net), determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
As always, **reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week.** Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

Of the relational commands Paul gives in verses 25-32 (i.e. speak truth, do not let the sun go down on your anger, speak no unwholesome word, etc.), which do you struggle with most? Give a recent example of this struggle in your life.

Are there any relationships in your life that are currently strained or estranged due to past conflict, anger, or hurtful speech? What can you do to begin the process of reconciliation and healing?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 4:17-32. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

➢ What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

➢ Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Conform to Christ

EPHESIANS 5:1-14
Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 5:1-2 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

Why does this matter?

“Quit copying me! Mom ... he’s doing it again. Make him stop, please!” Steve looked up from his breakfast to find his kid brother Justin dressed in exactly the same clothes, eating the same cereal, reading the same sports page, and listening to his iPod, just as Steve was doing. Their parents assured Steve that Justin was imitating his every move out of admiration and a desire to be like his older brother. After all, “Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery,” they said. Steve wasn’t so sure. Perhaps his pesky little brother just knew how to push his buttons!

Social psychology has long suggested that children learn through imitation. In 2007, the National Academy of Sciences reported that children actually over-imitate adults. In repeated experiments, groups of three-to-five year-old children consistently imitated both the necessary and irrelevant steps they saw adults performing in simple retrieval tasks. The study supported ongoing evidence that humans appear to be powerfully “hardwired” to learn by imitation.

In what areas of your life have you discovered a tendency to imitate or be influenced by others?

In what areas of your life do you provide a good example for others to imitate?
Ephesians 5:1-14

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.”
This week, we will begin to MAP THE PASSAGE. This skill is a fantastic way to discover the author’s intended meaning and flow of thought. It also will help you answer many of your interpretive questions. The first rule of mapping a passage is: There is not one “right” way! However you create your map, your goal should be to discover the author’s flow of thought by graphically laying out the passage. Before you complete the passage map for Ephesians 5:1-6 on the next page, here are some general rules to follow with examples from Ephesians 1:3-5 ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence (These form the main clause of your sentence). Write the main clause at the top left of your paper. Think of your map as an outline: This would be your Roman numeral I.

   1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
   This is the main clause of Eph. 1:3

2) Continue writing the first sentence, placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify. A modifying phrase describes something in the main clause – how, why, when, to whom, etc. In an outline, this would be your first subheading.

   1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
   who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing
   “who” modifies, or is talking about, God in this sentence

3) If there are multiple modifiers (several phrases or words all talking about the same thing), line them up underneath each other, under the word or phrase they are modifying.

   1:3 ...who has blessed us...
   4 just as He chose us...
   5 ...He predestined us...
   Both of the phrases in vv4-5 will have modifiers in your final map, but the phrases themselves should be lined up since they both modify God’s act of blessing. This is like the a., b., c. in your outline.

4) Continue writing out the phrases in your sentence, each under whatever word(s) they modify, until you reach the end of the sentence or idea being discussed.

5) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. At that point, you would put the next main clause back to the far left of your paper and begin at step one again. Ideally, you should be able to glance down the left side of your paper and see the main ideas of the passage you are mapping.

6) As you work, box all connecting words, and note how they are being used.
Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
For the next few weeks, we will learn three fundamental **PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION** that help us to use our interpretive skills accurately. **Principle #1 - Your goal is to discern the author’s intended meaning to the original audience.** Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, “What does this passage mean to me?” While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author’s intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps:

1. Always **start your study with prayer**, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Be very careful to **avoid reading your 21st century circumstances and theological issues** into the text as they will skew your understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text **from the point of view of the original readers**. To do this: [a] dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and [b] spend a few moments thinking about the original audience’s religious understanding by asking - What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? about Jesus? about salvation? etc.

1. Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

2. How does this passage relate to 4:17-32?
3. For each of the following sins, (1) provide a brief description of the sin, and (2) describe how it is contrary to Christ-like love...

   immorality & impurity (1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:15-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

   greed (Colossians 3:5)

   filthiness, silly talk, and coarse jesting (Ephesians 4:29)

4. For all of us who have ever given in to immorality or covetousness, 5:5 can sound like a pretty terrifying threat! What does Paul mean in this verse? To find out, consider the following ... Who is this warning directed toward? How can you tell?

   What is the inheritance that they may miss? To answer this question, begin by completing the word study on inheritance on the next page.

   Can a person who currently fits the description of verse 5 have eternal life?

5. How should we go about exposing the deeds of darkness (5:11)? Should we be pointing out the sins of our non-Christian friends?
6. Why does Paul include the quotation in 5:14? What point does it make?

Word Study

This week, complete a word study on inheritance (κληρονομία). Even though this skill was explained in detail on page 43, just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at www.biblestudytools.net, determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
As always, reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week. Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

In what relationship(s) do you struggle the most to imitate Christ’s love? How can you respond to this person differently this week in order to better imitate Christ?

In your own life, what secret sins do you need to bring into the light? Whom can you confess these sins to this week?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 5:1-14. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

- Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Submit to One Another

EPHESIANS 5:15-6:9
Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Ephesians 5:17-18 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

No employee at the financial firm had ever risen as fast as Catherine from the ranks of entry-level analyst to Vice President. Senior management had been quick to notice and reward her rare combination of technical competence, rapport with customers and peers, and a knack for making wise and timely decisions under pressure. As young as she was, the board already looked to her as a potential CEO in years to come. No one at the company showed such promise as a future leader of the Fortune 500 company. So, it was shocking to Catherine as she listened to the sermon to hear her pastor say that women were called to submission. She had become a believer only a month before and began attending the church with a neighbor. She had not grown up in a Christian home and had never spent much time reading the Bible before this month. So she was caught completely off guard as her pastor led the congregation through Paul’s instructions to women. In her world of fast paced financial deals and stiff competition for senior positions, “submission” was practically a curse word! To submit was to lose, to give-up, to surrender ground. How could God expect her, one of the most talented leaders in the company’s history, to practice submission towards others? How could God call her to submit to her husband when she had a far stronger gift for leadership and decision making than he did? How could God “ban” her from the highest levels of leadership in the church when she could accomplish so much as a leader?

Why is submission viewed so negatively in our culture? What is it about submission that our culture rejects? Note, this is not just about submission of a wife to a husband, but the submission of any person to those in authority.
We have no new observation skills this week. As in previous weeks, read the passage, underline the verbs, circle the key words, box any connecting words, and highlight repeated words or phrases. Then, write your observations and questions on the following page. Now that you have practiced all the basic skills, feel free to add your own techniques. Some people prefer to work on a computer, making mapping a passage much easier. Others like to use colored highlighters or pencils to mark verbs, key words, and connecting words. Many find it helpful to add arrows connecting related ideas or symbols to highlight important names (such as a cross any place that Jesus is mentioned).

**Ephesians 5:15-33**

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 16 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 17 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 18 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 19 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. 20 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 21 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 22 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 23 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 24 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 25 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 26 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 27 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 28 because we are members of His body. 29 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 30 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 31 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations

vv 15-20

vv 21-24

vv 25-29

vv 30-33
Ephesians 6:1-9

1Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. 4Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. 5Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. 9And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations - 6:1-9

vv 1-2

vv 3-4

vv 5-6

vv 7-9
Since this skill has already been introduced, begin practicing it consistently by mapping Ephesians 5:18-30! Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
This week we will learn our second of three PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION. Principle #2 - Assume a “normal” use of language. The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for hidden meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the normal techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. **Study the grammar.** Yes, most of us hated grammar in junior high, but it really is helpful for understanding Scripture! So pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.

2. **Remember that chapters came later.** When Paul wrote Ephesians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. So always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

1. Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a)
   b)
   c)

2. Based on surrounding context, what does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit”? Are all believers filled with the Spirit all the time? How do you know?

   What hinders us from being “filled with the Spirit” (See Galatians 5:16-26.)?

   What are some specific examples of Spirit-filled behavior according to the context?
3. What does it mean to “be subject” to someone else (5:21)?

Can someone else make you submit, or is submission entirely voluntary?

In what relationships does God expect us to practice submission? (See 1 Corinthians 15:28; Ephesians 1:22; Titus 2:5, 9; 3:1; James 4:6, 7; 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 5:5.)

What exactly does it mean for a wife to “submit” to her husband?

Why does God call wives to submit to their husbands? Is it because they are somehow inferior to their husbands? Is it based on societal problems in the past (i.e. women were usually not educated in the ancient world)? (See Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-24; Galatians 3:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4; 11:3-12; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Philippians 2:5-8.)

4. Do Paul’s commands to slaves condone the institution of slavery? Why or why not? What does Paul have to say about the issue of slavery in his other letters?

Word Study

This week, complete a word study on submit (ὑποτάσσω). Even though this skill was explained in detail on page 43, just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at www.biblestudytools.net, determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.
As always, **reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week.** Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

**Reflect on your life**

- In what situations or relationships have you been called upon to submit to someone else? Did you find it easy or hard to submit? Why? How can you better honor and serve in this situation or relationship this week?

- Look at the family roles/positions mentioned in 5:22-6:9. Which of these most apply to you personally at this time in your life? How are you doing in this role lately? How can you do better?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 5:15-6:9. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

- Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Prepare for Battle

EPHESIANS 6:10-24
Pray

Memorize

Ephesians 6:11 | Write it out to get your memorization started.

Why does this matter?

Private Riley scanned the crowd as merchants loudly advertised their produce to passingshoppers. Despite the stifling heat, the bazaar teemed with life, a fact that would have surprised Riley early in his tour of duty. Not only should the heat be keeping these crowds indoors, but also the wreckage and ashes of a suicide bomb one week ago were still visible near the center of the market. Yet life had to go on for the citizens of Fallujah, Iraq. It was Riley’s mission on this mid-summer day to prevent a repeat of last week’s carnage. Unfortunately, such attacks had proven remarkably hard to prevent. The terrorists he was looking for were not only growing more cunning in their planning and more effective in their weaponry, but they enjoyed one great advantage that confounded Riley’s best efforts: they looked and talked exactly like every other person in the market. Suicide bombers were usually recruited from among the native population. This made it incredibly difficult for Riley to identify potential threats in time to prevent another attack. And so, despite months of training and the mental hardness that came from past battles, Private Riley spent the eight hours of his shift on this hot summer day hoping and praying that it might pass without another attack.

How would you feel if, like Private Riley, you faced the constant threat of imminent attack by an unknown assailant? What would your emotional state be like?

In general, do you usually feel safe and secure as you go through the day, or are you generally looking out for threats or dangerous situations? Why?
Ephesians 6:10-24

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 20 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 21 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. 22 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 23 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.
Themes

List out any themes or big ideas you see in this passage.

My observations

vv 10-13

vv 14-17

vv 18-20

vv 21-24
Map the Passage

Since this skill has already been introduced, begin practicing it consistently by mapping Ephesians 6:10-20! Remember that there is not one “right” way! In general though, remember these summarized rules ...

1) First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence, and put it at the top left of page.

2) Continue by placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify.

3) Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. Then, put the next main clause back to the left of your paper under the idea it modifies or all the way to the left if it is a brand new idea, and begin at step one again.
This week we will learn our last of three PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION. Principle #3 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Since God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (Jn 17:17; Heb 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. **Check your conclusions.** Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole. If you find that your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.

2. **Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages.** Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of Scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

**One last caution** - remember that God revealed Scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of Scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Gen 15:6), in the NT era, we must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

1. Create and answer any three of your own interpretive questions from this passage:
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

2. How does this passage relate to the rest of the book?

3. Where else have we seen the ideas of God’s strength or power in Ephesians? To what did that strength refer? How do we take advantage of that strength?
This last time, you pick a word to study and to present to the group. Even though this skill was explained in detail on page 43, just remember that the MEANING of a word is determined by its USAGE. So isolate each usage of the word in Greek at www.biblestudytools.net, determine a range of meanings for the word, and finally choose the best meaning of the word in the present context.

4. Who are our enemies (See 2:2; 1 John 5:19; 1 Peter 5:8.)? What specific tactics do they use (See Genesis 3:1-5; Job 1:9-12; Luke 4:1-13; John 8:44; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 Peter 5:8-9.)?

5. List each piece of spiritual armor. What does each mean? Be specific (e.g. what is “truth,” and what is the significance of the imagery “having girded your loins with the truth“?). How does each piece of armor contribute to our ability to stand strong in the midst of spiritual warfare? Finally, explain how each piece is received and used (e.g. explain what the “breastplate of righteousness” is, how it helps us stand strong, and how we put it on).
As always, reflect on your own life, list at least five principles, and choose one to apply this week. Here is that helpful list of application questions to aid you in the second and third steps:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

Reflect on your life

Most of us have never fought in a war, so we don’t know what it is like to have our physical lives constantly at risk. However, as we’ve learned from Ephesians 6, moment by moment our spiritual lives are indeed at risk.

- How aware are you of spiritual opposition in your life? Does it paralyze you or do you rarely consider it?
- How can we maintain spiritual vigilance at all times?
- In what ways can your prayer life become more effective in this spiritual battle?
List principles

List at least five principles from Ephesians 6:10-24. (Remember, a principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Apply one this week

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

▷ What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life (be specific)?

▷ Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Put it Back Together

EPHESIANS SYNTHESIS

114 / LESSON 11
Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Review your memory verses for each of the previous lessons.

- 1:5
- 1:18-19a
- 2:8-9
- 2:13-14
- 4:1-2
- 4:22-24
- 5:1-2
- 5:17-18
- 6:11

In the case study of lesson one (page 14), we looked at the ignoble resignation of President Richard Nixon whose conduct had failed to live up to the high calling he received when elected to the office of President. These same themes of calling and conduct have dominated the book of Ephesians. Having studied the book of Ephesians in detail, answer the following questions ...

With the book of Ephesians as a whole in mind, what does it mean that God “called” us? What did He call us out of? What privileges and blessings are included in His call?

According to Ephesians, what standards of conduct does God expect of us? In other words, how does He expect those whom He has called to act in this world?
During the past nine lessons, we have observed, interpreted, and applied the entire book of Ephesians. That is no small task! Now it is time to draw our detailed study to a useful conclusion, a process known as synthesis. Our goal is to create an overall summary of the book of Ephesians that we can quickly review any time in the future to remind us of the flow and content of the book.

But first, please realize how much we have developed as students of the Word during this study! Though you have focused on Ephesians, you have actually learned and practiced a method of Bible study that will help you understand and apply to your life any passage of Scripture! Observe, interpret, and apply. These are the three fundamental steps of all Bible study, and they will serve you well for a lifetime. As we draw Ephesians to a close, please continue to practice and refine these skills so that you will be, “a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

**Outline the Book**

The first step of this synthesis is to CREATE YOUR OWN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK. Review the work you completed each week, especially the summary sentences you have written for each passage in the “My Summary” section. Then, create your own brief outline on the next page. Feel free to use any outlining style, but here is an example of how you might start.

1. Greetings from Paul to the church in Ephesus (1:1-2)
2. Praise for God’s blessings to the church (1:3-14)
   a. Predestined adoption by the Father (1:3-6)
   b. Gracious redemption by the Son (1:7-12)
   c. Sealed inheritance through the Spirit (1:13-14)
The second step of this synthesis is to **RECORD WHAT YOU LEARNED OR WERE REMINDED OF.** This is more personal than your outline. Create a list of the theological truths and life lessons you have either learned for the first time or been reminded of from your study of Ephesians. As an example of a theological truth, you might write:

I was taught that the Holy Spirit is a pledge or guarantee of our eternal inheritance to come in the future (1:13-14).

An example of a life lesson would be:

This book reminded me that spiritual growth is a community project pursued not individually but corporately.

List at least ten theological truths and ten life lessons on this page that you learned from your study of Ephesians, and record the verses where each is addressed.
The final step of this synthesis is to **PRAYERFULLY CHOOSE TWO APPLICATIONS TO PRACTICE**. These can be applications that you developed and began to practice during previous lessons, or you can create entirely new applications. Whatever your choice, two things must be true about them:

1. Both applications should touch on **areas of your life where you are currently in need of growth**. Do not choose “be kind to others” if this is already something you do very well.

2. Both should **be specific** with a clear plan for growth and the name of someone who will hold you accountable. So, “study the Word more” is not sufficiently detailed. Instead, develop a specific plan such as “I will read through Romans this next month and write down my observations, interpretive questions, and applications in a journal - Steve will hold me accountable weekly.”

### Application #1

**Principle from Ephesians:**

**Verses where it is discussed:**

**Plan of Action:** I will...

### Application #2

**Principle from Ephesians:**

**Verses where it is discussed:**

**Plan of Action:** I will...

### Pray

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.
Appendix

1. Principles of Interpretation - p121
2. Creating Lists - p122
3. Discipleship Resources - p123
1) Principles of Interpretation

Principle #1 - Your goal is to discern the author’s intended meaning to the original audience. Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, “What does this passage mean to me?” While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author’s intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps.
1. Always start your study with prayer, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Be very careful to avoid reading your 21st century circumstances and theological issues into the text as they will skew your understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text from the point of view of the original readers. To do this: [a] dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and [b] spend a few moments thinking about the original audience’s religious understanding by asking - What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? about Jesus? about salvation? etc.

Principle #2 - Assume a “normal” use of language. The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for “hidden” meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the “normal” techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:
1. Study the grammar. Yes, most of us hated grammar in junior high, but it really is helpful for understanding Scripture! So pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.
2. Remember that chapters came later. When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. So always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

Principle #3 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Since God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:
1. Check your conclusions. Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole. If you find that your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.
2. Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages. Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of Scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution - remember that God revealed Scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of Scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the NT era, we must believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).
2) Bonus Skill: Creating Lists

This skill involves identifying a key word, subject, person, place, or event in the passage and then listing every fact given about that word. For example, if you made a list on “God” from 2 Timothy 1, it might look like this:

God...
1. made Paul an apostle by His will (v1)
2. gives grace, mercy and peace (v2)
3. is the Father (v2)
4. is thanked and served (v3)
5. gives gifts (v6)
6. doesn’t give spirit of timidity (v7)
7. gives spirit of power, love, and sound mind (v7)
8. gives power for suffering (v9)
9. saved us (v9)
10. called us (v9)

As you read this list, what jumps out at you? Perhaps you see that “God gives” is mentioned five times in this list. What a gracious and loving God we serve! You have discovered one of the characteristics of God: His generous grace toward men. By creating these lists, you will begin to see patterns of truth that you will want to study further. For example, this list about God may lead you to do a word study on give or find all the other references in Paul’s epistles to God’s giving nature. Furthermore, this list can now be used for meditation, to praise and worship God, to encourage others, and to proclaim the character of God to the lost.

One word of caution about lists, however. Just because you are able to create a list centered on a key word, such as “God” in 2 Timothy 1, does not mean that Paul’s main point in the passage is to talk about that key word. Paul’s emphasis in 2 Timothy 1, in fact, is not to discuss attributes about God; it is to encourage Timothy to press on in the ministry of the gospel. So make sure that before you create any lists, you complete the initial processes of observation: list themes, mark up the text, and record your most significant observations. However, after these initial tasks, creating lists is a great way to deepen your study of a passage!
3) Discipleship Resources

One of the predominant themes throughout the book of Ephesians is the relationship between our high calling and our high conduct. It is important that we know the truth of the Bible and that our lives would more and more begin to reflect Jesus Christ. Spiritual growth clearly involves study of God’s word, but it also involves transformation of our character and life. This process is often called “discipleship” and refers to an intentional relationship between a mature believer and a younger believer where the former trains the latter towards the goal of spiritual maturity. Paul’s discipleship of Timothy (and Titus as well) is one the greatest examples we have of this process in all of Scripture. And like Paul, we too can make a lasting impact for God’s kingdom by spiritually reproducing ourselves in the lives of others.

Going through this Bible study was one of the best steps you could take to prepare you to disciple someone else because now you know how to explain and defend key biblical truths like the gospel, spiritual leadership, grace, and salvation. Just as important, you have now learned and practiced the basic method of Bible study - survey, observe, interpret, apply, synthesize. These are key steps towards spiritual maturity that you can now pass on to others!

But where can you go from here to learn more about spiritual multiplication? Here are a few helpful resources:

- **The Master Plan of Evangelism** by Robert Coleman
  This is a highly motivational analysis of Jesus’ own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

- **The Lost Art of Disciple Making** by Leroy Eims
  This very practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

- **A Survey of Bible Doctrine** by Charles Ryrie
  This is not a book about discipleship. It is, instead, an easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

- **Essentials of the Faith** by Grace Bible Church, CS TX
  This small group Bible study packet walks a new believer through the fundamental truths and practices of the Christian faith in ten self-paced lessons.
High Calling ... High Conduct

The calling and conduct of the church dominate the book of Ephesians. Throughout this rich book, we will learn about the church’s inherited stewardship, multi-ethnic identity, distinct lifestyle, and spiritual opposition.

The Apostle Paul:
Named Saul at birth, Paul was a devout Jew and foremost persecutor of the early church until an encounter with the risen Jesus altered his life forever. After becoming a follower of Jesus, he was divinely appointed as God’s Apostle to the Gentiles. In this role, he planted numerous churches throughout the Roman empire, carried the gospel as far as Spain, and wrote thirteen enduring letters of our New Testament.