

# 1. Introduction to Ephesians

## Introductory Questions/Thoughts:

*We often think of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in regard to individual salvation; ie, being saved from “my” sins, and receiving the gift of eternal life. But the Gospel is much more than that. The Gospel is not just good news of a new life in Christ, but good news of a new society. [Discuss]*

*One of the blind spots in modern Christianity has been to overlook the central importance of the church. We tend to proclaim individual salvation without moving on to the saved community. [Discuss]*

*The letter of Ephesians sets forth God’s eternal purpose through the Gospel to create a new society through Jesus Christ. What is this new society? (Eph 2:11-22)*

This new society is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is made up of followers of Christ from all walks of life, and from different ethnic groups (Jews and Gentiles). We are now one in Christ, and one with God our Father.

*Two key verses in Ephesians is Eph 1:9-10. It declares God’s eternal purpose. What is it?*

God’s eternal purpose is not just for individuals to be saved, but that we all be brought under one head – even God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; ie, we are not just saved for personal gain, but for God’s purpose of being a new society under Christ, for the praise of God’s glory (cf. Eph 1:11-12).

## Background to Ephesians:

- The letter of Ephesians was written by Paul (Eph 1:1), and was probably written when he was in prison in Rome (Eph 3:1, 4:1, 6:20).
- Ephesus was the capital city and most important city of the Roman province of Asia (now Turkey). It was a large, thriving commercial centre, with a busy commercial port. It was also home to the temple of the Roman goddess Diana (Greek – Artemis) – one of the seven ancient wonders of the world.
- Paul brought the Gospel to Ephesus at the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21).
- On his third missionary journey Paul spent a considerable time (three years) at Ephesus (Acts 20:31).
- He made Ephesus a centre of evangelism during this time, from which he reached out to other cities in the Roman province of Asia, such as Colosse (Acts 19:10).
- Paul experienced a severe trial at Ephesus due to an uproar started by a craftsman who was losing business because of many turning from the goddess Diana to the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 19:23-41).
- Since we read of Tychicus (by whom Paul sent the letter to Ephesus) in Eph 6:21 and we read of Tychicus going to Ephesus in 2 Tim 4:12 (and 2 Timothy was the last letter Paul wrote), it appears that Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian church near the end of his life.
- The letter of Ephesians does not address any errors or heresies (unlike some of Paul’s other letters).
- It was written to help Christians understand the dimensions of God’s eternal purpose and grace, and to appreciate the way we are to live as a new society in Christ, for His praise and glory.

## Ephesians – an important message for us

The letter of Ephesians concentrates on what God did through the historical work of Jesus Christ, and what He does through the work of His Spirit today, in order to build up His new society in the midst of a fallen world. The letter divides into the following four sections:

- The new life God has given us in Christ (1:1 – 2:10)
- The new society which God has created through Christ (2:11 – 3:21)
- The new standards which God expects of His new society; especially in unity & purity (4:1 – 5:21)
- The new relationships for those in this new society; harmony at home, etc (5:21 – 6:24)

## Read Ephesians 1:1 – 3:21

As a group, read through the first half of Ephesians (Eph 1:1 – 3:21), and then discuss.

Seek to glean what this new life God has given us in Christ (Eph 1:1-2:10), and the new society which God has created through Christ (Eph 2:11-3:21).

**Summary:** Christians are a new society under Christ for the praise of God’s glory.

## 2. A Life of Blessing

**Review:** *What is the overall purpose of the letter of Ephesians?*

Ephesians is the gospel of the church, to the church. It's about Christians being God's people - a new society under Christ, living a new life together by the Holy Spirit, for the praise of God's glory.

*In a society that is self-focussed, and with a modern-day Christianity that emphasises individual salvation, what should the letter of Ephesians help us to see? (cf. Eph 2:17-22; Tit 2:14)*

Salvation is not all about "me", but about "us". We are a new community for God. We are to live together as God's people in such a way that we are a light for Christ in a dark world (Eph 5:8-10).

### The Greeting (1:1-2)

*How does Paul describe himself in Eph 1:1 and 3:7-8?*

Paul is an apostle (an especially chosen messenger) of Christ. He did not attain to this position by self-effort, but by God's will and God's grace and God's power. As an apostle he was entrusted to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. With humility he carried out his ministry (Eph 3:8).

*How does Paul describe the Ephesian Christians? (Eph 1:1b)*

They were saints, and they were faithful. "Saint" means set apart ones for God (ie, holy). "Faithful" refers to how they were a people who had faith (trust) in Christ. Although they lived in Ephesus, most importantly they were in Christ. Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" many times in Ephesians.

REFLECT: How would you describe yourself? Are you a "saint"? Are you "faithful"? Are you in Christ?

*What blessing does Paul pronounce on the Ephesians? What's so special about this? (Eph 1:2)*

Paul desires that they know and experience the richest of God's blessings – His grace and peace. There is nothing more precious than this. God's grace in Christ is His undeserved and unmerited favour toward us, and God's peace in Christ guards and protects our heart and mind (Phil 4:7).

REFLECT: Do you pray for God's grace and peace for yourself? And for fellow Christians?

### The Blessing (1:3-8)

*Paul wrote from prison (Eph 4:1, 6:20). Yet after his greeting, what does Paul write next? (1:3)*

Despite his chains, Paul praises God for all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. He lifted his eyes off his present circumstances and looked upward to God, who so blesses us by His grace through Christ.

REFLECT: When you're facing trying circumstances, what do you do? (cf. Job 1:20-21; Acts 16:23-25)

*Paul emphasises that we have "EVERY SPIRITUAL" blessing. How are we to understand this?*

Firstly, by being in Christ we have every blessing. There is not one more blessing we could have.

Secondly, we haven't been given earthly blessings, but spiritual ones. Our blessings are in connection with heaven; not this earth. As a result, Christians don't enjoy health, wealth and prosperity (as a false doctrine declares) but often they experience pain, loss and persecution. But what a hope we have!

*The phrase "heavenly realm" occurs five times in Ephesians. What does this mean? (Eph 2:6)*

It's in reference to how Christ has been raised from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father – in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6). Since we are in Him now, this is where we are seated as well, and one day, when we go to be with Him, we will enjoy all the blessings of God that are in Him – in full.

*Why are we in Christ and blessed with every spiritual blessing, according to Eph 1:4-8?*

It is not because of who we are and what we have done. It's all because of God's doing. God chose us to be His holy people (v.4); He predestined us to be His adopted children (v.5); He redeemed us through His Son's blood so that we could be forgiven. It's because of God that we are blessed.

*When did God chose us? How does that make you feel toward God?*

He chose us before the creation of the world; before we ever lived, and did right or wrong. Why He chose us we do not know, but the fact that He did, should fill us with humility and praise. It did for Paul!

*What were the motivating factors for God to choose and predestine us? (Eph 1:4-8)*

It wasn't according to how righteous we were, or because we had faith. Instead, He chose and predestined us before time began, according to His amazing love and His glorious grace.

*In Christ we have been adopted as sons and have forgiveness of sins. What's your response?*

We, who once were sinners and enemies of God, should be so thankful for what God has made us in Christ. Every true Christian is so blessed – we are the most blessed people in the whole world.

**Summary:** Christians have every spiritual blessing in Christ because God chose us. Praise His name.

### 3. A Life for Praise

**Review:** *Though Paul was in chains, what do we find him expressing in Eph 1:3? Why?*

Paul is praising God for who He is and what he has done for us in Christ. Despite his circumstances, he looked upward and praised God for all the spiritual blessings we have in the heavenly realms.

*Why are we in Christ and so blessed of God? (Eph 1:4-8)*

We are in Christ and blessed of God because of His doing. God chose us before the creation of the world and predestined us to be the recipients of His great salvation in Christ – according to His grace.

#### The Purpose of God (1:4-8)

*God has done so much for us, with a purpose in mind. What is the chief purpose? (1:6, 12, 14)*

God's chief purpose was not just to save us, but to make our lives for His praise and glory.

*How can our lives bring praise and glory to God? (cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10)*

We are the objects of His great grace and amazing love. When we testify of God's love and grace through song or speech or sharing the Gospel with others, we bring praise and glory to Him.

*What do you think the phrase means "to the praise of His glory"? (1:12, 16)*

God's glory, in this case, is in relation to His glorious character. Not only is He glorious in appearance (Rev 4:2-3), but our God is glorious in character – in His righteousness, justice, faithfulness, love, grace. We should praise and worship God for His glorious character (cf. Exod 34:5-8, and Moses' response).

*According to Eph 1:4 how can we live lives here on earth that bring praise to Him?*

We were chosen to be holy (set apart for God), and to be blameless (righteous and pure). We have not been chosen just to go to heaven. God wants us to be like Him (1 Pet 1:15-16) here on earth; that we might express His glory to others (cf. Matt 5:16).

#### The Plan of God (1:9-12)

*Not only has God a purpose for us, but our salvation is part of His plan (His will). What did God's plan bring about for us, according to Eph 1:5?*

God's plan (or will) was to adopt us as His children through Jesus Christ. What an incredible plan, when we think of who we were - enemies of God and rebels of Him. It was His will (Eph 1:5b).

*God's plan is much bigger than us being His children. What is God's chief plan? (Eph 1:9-10)*

God's chief plan is to have everything under His Son; whether things in heaven or things in earth. All things are to come under His headship and rule. This is where everything is heading (cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28).

REFLECT: Even non-believers will one day bow before Jesus (Phil 2:9-11), but how much better to bow before Him now as our Saviour and King – and be saved.

*Why does Paul speak of His master plan being a mystery, and who has it been revealed to? (1:9)*

God's great plan was a mystery during the Old Testament period. It was prophesied about (Isa 9:6), but who was this "child"? It wasn't fully revealed until Jesus came. This mystery has now been revealed to those who trust in Jesus – the fallen world is oblivious to God's great plan and the implications of it.

*What great declaration does Paul make in regard to God's plan in Eph 1:11-12?*

Everything is worked out according to God's master plan – nothing has been left to chance. We who are in Christ have not just stumbled into salvation, but we were chosen and predestined to salvation.

REFLECT: *How should we view all the horrific things that happen in our world. Are these according to God's plan as well? (cf. Rom 8:18-21)*

God has willed for this world to be in a fallen state at present, but He doesn't permit things to get out of control - He puts a boundary around the evil of men and Satan, so that His master plan is done; ie, where all things come under Christ His Son. This master plan is what is in mind in v.11.

#### The Promise of God (1:13-14)

*What is part of God's great plan for us? (Eph 1:13-14)*

We have been promised a glorious inheritance in Christ; one day our redemption will be complete.

*How is the Holy Spirit described in these verses?*

We have been sealed by God's Spirit, and He is a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. In other words, what we have in Christ (our salvation and inheritance) is absolutely certain; made certain by the Spirit.

*God has done everything for us, but we also must response rightly to God. What is it? (Eph 1:13)*

We must hear the Gospel of Jesus and respond to it by believing (trusting) in Christ. Have you?

**Summary:** God has planned to save us and promised us salvation, so that we might be for His praise.

## 4. A Life of Prayer

**Review:** *What is God's great plan for the whole creation (1:10), and His chief purpose for us (1:12)?*

God's great plan is to bring all things under Christ, and for Christians to be for the praise of His glory.

*We are so often distracted by the things of this life. How should we see our life? (1:3-14)*

We should see our life, no matter how things are, in the light of God's eternal plan for us. God has chosen us in the past and has promised us glorious things for the future; those in Christ. Praise God!

### The Prayer for Christians (1:15-19)

*What do we learn from Paul in regard to his view of the Ephesian Christians? (Eph 1:15-16)*

Paul is mindful of them. He is thankful for them, and also prays for them.

REFLECT: Are we mindful of each other? Are we thankful for one another and pray for each other?

*Why is Paul thankful for the Ephesian Christians? (Eph 1:15; John 13:34-35)*

He is thankful for their faith in Jesus, and the way they express that faith by loving other Christians.

REFLECT: Can others be thankful for us because of how we show our faith in Christ by loving them?

*Read Paul's prayer in Eph 1:17-19. What motivates Paul to pray like this? (cf. also Eph 4:13)*

Paul knew that none of us are mature in Christ – we are still growing. Thus, he prayed for their growth.

REFLECT: How often do you pray for yourself/others in being a mature and fruitful Christian?

*What is the overall thrust of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians?*

Paul is not asking for God to give the Ephesians a "second blessing". We already have every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3). He wants them to know what they already have in Christ; that's how we grow.

*What specific requests does Paul make before God for the Ephesian Christians? (Eph 1:17-19)*

He prays that they may know God better, that they may know the hope of God's calling, that they may know the riches of God's inheritance for us, and that they may know the power of God that is for us.

REFLECT: Although "we once were blind, but now we see", most Christians see (or know) poorly. Why?

*How can we know God better? (Eph 1:17)*

We can know God better by praying for wisdom (spiritual sight) and revelation. We are to know God more and more; as the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" and the "glorious Father", as Paul calls Him.

*What is the primary way for us to receive wisdom and revelation in regard to knowing God?*

God's Word is the way for us to have wisdom and revelation of God, for the Bible is the revelation of God. Thus, we need to read God's Word and pray for God to reveal Himself to us through His Word.

*What is required for us to know the hope of God's calling? (Eph 1:18)*

We need the "eyes of our heart" enlightened. In the Bible, "heart" includes mind. Thus, our mind needs enlightening to what God has called us to. This is something to pray for, and to discover in God's Word.

*How well do you comprehend the riches of God's inheritance for us? What should we do?*

We think we know what's in store for us, but our lives often don't reflect the reality. What we must realise is that we need to pray and read God's word, so that we may appreciate all that God has for us.

REFLECT: Are you able to say like Paul in Phil 1:21 "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain"?

### The Power of God (1:19-23)

*In Eph 1:19, Paul also prays that we may know "the incomparably great power for us who believe".*

*What do you think Paul may be thinking of when he mentions God's power for us?*

God's power for us is His power to make our salvation secure (John 10:27-30); and to grant us life (Rom 8:10); and to keep us for our inheritance (1 Pet 1:3-5). It's God's power that makes it all happen.

*In Eph 1:19-23 Paul speaks of God's mighty power. What does he mention? Why?*

He mentions the mighty power God used to raise His Son from the dead, and His ascension to His right hand, and to put all things beneath His feet. Because we are in Christ, we can be assured that this same power will be exercised to ensure our own salvation and eternal security – our inheritance is certain.

*Twice Paul mentions the headship of Christ – in Eph 1:9-10 and Eph 1:21-23. Why?*

Paul wants to constantly remind us of God's master plan. God wants His Son to fill and rule everything.

*In Eph 1:22-23 what do we learn about Christ and the church. What do we show the world?*

The church is a people that has fulfilled God's plan by being under the Lordship of Christ. He is the head, we are the body. We show to the world how we are all meant to be – under Christ (God's master plan).

REFLECT: How well do we show the world what it looks like to be under Christ?

**Summary:** Pray as Paul did so that we may grow in Christ and show the world that Christ is Lord.

## 5. A New Life – by God’s Grace

**Review:** *What should we be doing for fellow Christians (consider the example of Paul in Eph 1:15-19)?*

We should be mindful of them, thankful for them, and praying for them. We should pray that we may know better our God, our hope, and His power at work in us. This is so that we may grow in Christ.

*It is God’s master plan for Christ to be Lord of all. Where is this already seen? (Eph 1:22-23)*

It is already seen in Christ’s church, where He is the head of the church – but how well is it seen?

### **What we were by nature (2:1-3)**

*In Eph 2:1-3 who is Paul describing? (consider especially the last part of v.3)*

Paul is not describing people from satanic heathen nations, but how we all once were before we became a Christian; even those of us who have grown up in a Christian home.

*What state were we in before we came to be in Christ (Eph 2:1)? What does this imply?*

We were dead spiritually - separated from God. We had no spiritual life, no relationship with God, and no promise of eternal life, because of our sins. This is how we all were – no one is born alive spiritually.

*To what forces were we enslaved to before we became a Christian? (Eph 2:2-3)*

We were enslaved to the ways of this world, and to all kinds of sinful desires and lusts.

REFLECT: What would your life be like today if you had not become a Christian?

*Whose power were we really under? (Eph 2:2; John 8:42-44)*

We were under Satan’s power – who is called the “prince of the power of the air”. Not only did he tempt us to be in rebellion to God, but he blinded us to the Gospel (2 Cor 4:4) so that we might not be saved. This is why salvation is often described as being set free from Satan’s dominion (Col 1:13).

*In God’s eyes what had we become? (Eph 2:3)*

Through our sinful nature, we had become children of wrath – God’s anger was toward us (John 3:36).

REFLECT: The description given here of how we all once were before we became a Christian is hard-hitting. *Why is it important that we understand this and see what our true natural state was? [Discuss]*

### **What we have become by grace (2:4-9)**

*Despite what we are by nature, how has God treated us? (Eph 2:4-7)*

He has not treated us as we deserve. Instead of pouring out His wrath on us, He has poured out His great love and mercy upon us, and has saved us through His Son Jesus Christ. Wow! “BUT GOD”!

*What three awesome things has God done for us in Christ? (Eph 2:4-7)*

We were spiritually dead, but God has made us spiritually alive; we were part of a fallen world under Satan, but God has raised us up to be with Christ; we were slaves of sin and evil desires, but God has seated us with Christ to rule and reign with Him. God has reversed our state. Praise His name!

REFLECT: All the things God has and will do for us are tied to what God has done for His Son (Eph 1:19-21).

We too will be raised up and seated in heaven, just as Christ was – all because we are in Him.

*In Eph 2:4-9, one word is mentioned three times. It’s the key to our new state. What is it?*

“GRACE”. By God’s grace we have been saved. All that is to come and what we will enjoy in eternity is all because God has been gracious to us – He has not treated us as we deserve (which is wrath).

*Eph 2:8-9 is a key passage in the Bible. What important truths does it teach?*

Salvation from sin is by God’s grace. Salvation is a free gift God has graciously chosen to give us. We receive it, not by earning it through good works, but through putting our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECT: *What shouldn’t we be glorying in, in the light of God’s grace (Eph 2:9)? In what ways do we?*

### **What we are in Christ (2:10)**

*While we wait to be raised up and seated with Christ, how are we to view our life here on earth?*

We are to consider ourselves to be God’s work. He has saved us and is seeking to do good works in us.

*What does it mean to live a life of “good works”?*

It is to be like Jesus, who lived a holy and blameless life for God’s glory (cf. Eph 1:4, 1:12).

*Faith is mentioned in Eph 2:8 and good works in Eph 2:10. How do they relate to salvation?*

We are saved by faith in Christ – not by doing good works. And if we are saved, then we will show it by doing good works; ie, we are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone (cf. James 2:17-18).

REFLECT: What does your life reflect? A fallen nature, or a new nature that practices good works?

**Summary:** By nature we are dead and objects of wrath; by grace we are alive and are God’s work.

## 6. A Life in a New Community

**Review:** *How does the Bible describe our natural state; before we came to trust in Christ? (Eph 2:1-3)*

We were spiritually dead, under Satan’s control, enslaved to evil desires, and under God’s wrath.

*What have we become by God’s grace and through faith in Christ? (Eph 2:4-10)*

We, who were spiritually dead, have become spiritually alive; we who were part of a fallen world under Satan, have been raised with Christ; we who were slaves of sin have become God’s workmanship.

### **Brought near (2:11-16)**

*Most of us are Gentiles (non-Jews). In Eph 2:11-12 we are reminded of our history. What is it?*

We were without hope and without God in this world. Only Jews had a covenant with God and could be God’s people. We were alienated and separated from God – not just because we’re sinners, but because we were non-Jews. (NB: A Gentile had to be “naturalised” as a Jew to have any hope and to know God)

REFLECT: *A Gentile in the Old Testament died without hope and without God. What does that mean?*

*We have an inkling of the attitude of Jews to Gentiles in Eph 2:11. What was it? Was that right?*

The Jews looked down at the Gentiles – they were slandered as the “uncircumcision” and were pushed away. Yet, God had commanded the Jews to welcome Gentiles; ie, strangers and aliens (Lev 19:33-34).

*But what has Christ done for the Gentiles? (Eph 2:13)*

Christ has welcomed the Gentiles – we who were “far off” have been “brought near”.

*How has Christ brought us near? What does Paul particularly emphasise in Eph 2:13?*

Christ has brought us near by His blood; ie, Christ also died for the sins of the Gentiles to make us right.

*By Christ shedding His blood, He has established a new covenant (1 Cor 11:25). What has happened to the old covenant that the Jews were under? (Eph 2:14-15; cf. also Heb 8:7-13)*

The old covenant has been abolished by the new. It’s been made obsolete. No longer are people made right with God as the Jews were (and those who converted to Judaism) by obeying the ceremonial law, which included circumcision and sacrifice. Instead, all people groups are now made right through Christ.

*Some feel that the inclusion of the Gentiles was God’s plan B after the Jews failed. Is that true?*

No! It was always God’s intention to include all people (not just Jews) into His kingdom. Consider the promise in Gen 22:18 and the prophecies in Isa 2:2, 42:6-7, 49:5-6, and the fulfilment in Rev 5:9-10.

*What has God brought about through His Son? (Eph 2:14-16; Col 1:19-22)*

God has made a new community where Jews and Gentiles are at peace with Him and each other through Christ. This new community is Christ’s church; His body. The things that led to hostility between Jews and Gentiles have been removed. We have become one people through Christ’s body and blood.

### **Citizens of God’s household (2:17-22)**

*Why was the Gospel of peace preached to those who were near (ie, the Jews)? (Eph 2:17)*

Although the Jews “were near”, they were not right with God, as they had based their salvation on their heritage and works. Besides, only Christ can truly bring about the forgiveness of sins (Heb 10:4-10). The Jews were as lost as the Gentiles; that’s why they needed Christ to save them too.

*In Eph 2:18, what ultimate purpose did Christ’s death enable?*

It enabled all people to have access to God the Father. Through faith in Christ and the receiving of God’s Spirit, any person from any people group can know the Father of our Lord Jesus as their Father.

*What glorious conclusion does Paul come to in Eph 2:19, especially for Gentile believers?*

Although we were strangers and aliens, we who have trusted in Christ are fellow citizens with Jews who also have trusted in Christ. We are part of God’s family; adopted children (Eph 1:5).

REFLECT: *In a world where we strive to find belonging, what has God done? How do you feel?*

*Eph 2:20-22 relates the church to a spiritual building. What do we learn about our foundation?*

The church has been built on the apostles (New Testament) and prophets (Old Testament), with Christ the cornerstone; ie, everything is lined up with Him, in accordance with God’s will (Eph 1:10, 1:22-23). Thus, Christ and His Word (the Bible) is the foundation of the church.

*What should be happening in Christ’s church? (Eph 2:21-22)*

We should be one - fitting together, growing together, and being built up together for God’s dwelling.

REFLECT: *The old Jew/Gentile barrier has been abolished. But have we replaced it with others? Consider denominationalism, separation of clergy and laity, ethnic racism, alienation of people, etc.*

**Summary:** We live in a new community; by faith in Christ, all are welcome, and we are to be at peace.

## 7. A Life of Ministry

**Review:** *What was the state of Gentiles and what has God done for them through Christ? (Eph 2:11-13)*

Previously we were without hope and without God, but now we have been “brought near” through Christ.

*In Christ, what have Jew and Gentile believers become? (Eph 2:14-19)*

We have become one people. There are no more barriers, but all have access to the Father by one Spirit.

### **A Ministry Revealed (3:1-6)**

*Why does Paul consider himself a prisoner of Christ, when he is a prisoner of Rome? (Eph 3:1)*

Paul was in prison for ministering the Gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. He was also in prison to minister for Jesus to rulers and authorities (Acts 9:15). In that sense he calls himself a prisoner of (for) Christ.

*Paul was a Jewish Pharisee who persecuted the church of Christ (Phil 3:6). How did he even become a minister of the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles? (Eph 3:2-3)*

Paul became a minister of the Gospel of Christ by revelation. He hated the Gospel and he hated Christ. But he encountered Christ and His grace on his way to Damascus, who revealed to him the Gospel, and also commissioned him to preach it (Acts 22:14-15; Gal 1:15-17).

*Paul often associates the Gospel with “mystery”. In what way is it a mystery? (Eph 3:4-5)*

The Gospel was not fully revealed until Christ came. Although the OT Scriptures spoke of Christ and the Gospel, the full extent of the Gospel was only revealed through Christ and His apostles.

*How has the mystery been revealed to us? (Eph 3:5)*

It has been revealed by God’s Holy Spirit. He, and He alone, is able to reveal the Gospel to us. He first revealed it, in part, to the Old Testament prophets, and then to Christ’s apostles. He is also the One who takes the words of the Bible and helps reveal the Gospel to us. (cf. Matt 16:15-17; 2 Cor 4:4-6).

REFLECT: If you are a follower of Christ, this only happened because God was pleased to reveal the mystery of the Gospel to you. *How does that make you feel? (cf. John 6:44)*

*What are some of the key truths of the mystery that have been revealed? (Eph 3:6; Col 1:27)*

One of the great mysteries revealed in the Gospel is that the Gentiles (non-Jews) would be included into God’s family through faith in Christ, and that Christ would dwell in us by His Spirit.

### **A Ministry Received (3:7-13)**

*Paul was given revelation. How else did he become an appointed apostle of Christ? (Eph 3:2,7)*

Paul became an apostle by God’s grace and by the working of God’s power (cf. it required the risen Jesus to appear to Paul – an enemy of Christ’s church). Unlike how he became a Pharisee by human effort, he received his apostleship as a free gift. God gave it to him.

*What was Paul’s response to receiving this lofty position of being an apostle of Christ? (Eph 3:8)*

He felt very humbled. He never forgot how he was the least of all Christians because of how he had blasphemed Christ’s name and had persecuted Christians. God’s grace kept him humble and thankful.

REFLECT: If you are in Christ, you are a child of God, and have been blessed with spiritual gifts, and given ministries to do for God’s glory. *How have you received all this? How should you respond?*

*In Eph 3:8, how does Paul describe the Gospel that he was given to proclaim?*

He describes it as “the unfathomable riches of Christ”. The Gospel is all about Jesus; who He is and what He has done for us, to secure for us eternal and glorious riches beyond measure! (cf. Eph 1:3-7)

*Besides Paul being commissioned to make known the Gospel, who else is? (Eph 3:9-10)*

The church is to make known the Gospel. It has been revealed to us and entrusted to us (to every true Christian). We are to pass it on to all nations, and to people in all positions – including rulers.

*In Eph 3:9-10, how is the Gospel described?*

It is the revealed mystery of God and the manifold wisdom of God. Through Christ dying in our place on a cross, God dealt justly with our sins and could mercifully forgive us and save us (cf. 1 Cor 1:21-24).

*According to God’s plan, what is the overall main purpose of the Gospel? (Eph 3:11-12; cf. 2:18)*

Through the Gospel and faith in Christ, we now have freedom and confidence to approach God. Wow!

REFLECT: *What do you see to be the main purpose of the Gospel? Is it to approach and know God?*

*How should we look at hardships that come from declaring the Gospel? (Eph 3:13) Why?*

We should never lose heart, for the Gospel is the manifold wisdom of God in bringing us to God.

**Summary:** By revelation we have received the Gospel – may we minister faithfully and not lose heart.

## 8. A Life of Fullness

**Review:** *What are some ways Paul describes the Gospel of our Lord Jesus in Eph 3:4-5, 8-10?*

It is the revealed mystery of Christ, the unfathomable riches of Christ, and the manifold wisdom of God.

*What is the connection between the church and the Gospel? (Eph 3:10-11)*

As God's church, we have had the Gospel revealed to us by the Spirit, and we are to reveal it to others for their salvation. This is the ministry we have received from God according to His eternal purpose.

### **A Life of Prayer (3:14-16a)**

*In Eph 3:14-21 Paul shares a second prayer for the Ephesians (the first is in Eph 1:15-23). He begins in 3:14 by saying "for this reason". What was the reason that caused Paul to pray for them?*

Paul prayed in the light of what God has done for us in Christ and the revelation of God's will and purposes (which we read about from Eph 2:1 – 3:13). God's truth leads to action – including prayer.

**REFLECT:** *How often do you act on God's word, after reading it or hearing it? Does it lead you to pray?*

*Consider how Paul prayed. What do we learn from his prayer? (Eph 3:14-16a)*

1. Like Paul, we should pray humbly and reverently – on bended knees (or at least, with bowed hearts)
2. Like Paul, we should pray to the Father – it's the thrust of the Gospel; we haven't just been saved from our sins. We have been reconciled to God (Eph 2:18, John 16:25-27, John 20:17)
3. Like Paul, we should adore God – He has given us birth into His family through Christ
4. Like Paul, we should bring our requests to Him, for He is generous and rich in giving (cf. Matt 7:7-11)

### **A Life of Faith (3:16b-17a)**

*In his prayer, what does Paul request first for the Ephesians? (Eph 3:16)*

He requests that they be strengthened in their inner being (heart and mind) by the Holy Spirit's power.

*What did Paul believe this request would result in? (Eph 3:17a)*

Paul knew that this request was essential for the Ephesian Christians to continue to have faith in Christ.

*Why is there such a great need to pray this for ourselves and for each other?*

We are in spiritual warfare (as we shall see in Eph 6). The devil is doing everything he can to knock faith out of our hearts; whether through temptations or trials, fightings or fatigue. We also have the world seeking to tear faith out of us, and our own sinful nature is doing the same.

*Understanding the battle leads us to pray like Paul did. Do you pray like this? [Discuss]*

*Read again Eph 3:16. Why is the Holy Spirit specifically mentioned?*

The Holy Spirit, given to us when we trust in Christ, alone has the power to enable us to continue in the truth, and to help us continue to have faith in Christ. We can't do it on our own; in our own strength.

**REFLECT:** *Like many, do you automatically assume you will always maintain your faith in Jesus? Others have thought the same and fallen away. What can you do to ensure you will persevere and trust Christ?*

### **A Life of Love (3:17b-19)**

*In Eph 3:17b-18, Paul makes a second request to the Father. What is it?*

Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians to comprehend (or grasp) the love of Christ. They had already been established in it (by the Gospel), but there was a need to grasp and know it more.

*What was the main purpose of this second prayer request? (Eph 3:19; 4:13)*

It was so that we "may be filled up to all the fullness of God". Grasping the love of Christ enables us to be "full in God", which in turn enables us to be mature in the faith, and fruitful in our service to Christ.

*Why does grasping the love of Christ enable us to be "full" and mature Christians?*

When we comprehend the grace of God and the love of Christ, it will spur us on to living fully for Christ. Cf. In Rom 12:1, there is a direct link between appreciating God's mercy with us being "living sacrifices".

*How does Paul describe the love of Christ?*

The love of Christ surpasses knowledge; it's not unknowable, but it can't be completely known. Consider its width – all sinners are welcome; its length – Christ gave His all for us; its depth – Christ our Maker became sin for us and died; its height – it's divine; higher than the highest heavens (cf. Psa 103:11-14).

### **A Life of Praise (3:20-21)**

*Paul concludes his prayer with such a wonderful benediction. What is it? (Eph 3:20-21)*

Our Father who is more powerful and generous than we could ever imagine.

*Who should especially be glorying in God? Why? (Eph 3:21)*

The church should be glorying in God, for God's goodness and greatness has been revealed to us.

**Summary:** Pray for God's fullness, through the Spirit's power and us grasping the love of Christ.

## 9. A Life of Unity

**Review:** *Paul prayed that the Ephesians be strengthened in the inner man. Why? (Eph 3:16-17a)*

He prayed this so that they may not give up but continue to have faith in their hearts toward Christ.

*Paul also prayed that the Ephesians comprehend the love of Christ. Why? (Eph 3:17b-19)*

Paul knew that grasping the love of Christ would help them be “full of God”; ie, mature and fruitful.

**Note:** In Ephesians 1-3 Paul has made known the content of the Gospel. In Ephesians 4-6, he moves onto living out the Gospel. Put another way: previously we have considered the new community we are in Christ. Now we shall consider what it practically looks like to live as Christ’s new community.

### A Life of Worthiness (4:1)

*What does Paul remind us about concerning what God has done for us? (Eph 4:1, 4b)*

He reminds us that we have been called by God. God chose us and called us to Himself through Christ by His Spirit (Rom 8:29-30). We wouldn’t be a Christian if God didn’t call and draw us (John 6:44).

*In the light of God calling us to Himself and saving us, how should we live our life? (Eph 4:1)*

We should live our life “worthy of the calling we have received”; ie, being holy and blameless (Eph 1:4).

*How should we understand the word “worthy” in Eph 4:1? What must we be careful about?*

It is not to be understood in the context of salvation, for we can never be worthy of that (Eph 2:1-3).

There’s nothing worthy that we can do to save ourselves (Eph 2:8-9). But once we are saved, we are meant to live a life worthy of what Christ has done for us and that reflects our thankfulness to God.

*Paul often writes about living a worthy life. What do we learn from the following verses?*

Col 1:10 We are to please God, doing good works and bearing fruit, and growing in knowledge

1 Thess 2:10-12 We are to be holy, righteous and blameless

2 Thess 1:11-12 We are to glorify Jesus by living by faith and by relying on God’s power

### A Life of Unity (4:2-6)

*According to Eph 4:1-3 what is an essential element of living a worthy life? (cf. also Eph 2:13-18)*

We are to preserve unity amongst God’s people. There are not to be any barriers; only unity and peace.

*What effort should we put into being one, according to Eph 4:3? (Cf. also Heb 12:14)*

We should “make every effort”, or “spare no effort” in preserving our unity. We are to be striving and diligent at it. This includes going out of our way in putting things right with each other (Matt 5:23-24).

*We are called to unity. What are the four foundation stones for Christian unity? (Eph 4:2)*

The four foundation stones are humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance. They are all acts of love and selflessness. Humility is putting others before yourself (cf. Phil 2:3-4); gentleness is being considerate and kind; patience is being long-suffering; tolerance is being lenient and understanding.

*Consider the opposites to the characteristics listed in Eph 4:2. What must we watch out for?*

We must watch out for pride (self-ego), harshness (judging others and treating them rough), impatience (irritability), intolerance (lacking understanding and empathy). Such characteristics and behaviours are common in the world, but lead to division in Christ’s church; not unity.

*The word “peace” is used in Eph 4:3. Why is it linked to unity? How does it relate to the Gospel?*

True Christian unity is about having peace. This should not surprise us for the Gospel is about bringing peace between God and man (Rom 5:1), and between people (Eph 2:13-14). We are called by the God of peace (Phil 4:9) and the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6) to live out the Gospel of peace (Eph 6:15).

*What’s the difference between uniformity and unity?*

Uniformity is where we are the same as each other. But the church does not have uniformity, but diversity. We are made up of different ethnic groups, male and female, young and old, and where Christians have differing gifts, and have come to faith by different ways. But unity is where we work together, though different from each other, in order to have peace and harmony.

*Although there is diversity, what things do we have in common? (Eph 4:4-6)*

We have one body (one true church), one Holy Spirit in each Christian, one hope for all Christians, one Lord and King over us (Jesus), one faith in which and by which we are saved, one baptism which we have had, and one God and Father over us all. What we have in common should truly help us be one.

*Read John 17:20-23 and consider Jesus’ prayer for unity. What comes from our unity?*

When we practice unity, it enables people around us to take us seriously and the Gospel we proclaim, and to consider the possibility that Jesus is God’s Son and from God. Unity is a powerful witness!

**Summary:** Live worthily of God’s calling – preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

## 10. A Life of Giftedness

**Review:** *How should we live in the light of how God has called us to Himself through Christ? (Eph 4:1)*

We should live a life worthy of the calling we have received; living holy lives for His glory and praise.

*What's one main way we can live a life worthy of our calling? (Eph 4:2-6)*

We are to be one: “preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. We do that by bearing right characteristics (humility, etc), and remembering the things that tie us together; eg, one Lord, one faith.

### The Giver of Gifts (Eph 4:7-11)

*Based on Eph 4:7-11, what has been given to each Christian? (cf. also 1 Cor 12:1-7)*

Each Christian has received special God-given spiritual gifts – through the Holy Spirit.

*Should we distinguish spiritual gifts from natural talents or abilities? Why?*

Spiritual gifts are different from natural talents, or natural abilities that we have developed. They are given to individual Christians by Christ through His Spirit for His church.

*How have these spiritual gifts been distributed in Christ's church? (Cf. also Rom 12:4-6)*

They have been given to us by Christ's grace. We haven't deserved them or earned them. They have also been given according to how the Lord sees fit (according to how He wills - 1 Cor 12:11).

*As Paul writes about our spiritual gifts, what great truths about Christ does he share?*

Before Jesus gave us spiritual gifts through His Spirit, He is also the One who not only descended from heaven to earth, but descended into Hades (the abode of the dead) after He died for us. He was then raised to life, ascended into heaven and is now above all things (cf. Phil 2:9-11) and fills all things. He is the Lord of all, and the Lord of His church – and it's from Him that we have received our spiritual gifts.

*In the light of Christ and what He 's done for us, what should our attitude be toward our gifts?*

We ought to be humble and thankful for our gifts, and we ought to make sure we use them well.

*Besides gifts being given when Christ ascended and when the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost,*

*Christ did something else so gracious when He ascended according to Eph 4:8. What is that?*

Jesus took “captives” to heaven; these are the Old Testament believers who were “captives” in Hades (the abode of the dead). When Christ ascended, they went home with Him. Now, when we die, we go straight to be with the Lord; ie, we don't go to Hades but heaven (cf. John 11:25-26, 2 Cor 5:8)

### The Gifts and their Purpose (Eph 4:11-16)

*Paul lists some of the spiritual gifts in Eph 4:11. There are others listed in Rom 12:6-8 and 1 Cor 12:8-10. These are not exhaustive lists of spiritual gifts. What are the spiritual gifts named in the NT?*

Prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leading, showing mercy, having wisdom, having knowledge, having faith, healing, performing miracles, distinguishing spirits, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, apostleship, evangelising, pastoral ministry.

REFLECT: Every Christian has been given spiritual gifts. What gifts has Christ given to you in His grace?

*What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? (Eph 4:12-13; cf. also 1 Cor 12:7)*

Christ has given us gifts to help His body, the church, function well. The gifts are given so that we may help one another and equip one another in works of service; so that we may become mature in Christ.

*When the gifts are operating well in a church, what does this look like practically? (Eph 4:14-16)*

It results in God's people, both collectively and individually, remaining faithful to Christ and not going off track with wrong doctrines. It also results in us being like Christ and being under His rule. It also causes us to grow in love and unity, fulfilling Christ's great desire for His people (John 13:34-35, 17:20-21).

*According to Eph 4:14, what are we to be aware of, and how do spiritual gifts help us in this?*

We are to be aware of Satan's schemes to take us away from the truth through trickery, deceit and scheming. Such spiritual gifts as mentioned in Eph 4:11 help us to stay on track.

*Is the gift of apostleship still around?*

A growing number argue that this gift is still current. We believe this gift was only at the start of the church, for apostles had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection (1 Cor 9:1), and they were entrusted with laying the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20).

*In the context of spiritual gifts, how are we to speak to each other? (Eph 4:15)*

We are to “speak the truth in love”; the truth can be confronting, so we must do it in love, and with the purpose of maintaining unity. Jesus was the perfect example of this (cf. John 1:14).

REFLECT: The church grows by truth and love. Discuss the dangers when truth and love aren't together.

**Summary:** Use the spiritual gifts Christ has given you in His grace. God's people need you.

## 10a. Spiritual Gifts – What are they? Why do we have them?

**Review:** *Every Christian has been given spiritual gifts. How have they been given? (Eph 4:7-11)*

They have been given by Christ (through His Spirit) according to His grace and will.

### Introduction to Teaching on Spiritual Gifts

(an extension on what we have considered so far in Eph 4:7-13)

*Christians have lots of questions when it comes to spiritual gifts, such as: “What are spiritual gifts?” “Do they still exist today?” “And if so, which ones?” How are we to use our spiritual gifts?” “What’s the difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents?” Why do we have so many questions?*

We are often confused about the Bible’s teaching on spiritual gifts. This can come from the different positions people hold to. We also have been impacted by the misuse of spiritual gifts in some churches.

In this and subsequent studies we shall consider spiritual gifts.

### What are Spiritual Gifts?

*How would you describe spiritual gifts to a new Christian?*

Spiritual gifts are spiritual abilities for spiritual purposes given by the Holy Spirit to Christians. They are not to be confused with natural talents or abilities that we receive at birth and develop through life.

*What does Paul wish for believers regarding spiritual gifts? (1 Cor 12:1)*

He doesn’t want us to be ignorant/unaware of them. We are to know about them and what they’re for.

*Amongst Christians, who receives spiritual gifts? (1 Cor 12:4-7)*

It’s not just pastors or missionaries; we all do. To “each one” God gives spiritual gifts through His Spirit.

*How do we decide what spiritual gifts we will receive? (1 Cor 12:11)*

We don’t decide; God decides and gives the gifts He chooses for each one of us. It’s according to His sovereignty and according to His grace. God knows what gifts are needed in each local church.

*There are many spiritual gifts. The New Testament doesn’t give an exhaustive list of them all.*

*Which spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Cor 12:8-10, 1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11 and Rom 12:6-8?*

1 Cor 12:8-10 (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing spirits, tongues, interpreting tongues); 1 Cor 12:28 (apostleship, prophecy, teaching, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administration, tongues); Eph 4:11 (apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoral care, teaching); Rom 12:6-8 (prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy)

*In reality, we all have one or more spiritual gifts? Which are yours?*

NB: Many of us are not aware of the spiritual gifts we have received. By faith, we need to believe that we have been given some, and through being involved in church, we need to discover what they are.

*Can we ask for spiritual gifts? (cf. 1 Cor 14:1-3, 13)*

Paul encouraged the Corinthian Christians to ask and seek for gifts; eg, gifts that are helpful, such as prophecy. He even urged those who spoke in tongues to pray that they may be able to interpret, as that would benefit God’s people. We are therefore to ask, but what we receive is up to God’s sovereign will.

### Why are Spiritual Gifts Given?

*Why does God give us spiritual gifts? (1 Cor 12:7)*

God gives us spiritual gifts for the common good. They are not for our benefit, but for others’ benefit.

*Why hasn’t God given all the gifts to one person? (1 Cor 12:12-30)*

In His wisdom, God has given each one certain gifts, but not all, so that we all have a different role to play (just like the members of our body). We are to serve one another and depend upon one another.

*According to 1 Pet 4:10, why has God seen to it that everyone has at least one gift?*

He has done this as an expression of His grace, and to ensure that we all function in the body of Christ.

*Read Eph 4:11-16. Why has God given us spiritual gifts according to this passage?*

He has given us spiritual gifts to help equip each other for works of service, to build each other up in Christ’s kingdom, to unite us and mature us in Christ, and to help us be stable and settled in Christ.

*Sadly, against God’s will, spiritual gifts can lead to disharmony in church. Why?*

Denial of gifts; ignorance of them; misuse of them; disobedience to Spirit’s leading; envy.

*What conclusions can we draw about church life from the Bible’s teaching on spiritual gifts?*

No one has all the gifts, and no gift is given to everyone. We must work together. Those who sit on the side-lines are disobedient. Those who want to be in the spotlight through gifts are disobedient too.

**Summary:** Spiritual gifts are given to all Christians for the benefit of all, and for the glory of God.

## 10b. Spiritual Gifts – Part 1

**Discuss:** *Imagine a family with a Christmas tree and under it sits a pile of presents. It would be a shame if the presents remained there, beautifully wrapped but never opened. The receivers would never experience the gifts, the givers would never be appreciated, and the family would never benefit from the blessings of the gifts. How does this relate to the church and spiritual gifts?*

Our church was not designed to be a house full of unwrapped gifts. When we know the gifts God has given us and use them for the common good, the receiver becomes fruitful and fulfilled, the church is blessed, and God is glorified.

This study will help us understand the spiritual gifts listed in Eph 4:11, and how they are to be used in the church. In the subsequent studies we will consider the other gifts listed in the NT.

### **Apostleship**

*The gift of apostleship was a restricted gift. In what sense? (1 Cor 9:1-2; Rev 21:14)*

It was restricted to the Lord Jesus' twelve apostles; those who had been eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection. Note: Many believe Paul was the twelfth apostle, after the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. Paul saw the risen Jesus and was clearly an apostle (1 Cor 15:6-9).

*What did a person with the gift of apostleship do? (Acts 1:8; Eph 2:20)*

They were witnesses of Christ's death and resurrection, and they had the very important task of laying the foundation of the church, with Jesus being the cornerstone.

*Was the term apostle used in the NT for others apart from the twelve? When? (Acts 14:14)*

Some of Paul's associates were called apostles, because the term can also be used to mean "one sent by the church for a special mission". However, the gift of apostleship was restricted to the twelve.

**Prophecy (Preaching):** A special gift and calling to proclaim a divine message publicly or privately, where God's word is proclaimed with power and clarity in a timely manner.

Note: People often equate prophecy with predicting the future. While the gift of prophecy may include a look into the future, it is mainly about applying God's revealed truth (the Bible) to the present.

*Why do you think Paul placed prophecy in such high esteem? (1 Cor 14:1-5)*

He saw the benefits it produced for the church. It is for edification (building up), for exhortation (correction and repentance) and for consolation (comfort).

*What is the blessing of the gift of prophecy according to 1 Cor 14:23-25?*

It has the ability to convict a lost sinner of the reality of God and his own sin, and it can lead them to repent and believe in Jesus; and become a worshipper of God.

**Evangelism:** The divine enablement to effectively communicate the message of Christ to unbelievers in a winsome way so that they can respond in repentance and faith and be saved.

*Philip was an evangelist (Act 21:8). How did he exhibit this gift? (Acts 8:26-38)*

He was led by the Spirit to the Ethiopian eunuch and could clearly explain Christ from the Scriptures to him, in order lead him to Christ and be saved – he was even baptised.

*What's the difference between the gift of evangelism and the responsibility we have to evangelise?*

We all are responsible to evangelise (2 Tim 4:5), but some have been enabled to communicate well the message of Christ to others such that God uses them to bring many to Himself (Acts 2:40-41).

**Pastoring:** The God-given ability to guide, care for, nurture and feed the body of Christ.

*What characterises a pastor's heart? (Phil 2:19-21; 2 Cor 11:28)*

They have a concern for the welfare of God's people and are moved to do all they can for them.

*What metaphor is used to describe the exercising of this gift? (John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)*

A pastor shepherds God's people, following the Good Shepherd who shepherds His people (Psa 23).

**Teaching:** The divine gift of being able to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God.

*In what ways is a person with the gift of teaching to apply God's truth? (2 Tim 3:16-17)*

They are to use God's Word to teach, bring reproof, correction, and train themselves and others so that God's people may not lack in understanding, but be enabled to know God's will and live holy lives.

*What instructions are given to those who teach in 2 Tim 2:15, Jam 3:1 and 1 Pet 4:11?*

Teachers need to be careful that they accurately explain God's Word. If they don't, they can harm God's people, for which God will hold them responsible. They are to speak the Word as if God were speaking.

**Summary:** Through spiritual gifts, God grows and builds up His Church (Eph 4:12-13).

## 10c. Spiritual Gifts – Part 2

**Discuss:** *The church is made up of many separate individuals, but all gifted with spiritual gifts. Why?*  
 Spiritual gifts help us work together with fellow believers so that the church can function as one body. Our gifts distinguish us as valued participants who can uniquely contribute to the life of the church.

We have covered the spiritual gifts of apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring and teaching. This study will consider leadership, administration, giving, helps, mercy, hospitality and encouragement.

**Leadership** – Rom 12:6-8: To lead God's people responsibly, with the aim of caring for God's flock.

*What are the main obligations of those with the gift of leadership? (Rom 12:8; Heb 13:17)*

They are to be diligent in their leadership; ie, responsible and devoted. In their leadership they are to particularly watch over God's people, protecting and guarding them from spiritual danger.

*What characterises those with the gift of leadership? (Matt 20:25-28; Heb 13:7)*

They are humble servants who do not lord it over others. They also set an example for others to follow.

**Administration** – 1 Cor 12:28: A form of leadership but in the area of church governance; i.e., making sure the church is governed decently and orderly.

*Why was the gift of administration so vital to the ministry of the early church? (Acts 6:1-4)*

It allowed the apostles to minister without being burdened with administrative responsibilities.

*What do we see in Tit 1:5 in regard to what the gift of administration results in?*

It results in good order being established in the church, which includes overseeing the appointment of right positions in church. This is all in line with God's character and what He desires (1 Cor 14:33,40).

**Giving** – Rom 12:8: The ability to contribute money and resources in a generous and cheerful manner, over and above what one will normally give.

*What is the difference between this gift and our normal giving to the Lord's work?*

The difference is one of degree; not kind. We are all to share in financially supporting the church and people in need, but those with the gift of giving do so with unusual generosity and cheerfulness. Those with this gift are blessed by God and entrusted with money and resources that they share with others.

*Read Luke 21:1-4, Act 4:36-37, 2 Cor 8:1-5 & Phil 4:15-16. What do we observe about giving?*

The gift of giving has nothing to do with how wealthy a person is. People with this gift even give over and above their means with gladness. They have a heart to help those (especially believers) in need.

**Helps** – 1 Cor 12:28: A person with a gift in this area performs practical and necessary tasks that help and assist members of the body of Christ in need and does so with thoughtfulness and care.

*How did Epaphroditus exhibit the gift of helps? (Phil 2:25, 29 30)*

He was a tireless worker and helper who enabled Paul to accomplish his ministry.

*What tasks could be done around our church by a person with the gift of helps?*

Preparing communion emblems, maintaining the church property, filing and printing material, etc.

**Mercy** – Rom 12:8: To have compassion and a heart of love for people who are in need through their struggles and sufferings in life, and are moved to do something about it.

*In what ministries of the church would the gift of mercy be especially valuable?*

Assisting those in the church who are sick, grieving, burdened and troubled. A person with this gift has great patience to care for those in need, and to remain committed to helping them on an ongoing basis.

**Hospitality** – Rom 12:13: Such people with this gift are able to be hospitable over and above the hospitality shown by Christians in general – they are very capable in providing meals or lodgings.

*What can we learn from Lydia's example about hospitality to other Christians? (Acts 16:14-15)*

Although only a new believer, she was eager to share her home with the apostles, and care for them.

*What do we learn about the gift of hospitality in 1 Tim 5:9-10 and Heb 13:2?*

Those with the gift of hospitality excel in showing care to strangers and visitors that come to church.

**Encouragement/Exhortation** – Rom 12:8: To reassure and strengthen those who are discouraged.

*Why is this gift such a blessing in church? (cf. Barnabas: Acts 4:36, 9:26-27, 11:22-23, 14:21-22)*

It brings about acceptance and unity in the church, it causes believers to be built up and to be active for the Lord, and it helps those who are struggling or weak in the faith to not give up (cf. 1 Thess 5:11-14).

**Summary:** Through spiritual gifts, God grows and builds up His Church (Eph 4:12-13).

## 10d. Spiritual Gifts – Part 3

**Discuss:** *Why has God given us spiritual gifts? (Eph 4:12; 1 Cor 12:4-7)*

They have been given to equip the saints, to build up the body of Christ, and to be a blessing to each other (for the common good). They are not for our own benefit.

This is our final study on spiritual gifts. We will consider the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. (Note: There are more spiritual gifts than the ones we have studied – the Bible doesn't give an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts)

**Knowledge** – 1 Cor 12:8: The ability to have spiritual insight and understanding of spiritual truths.

*What do those with the gift of knowledge do? (2 Tim 2:15) Why? (1 Tim 4:16)*

They rightly handle God's truth to keep the church sound in the Gospel and protected from heresy.

**Wisdom** – 1 Cor 12:8: The ability to apply spiritual knowledge effectively and practically.

*What's the difference between the gift of knowledge and the gift of wisdom?*

The gift of wisdom is the ability to practically apply knowledge for the benefit of God's church. It leads to godly behaviour and right priorities, because of God's enabling in helping one see things rightly.

**Faith** – 1 Cor 12:9: To trust God to act and do with unwavering belief in His ability.

*What's the difference between the faith of believers and the gift of faith? (1 Cor 13:2)*

None of us can become a Christian without faith in Christ (Rom 5:1), but those with the gift of faith believe God for the unusual, the extraordinary, the supernatural (cf. the example of Abraham in Rom 4:18). Such faith causes them to be unmoved in their trust in God, regardless of opposition and doubts.

**Healing** – 1 Cor 12:9: Those with this gift are specially used by God as an instrument of His healing.

*Is this gift current within the church today? Was it only reserved for the apostles? (Acts 8:4-7)*

It wasn't just the apostles whom God chose to be instruments of His healing; cf. Philip the deacon (Acts 6:5) healing in Acts 8:4-7. God may choose members of His church as instruments of His healing today.

*The gift of healing, like some other gifts, has been terribly abused in the modern church. How?*

There are those who claim to have this gift but are charlatans. They can be spotted by their self-promotion. Those with the genuine gift do it humbly, for God's glory and according to God's will.

**Miracles** – 1 Cor 12:10: A person with this gift obtains from the Lord the ability to perform exceptional feats (not just healing people). This gift always authenticates the message of Christ and glorifies God.

*What temptation would a person face who has been entrusted with this gift?*

They would face the temptation of being proud. Such gifts need to be used humbly, for God's glory.

**Discernment** – 1 Cor 12:10: The gift of being able to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error, and to identify deception within the body of Christ. It is more than just wisdom.

*Consider the exercise of the gift of discernment in Act 5:1-4 and 13:6-10. What do we learn?*

This gift identifies deception, and those who are false teachers and who hinder the Gospel.

*What harm might come to a church if people with discernment neglected to use their gift?*

Deceivers would be able to mingle in the church unhindered and bring about disharmony and division.

*What does 1 Tim 4:1-3 indicate will happen in the end times? How is this gift helpful?*

People will fall away from the faith. This gift helps us to remain faithful to God's truth and His Gospel.

**Tongues** – 1 Cor 12:10: To speak in an unlearned language miraculously (Acts 2:5-8).

*Why are other spiritual gifts more important than the gift of tongues? (1 Cor 14:2-5)*

Tongues build up only the person who is speaking. Unless interpreted, it is not beneficial to the church.

*The gift of tongues has been the most abused gift of all. This was the case in the church at Corinth, and also in our present day. In what way is it abused?*

Many people claim they speak in tongues, but it's only babble (it's not a genuine language). Some teach that if you don't speak in tongues you are not saved. This is dangerous and wrong (1 Cor 12:30)

**Interpretation** – 1 Cor 12:10: This gift is the divine enablement to interpret an unlearned language.

*What special instructions does Paul give for the gift of interpretation? (1 Cor 14:10-12, 2- 28)*

If tongues is being practiced in church, then the gift of interpretation must also be exercised. If the gift of interpretation is not present, then tongues is not to be practiced, as tongues won't be beneficial.

**Summary:** Through spiritual gifts, God grows and builds up His Church (Eph 4:12-13).

## 10e. Identifying, Using & Developing Your Spiritual Gifts

**Discuss:** *Does it make a difference which church ministry you are involved in? Why?*

Yes, it does! Generally speaking, when we're in a church ministry that we are not gifted for, and it's not God's will for us, we will struggle in it. There'll be little joy and the ministry will become burdensome.

Note: If this is the case, it's best to transition out of it and pray for others who are gifted to be involved.

*Of course, there are church ministries we should all be involved in, if we are able to? Why?*

There are many ministries that don't require spiritual gifts, such as cleaning, serving and helping. We are to be engaged in these, and as we do, we follow the example of Jesus who washed His disciples' feet, and who taught us to serve one another (John 13:13-15).

Discovering our spiritual gifts is a big step forward for effective Christian service. This study will consider identifying our gifts and developing them. A "Spiritual Gift Survey" is available if it may help.

### Identifying Your Spiritual Gifts

*How can spiritual gifts be best identified?*

They are best identified by being an active Christian, who seeks to serve the Lord in your local church.

*As you get involved in Christian service, what two things can affirm your gifts?*

1. Other believers will observe your service and affirm you if they see your giftedness in a certain area.
2. As you serve the Lord, you will find that you will have a greater sense of joy when you are doing Christian ministries that fit your spiritual gifts; it won't be a burden, but a joy.

*We have a "Spiritual Gift Survey" to do, if you wish. What do we need to be aware of if we choose to fill this survey out?*

A "Spiritual Gift Survey" can never replace the "better" way of discovering our spiritual gifts by getting into Christian service. But it can help in identifying our gifts, or affirming what we believe our gifts are.

Note: If you do the "Spiritual Gift Survey", please also do the "Observation Assessment Form for Spiritual Gifts". Then after this, consider these following questions:

*Do others affirm your gifts? Can you affirm them as well? Are you using your spiritual gifts?*

### Using and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts

*Read Matt 25:14-30. This parable is not just about spiritual gifts or natural talents. It's about all that God has blessed us with. But if we apply this parable just to spiritual gifts, what can we learn?*

God has given to each of us spiritual gifts in order for them to be used for the benefit of His church. We are responsible before the Lord to use them, in order to glorify God and to give a return for what the Lord has invested in us. One day, before Christ, we will give an account of how we have used our gifts.

*Read Acts 18:24-28. What do you see in this story about the development of spiritual gifts?*

Apollos had the gift of teaching, but Priscilla and Aquila helped him to develop it. Their gifts helped strengthen his gift, so that God could use Him more effectively and powerfully.

*What are some ways you could develop your spiritual gifts and those of others? (2 Tim 1:6)*

You could be active in encouraging people in their gifts ("fanning them into flame"), or you could talk with somebody who has the same gift as you and work together in using your gift more effectively.

### Misuse of Gifts

*Read 1 Cor 12:4-11, 14-30. In what way can spiritual gifts be misused?*

This passage addresses the misuse of gifts in the Church at Corinth. There are three ways this happens:

- 1) Using our gift for personal satisfaction only, rather than for the common good (v.7).
- 2) Thinking our gift is more important than the gift that others have (v.21).
- 3) Believing that everyone should have my gift, otherwise they are a "lower Christian" (vv.28-29)

*What other hindrances can affect the fruitfulness of our gifts? (cf. 2 Tim 1:6, 1 Cor 13:1-3)*

Not developing our gifts or using them fully (2 Tim 1:6); not using them in love (1 Cor 13:1-3).

### Conclusion

*According to 1 Cor 3:10-17, what will every Christian face one day?*

One day before Jesus, we will be rewarded according to our service; which includes using our gifts.

*Read 1 Pet 4:10-11? Are you a good steward of your gifts?*

The best way to be a good steward of our gifts is to use our gifts, and for the glory of God.

**Summary:** God has given us spiritual gifts for His glory and the benefit of His people – use your gift!

## HANDOUT: SPIRITUAL GIFT SURVEY

Instructions for Spiritual Gift Survey: Place a tick by those statements that are true and that best describes you when it comes to Christian service. Total the number of items ticked in each section.

Note: This survey is only a guide as to what your spiritual gift may be, and not all the gifts are listed.

### A

- More expressive and assertive rather than submissive/tolerant/inhibited
- Feels responsible to confront people with truth
- Strong convictions and willingness to stand alone
- Able to apply biblical truths to everyday situations
- Willing to experience brokenness before God and then be used to challenge others
- Messages bring conviction and change in the lives of others
- More serious than lighthearted about life and its problems
- SECTION A TOTAL

### B

- More patient/tolerant/empathetic rather than nervous and confronting
- Willing to spend much time caring and nurturing a group of people
- Desires and has needs for intimate spiritual relationships
- Tendency to compromise rather than go to either extreme
- Compelled to lead by example and model
- Spiritually develops others patiently and responsibly
- Willing to renounce personal interests for the sake of others
- SECTION B TOTAL

### C

- Thorough and careful, skilled in details
- More composed than nervous, more objective than subjective
- Able to see the overall picture and anticipate possible implications
- Clarifies goals and develops strategies to accomplish them
- Feels frustration and sadness at disorganisation
- Able to identify and effectively use resources to accomplish tasks
- Concerned for the productivity of kingdom work more than personal desires
- SECTION C TOTAL

### D

- Loves people and relates well
- Strong desire to share their faith with unbelievers
- Discerns spiritual needs in others
- More sympathetic than indifferent
- Communicates the gospel with clarity and effectiveness
- Committed to placing new converts in the body of Christ
- Enjoys building relationships with unchurched people
- SECTION D TOTAL

### E

- Devoted to God's kingdom
- Desires to give quietly without public notice
- Gives gifts of enduring value
- Wrestles with being faithful in issues of money management
- Able to give liberally and joyfully
- Desires to give to advance God's kingdom
- Feels a part of the work to which they give
- SECTION E TOTAL

**F**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Genuinely enjoys providing accommodation for others in need
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appreciates every guest the Lord brings into their home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Concerned with meeting a need; not making an impression
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tends to be easy-going and feels comfortable around strangers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fulfilled by serving people who cannot pay them back
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoys all classes of people and feels at ease with them
- \_\_\_\_\_ They migrate to new people in the church

\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION F TOTAL

**G**

- \_\_\_\_\_ People seem to wait on your decisions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to motivate others toward a goal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consciously sets an example for others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Influences others to be all God wants them to be
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confident, practical, applies common sense
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feels alone in making certain decisions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to live with disagreement

\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION G TOTAL

**H**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a soft heart for others, especially for those in need
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others easily confide in you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strong desires to remove the causes of people's hurts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Very empathetic, patient and tolerant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to express love in tangible ways
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reacts harshly when people are hurt, displaced, rejected, or dealt with unjustly
- \_\_\_\_\_ A positive faith that causes them to persevere to the end in helping others

\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION H TOTAL

**I**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifies needs and desires to help meet them personally
- \_\_\_\_\_ Easy-going, loyal and helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoys serving when it frees others to better accomplish their ministry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Avoids public, up-front ministry and tends to work behind the scenes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has trouble saying no, which often results in over-involvement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tendency to feel inadequate and unqualified for spiritual leadership
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are committed to see a task carried through to its end

\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION I TOTAL

**J**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Studies, understands, and shares truth from God's Word
- \_\_\_\_\_ More self disciplined than spontaneous
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gathers truth and presents it in an organised manner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listens with a discerning ear to the teaching of others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Logical and rational; makes decisions based on facts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoys researching an idea and effectively communicating it to others at their level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to stimulate others to understand truth and obey it

\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION J TOTAL

**K**

- \_\_\_\_\_ More tolerant and sympathetic rather than confronting and indifferent
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tends to be positive and full of faith
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strong desire to see people fully mature spiritually
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoys strengthening the weak and reassuring the unstable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Views trials as divine opportunities for growth
- \_\_\_\_\_ Likes to challenge and is willing to rebuke to cause growth in others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spontaneously discerns needs and encourages individually those in the trenches
- \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION K TOTAL

**L**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Others come to them for counsel about questionable matters, trusting in their judgement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to distinguish between what is of God and what is of Satan; between truth and falsehood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have insight which they are cautious to share except if it benefits the ministry
- \_\_\_\_\_ They are able to sense when something is not right when others are not able to
- \_\_\_\_\_ Their evaluation of someone or something, not readily apparent, is later proven to be correct
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can see through a phony before most other people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to detect subtle errors in someone else's thinking
- \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION L TOTAL

**M**

- \_\_\_\_\_ When others say something is impossible, they trust God can do it
- \_\_\_\_\_ Without hesitation or indecision, they trust God in difficult circumstances
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage others to trust God when they are defeated and discouraged
- \_\_\_\_\_ Experience answers to prayer that seem, from a human point of view, impossible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They have an ability to visualise things that God wants to accomplish in the future
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others are challenged by their ability to trust God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They have a pioneering spirit and are not easily discouraged
- \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION M TOTAL

**N**

- \_\_\_\_\_ They enjoy wrestling with biblical problems and researching the issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ They enjoy defining their theological position on certain issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ People with difficult biblical questions seek their understanding
- \_\_\_\_\_ New insights and understanding of difficult subjects come easily to them
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are quick to know what a passage of Scripture is saying before others do
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a great desire to share with others the meaning of difficult passages
- \_\_\_\_\_ See the acquisition of biblical truth as the most effective way to help others
- \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION N TOTAL

**O**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to reduce biblical truths to practical principles for living
- \_\_\_\_\_ They find it easy to clarify people's problems and give them biblical solutions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find it easy to illustrate truth that they want to communicate
- \_\_\_\_\_ More concerned about how to apply God's Word than simply understanding it's message
- \_\_\_\_\_ Know what to do when dealing with difficult problems and situations when others are not sure
- \_\_\_\_\_ A close presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions need to be made
- \_\_\_\_\_ More excited about the application of biblical truth than the truth itself
- \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION O TOTAL

List the sections with the three highest scores (highest to lowest in number of “ticks”).

Write in the corresponding gift from the key below:

Score	Section Letter	Spiritual Gift
1		
2		
3		

Key: A – prophecy; B – pastoring; C – administration; D – evangelism; E – giving;  
F – hospitality; G – leadership; H – mercy; I – helps; J – teaching;  
K – encouragement; L – discernment; M – faith; N – knowledge; O – wisdom

## Observation Assessment Form For Spiritual Gifts

Directions: Read each of the descriptions below. Using these definitions, mark one of the following letters in the each of the spaces provided.

Y = Yes, definitely true, certain gift

P = Perhaps, possibly true, potential gift

N = No, definitely do not have this gift

? = I don't know

\_\_\_\_\_ ADMINISTRATION: The divine enablement to ensure the church is governed decently and orderly, and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that increase its organisational effectiveness.

\_\_\_\_\_ DISCERNMENT: The divine enablement to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error, and to identify deception within the body of Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_ ENCOURAGEMENT: The divine enablement to reassure, strengthen, and affirm those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ EVANGELISM: The divine enablement to effectively communicate the message of Christ to unbelievers so they can respond in repentance and faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ FAITH: The divine enablement to trust God's will and act on it with unwavering belief in His ability.

\_\_\_\_\_ GIVING: The divine enablement to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord in a generous, cheerful manner, over and above our normal tithing.

\_\_\_\_\_ HELPS: The divine enablement to perform practical and necessary tasks that help and assist members of the body of Christ in need, and to do so with joy.

\_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITALITY: The divine enablement to care for God's family by providing food or shelter, with a warm and loving heart.

\_\_\_\_\_ KNOWLEDGE: The divine enablement to have spiritual insight and understanding of spiritual truths.

\_\_\_\_\_ LEADERSHIP: The divine enablement to direct and rule with the responsibility to protect, help, care for, and give aid to God's flock.

\_\_\_\_\_ MERCY: The divine enablement to have compassion and a heart of love for people who are desperately in need through their struggles and sufferings in life, and to be moved to do something about it.

\_\_\_\_\_ PASTORING: The divine enablement to guide, care for, and nurture individuals or groups in the body of Christ as they grow in their faith.

\_\_\_\_\_ PROPHECY: The divine enablement to proclaim the divine message publicly, interpret the times, and to proclaim His truth with power and clarity in a timely and culturally sensitive way.

\_\_\_\_\_ TEACHING: The divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God to the lives of listeners.

\_\_\_\_\_ WISDOM: The divine enablement to apply spiritual knowledge effectively and practically.

A. Look back at those gifts you marked “Y”. List, in order, the top three gifts marked with “Y”.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

B. List the top three gifts from the “Spiritual Gift Survey”.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

C. Compare the two lists. What can you conclude about the spiritual gifts you may have?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Are you ready to use your gifts?*

*Or if you are already using them, how are you developing them further?*

## 11. A Life Lived in a New Self

**Review:** *We've just done a mini-series on spiritual gifts, after previously considering the teaching on spiritual gifts in Eph 4:7-16. What's the "umbrella" under which we are to use our gifts? (Eph 4:1-3)?*

We are to use our spiritual gifts under the "umbrella" of living a life worthy of Christ's calling. Spiritual gifts are also to be used with good character, and with the purpose of maintaining unity (cf. also v.13)

Let's now continue to look at what it means to live a life worthy of our calling.

### **The Old Self – put it off (Eph 4:17-22)**

*In living worthy of our calling (Eph 4:1) what are we called not to live like? (Eph 4:17)*

We are called not to live like the Gentiles; that is, like pagan, ungodly people who don't know God.

*How are the unbelieving Gentiles (pagans) described in Eph 4:17-18a?*

They live futile lives; one day they will perish. They live according to their own understanding, void of God's knowledge (revelation). They are separated from God due to their ignorance when it comes to God.

REFLECT: God has plainly revealed Himself to us through Creation (Rom 1:18-20), and more completely through His Son (Heb 1:1-3). What causes us to miss the obvious and reject the truth? [pride]

*How else are the Gentiles described? What does their life lead to? (Eph 4:18b-19)*

They have hardened hearts, doing what they want without a care in the world. They have cold and callous hearts, having a "seared" conscience. As a result, they live a life where they give themselves over to every sinful desire and lust. Without God and a right mind, this is how our lives can end up.

REFLECT: The more void we are of God's revelation, the more immoral we will be as a society. Even our own society still has some respectability because of our Christian heritage, but as it is eroded, what will it lead to? What are we seeing more and more as the Christian faith is rejected in Australia?

*In Eph 4:20-21, Paul then challenges us in regard to the way Christians are to live. Why should we be living a life radically different from that of unbelieving Gentiles?*

In the Gospel, not only have we learnt about who Jesus is and what He has done for us through His death and resurrection, but we have been taught how to live righteously under Christ's rule. We have both His example and His teaching so that we might live holy lives for God's glory. This new life we are called to live with the help of God's Spirit is totally opposite to the way an unbelieving Gentile lives.

REFLECT: If we only preach salvation through Christ's death and resurrection, and neglect Christ's lordship and the righteous life He calls us to live (Matt 28:20), what will it lead to? [we will continue to live lives that are like the unbelieving Gentiles – this is why discipleship is so important]

*What is so important about Jesus that changes us from being an unbelieving Gentile? (Eph 4:21)*

The truth is in Jesus; He is the truth (John 14:6). If we reject or ignore Him, then we will be like an unbelieving Gentile – ignorant, with a darkened understanding of life, and a futile mind.

*So, in the light of what we have been taught in Christ, what are we to do? (Eph 4:22)*

We are to put off our "old self", just as we put off an old, dirty garment. Our sinful nature is our old self – our fallen nature that is bent on indulging our fleshly desires, and that is corrupted by the world.

REFLECT: Is this "putting off" something we do just once at conversion? NO! (cf. Rom 6:12-14, 8:12-13)

### **The New Self – put it on (Eph 4:23-24)**

*As we are called to put off the old self (sinful nature), what are we called to do? (Eph 4:23-24)*

We are called to put on the new self – the new self is, in a nutshell, the life of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Cor 4:4). We are not just to put off and remain naked, but to clothe ourselves with Christ.

*How has it been possible for us to put on the new self? (Eph 4:23)*

It has been made possible through our mind being renewed; and this has come about through the truth that is in Jesus. No longer are we in darkness and ignorance, for our spiritual eyes have been opened and we can see how we are to be in Christ – God's truth is key to putting on the new self (cf. Jn 17:17).

REFLECT: What are you doing to renew your mind in Christ? (cf. Rom 12:2; John 17:17)

*What characterises the new-self, according to Eph 4:24 (compared to the old-self)?*

The new self is all about righteousness and holiness; not sensuality and impurity. It is a return to how we were first made – in the likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27). It's all about becoming more like the One who was fully in the "likeness of God" (Heb 1:3); following His example and listening to His truth.

**Summary:** Let us live a worthy life by putting off the old self and putting on the new self in Christ.

## 12. A Life Imitating God

**Review:** *What are we to “put off”?* (Eph 4:22)

We are to “put off” the old self. This is our fallen sinful nature, which we see unchecked in unbelievers.

*What are we to “put on”?* *How?* (Eph 4:23-24)

We are to “put on” the new self. This is the likeness of God (or the life of Christ, who is the image of God). We do this by renewing our minds through the truth – which is Jesus (Eph 4:21b).

### Putting off and Putting on (Eph 4:25-32)

*After Paul teaches Christians that we are to put off the old self and put on the new self, he goes on to give some specific applications of this. What does he begin with in Eph 4:25?*

We are to put off falsehood; that is, lying, as well as distorting or exaggerating the truth. It is common amongst unbelievers from politicians to school kids. However, as Christ’s community we are to be different by putting on truthfulness; both to outsiders and within Christ’s body.

*Amongst unbelievers anger is common. What characterises such anger?* (Jam 1:19-20)

It is often not slow, but quick, and it also does not accomplish God’s righteousness. This is because of how it is selfish, uncontrolled, and damaging. Such anger is to be “put off” by the Christian.

*Can Christians be angry? If so, in what way?* (Eph 4:26)

Christians can be angry – we can “put on” anger. However, our anger is to be different to that which we see in the world. Our anger is to be without sin – which means it’s not to be selfish or uncontrolled. It must be slow. We call such anger “righteous anger” (cf. Jesus when he was angry in John 2:13-17).

*What does it practically mean to “not let the sun go down while you are still angry”?* (Eph 4:26b)

Our anger is to be short-lived. We’re not to continue to be angry, as this leads to retaliation. Instead, we are to be forgiving and compassionate toward those who have angered us.

*Why is it not good to lie or be angry, like unbelieving people in the world?* (Eph 4:27)

Not only is it inconsistent with our new self, but such behaviour leads to the devil getting a foothold into our life. He cannot possess us, but he can exploit our sinful behaviour so that we are defiled, and where we damage the witness of Christ’s church, and bring dishonour to God’s holy name.

*In Eph 4:28, what’s another behaviour that we are to put off, and another that we are to put on?*

We are to put off stealing; which includes taking someone’s property, or time, for our gain. Instead of being takers, we are to work for what we have, and be giving. This behaviour is what we are to put on.

*According to Eph 4:29, what are we to put off and put on in regard to our speech?*

We are not to speak with evil words that cut and destroy. Instead, we are to speak words that build up. REFLECT: The tongue gets quite a mention in this section. Do you have a controlled tongue that blesses, or an uncontrolled tongue that damages? What do we need to take care of? (cf. Matt 15:18)

*In Eph 4:30, Paul tells us not to grieve the Spirit. Why is this mentioned?*

The Holy Spirit is the one who makes it possible for us to put off the old self (Rom 8:13) and to put on the new self (2 Cor 3:18). We therefore grieve the Spirit when we choose not to put on our new self, and to not put off (rid ourselves) of sinful traits.;

*How do we do grieve the Spirit according to Eph 4:31?*

We grieve the Spirit by being bitter and resentful, angry and punishing, as well as gossiping and slandering others, and having an attitude of malice. Wrong heart attitudes and words grieve the Spirit.

*In Eph 4:32, Paul gives a summary of what we are to be like toward others, and which stops us from grieving the Spirit. How are we to be? What part of us is being addressed?*

We are to be kind, compassionate and forgiving. Our heart (or mind) is being addressed.

*We can find forgiveness hard. What should help us forgive others?* (Eph 4:32; Matt 18:23-35)

We should forgive others in the light of how much God has forgiven us through Christ.

REFLECT: If we don’t forgive others, what does that imply? (cf. Matt 6:14-15)

### Imitating God (Eph 5:1-2)

*The whole “putting on” is summarised by Paul in Eph 5:1. What is it?*

We are to imitate God – we are to imitate our heavenly Father, as Jesus taught us (Matt 5:44-48), for we are His children. We are to imitate Christ our Lord, who perfectly reflects the Father (Heb 1:3).

*What key characteristic should dominate our new life in Christ as we imitate God?* (Eph 5:2)

We ought to love. God is love (1 John 4:8). Christ is love - He loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal 2:20). The Holy Spirit has poured God’s love into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Let us love! (cf. 1 John 4:11).

**Summary:** Let us imitate God – by putting off the old, putting on the new, and living in love.

## 13. A Life of Holiness

**Review:** *What happens when we don't "put off" the old self and don't "put on" the new"? (Eph 4:25-30)*  
 We give the devil the opportunity to make our life unworthy of the calling we have received, and to bring Christ's church and Christ's name down. We also grieve the Holy Spirit.

*As we "put off" the old and "put on" the new, what will we become like? (Eph 4:32-5:2)*

We will become kind, compassionate, forgiving and loving – imitators of God and of His Son Jesus Christ.

### Holiness and Unholiness (Eph 5:3-6)

*In Eph 4:25-31 we were instructed to "put off" certain sinful behaviours. What other sinful behaviours are we not to practice, according to Eph 5:3-4?*

Christians are not to be immoral (especially in sexual immorality), or impure (especially in idolatry and worldliness), or greedy (covetous), or speak coarsely or badly.

REFLECT: The sinful behaviours mentioned in Eph 5:3-4 are commonly seen in our society. Discuss how rampant sexual immorality, idolatry, greed, and coarse joking is? How do you go about resisting it?

*When it comes to our talk, instead of being like unbelievers, how should we be? (Eph 5:4b)*

We are to use our tongue to give thanks to God through our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Thess 5:18).

*Not only are we no longer to be immoral and impure, but what else does Paul say in Eph 5:3?*

We are not to have anything to do with such sinful behaviour; there's not even to be a hint or a possible accusation that we are dabbling in it. We are to be holy (cf. 1 Peter 1:15-16).

*What's one of the motivating reasons why we should be holy according to Eph 5:3-4?*

It is inappropriate, or not fitting, for Christians to behave like unbelievers. We are saints now; ie, God has called us out of this world to be His beloved and holy children (set apart for God).

*What's another motivating reason why we should be holy according to Eph 5:5-6?*

No one who continues in sinful behaviour is part of Christ's kingdom; that is, they are not right with God and they will not have eternal life. Also, they are under God's judgment and will face the wrath of God.

*Does this mean that if we commit immorality or impurity or covetousness or idolatry, we won't be saved? (cf. 1 John 3:7-10 and then 1 John 1:8-2:1)*

Christians still sin, but unlike unbelievers, we do not habitually sin, and when we do sin, we feel bad about it and repent and seek forgiveness from God through Christ.

*According to the context, what does Paul mean by "let no one deceive you" in Eph 5:6a?*

There are false teachers that claim that we can live as we please (ie, encouraging people to continue in immorality) and still be a saved Christian. Don't be deceived! If we are saved, the presence and work of God's Spirit in our life will show itself by the way we have a heart to be holy (cf. Heb 12:14).

### Light and Darkness (Eph 5:7-14)

*What's another motivating reason why we are not to participate in sinful behaviour? (Eph 5:7-8)*

We, who once were in darkness are now "light" in the Lord. When we were in darkness (Eph 2:1-3) we were not under Christ, but under satan, fulfilling our sinful desires. However, now being in Christ, we are in His light, and we have been blessed with salvation, as well as sight to see how to live aright.

*What is consistent with living in the light of Christ and His truth? (Eph 5:9-10)*

We bear the fruit of goodness, righteousness and truthfulness (the opposites of sinful behaviour), and in the Light of Life (John 8:12). We seek to please the Lord (Eph 5:10), rather than ourselves (Eph 2:3).

*What does Paul tell us to do in regard to the "deeds of darkness"? (Eph 5:11)*

We are not to participate (take part) in deeds of darkness – because it is disgraceful and contrary to the way we are to behave as children of light. Not only that, but we are to expose the deeds of darkness.

*How do we go about exposing the "deeds of darkness"? (cf. also John 3:19-21; Phil 2:14-16)*

This is done by us speaking up and not remaining silent. It is also done by living as children of light in the midst of a dark world. As Christ shines His light through us, the deeds of wickedness are exposed.

REFLECT: In what way have you been able to expose "deeds of darkness"?

*Why is it important that sin is made visible by God's light? (Eph 5:13-14)*

Unless sin is made visible, we will not repent of them and turn to Christ. The believer will not have fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7), and the unbeliever will remain spiritually dead. But through God's light, we're awakened and made aware of our sin, so that we may seek Christ and be found in His light.

**Summary:** Be holy, for it is fitting for God's saints, and it is consistent with being in Christ's light.

## 14. A Life of Fruitfulness

**Review:** *What motivations do we have to live a holy life? (Eph 5:3-6, 8)*

We're set apart (saints) to God (5:3), we're not under wrath (5:6), and we're light in the Lord (5:8).

*Why do we need to expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness? (Eph 5:11-14)*

Exposing sin enables us to be alive & live holy lives. It also helps unbelievers to repent & come to Christ.

### **Be careful how you live (Eph 5:15-17)**

*As Paul continues to show us how to "live a life worthy of the calling" (Eph 4:1), what does he teach us in Eph 5:15 in regard to how we should live?*

We should live carefully; not casually or carefree. We should also live wisely; not unwisely or foolishly.

*Why does Paul emphasise the need to live carefully and wisely? (cf. Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 5:3-7)*

We live, and are immersed, in a fallen world hostile to God and ruled by Satan. It is full of immorality, impurity, and idolatry. As a result, we need to be careful not to live as people do in this fallen world.

*What's the great benefit of living carefully and wisely according to Eph 5:16? (cf. 2 Pet 1:8).*

We won't be living for self-indulgence or self-satisfaction, but we will be making the most of our short time here on earth for God. Our lives will be useful and fruitful, for Christ's honour and God's glory

**REFLECT:** In what ways could you make the most of your time on earth? Reflect on this quote from C T Studd *"Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Jesus will last."*

*In order to live wisely and to make the most of our time, what must we know? (Eph 5:17)*

We must understand and know the will of the Lord.

*How do we know God's will? Look up Rom 12:2 and Col 1:9-10.*

God's will is known when our minds are renewed (through His Word); rather than our minds being conformed to this world. We also should pray that God might make known His will, as Paul did for the Colossians. Knowing God's will leads to a life pleasing to Him. Cf. Jesus example in John 4:34; 6:38.

### **Be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-21)**

*What are we to be filled with? What does this mean? (Eph 5:18)*

We are to be filled with the Spirit. The Greek verb indicates an ongoing process – not a once-off experience or "filling up".

*What is the link between drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit?*

A drunk person is controlled by alcoholic spirits, as is evident by his walk and his talk; but a spirit-filled person is controlled by the Spirit, and this also is evident by their walk and their talk.

*In Eph 4:30 and 5:18 we have two contrasting references to the Holy Spirit. What are they? How do they relate to Paul's earlier language of "putting off" the old self and "putting on" the new self?*

We are not to grieve the Spirit but be full of the Spirit – we grieve the Spirit when we don't "put off" the old self; we can only "put off" the old and "put on" the new, when we are controlled (full) of the Spirit.

*What things flow out of our lives when we are full of the Holy Spirit? (Eph 5:19-21)*

We express love for God by singing to each other joyful songs of praise, and by giving thanks to Him. We will also love people by submitting to them and serving them; love will be the key (cf. Gal 5:22).

*In Eph 5:19, we have an insightful verse in regard to public singing in church. What do we learn?*

We not only sing to God, but as we do, we also sing to each other. This implies that songs at church should not be all about "me and my relationship with God", but about "us and our relationship with God". We also have a variety of songs, such as psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and we should use our rich heritage to keep a good balance. Above all, there ought to be "making of music" in our heart – in other words, we sing from the joy of the Lord, which is part of the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22).

*We are called to be a thankful people. What do we learn from Eph 5:20? (cf. also 1 Thess 5:18)*

We are to always be giving thanks to God, in every situation of life and for all things. Our thanks is to be like our prayers – directed to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**REFLECT:** How can we give thanks to God for horrible situations? [consider: we are not to give thanks for evil, but for our God who blesses us and helps us no matter what we may face – cf. Psalm 23:4-6]

*The Spirit will help us to submit to each other. What else should help us? Why? (Eph 5:21)*

If we revere Christ, then we'll respect and love His church. Instead of demanding "my way", we will serve one another – recognizing that they are God's children too; my brothers and sisters.

**Summary:** Be fruitful, by being careful and wise in the way you live, and be filled with the Spirit.

## 15. A Life of New Relationships – in Marriage

**Review:** *How should we live in this fallen world? (Eph 5:15-17)*

We should live carefully and wisely, making the most of our time here on earth by doing God's will.

*What must we maintain in our life, and what does this result in? (Eph 5:18-21)*

We must keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit; which is allowing the Spirit to completely control us. This results in a life of praise and thanks to God, and where we serve one another.

**Discuss:** Paul has taught us the importance of unity in the church, and the use of spiritual gifts and godly living to help us in this. But what is the point of having unity (peace) in the church, if there is no unity (peace) in the home? What problems does this create? What effect does this have on children?

### Role of a wife (Eph 5:22-24)

*After teaching us that Christians are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21), what is a wife specifically commanded to do in a Christian marriage? (Eph 5:22-24)*

She is to submit (or be subject) to her husband in everything; as she does to the Lord Himself.

*Why can wives react to this word "submit"? What must we bear in mind when we use this word?*

The word "submit" has a derogatory meaning. When used to define a wife's behaviour in marriage, it implies she is her husband's "slave". But as a fellow heir of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7), she is a companion; and not a slave. What is being highlighted in Eph 5 is not her personhood; but her role.

*What example is given of how a wife is to submit to her husband? (Eph 5:22, 24)*

She is given the example of the church. As the church submits to Christ, so a wife is to submit to her husband. As she submits to the Lord, she is to have the same heart attitude toward her husband.

REFLECT: A wife is called to submit to her husband "in everything". Are there any occasions when a wife shouldn't submit? [cf: What if her husband asks her to do something contrary to God's will?]

*How are wives to view their husbands? (Eph 5:23, 33)*

She is to view her husband as her head. As a result, she is to respect him (Eph 5:33).

### Role of a husband (Eph 5:23, 25-31)

*What role does the husband have in a Christian marriage? (Eph 5:23)*

A husband is to be a head (a leader) in his relationship with his wife (cf. also 1 Cor 11:3).

*What example is given of how a husband is to be the head of his wife? (Eph 5:23)*

He is given the example of Christ. As He is head of the church, so a husband is to be head of his wife.

*Consider what it says of Christ in Eph 5:23, 25-26). What type of head should a husband be?*

Paul refers to Jesus being the "Saviour of the body". Like for Christ, our headship is to be about care; not control. It's to be about helping our wife grow; not about personal gain (cf. also Eph 5:29).

*In order to lead like Christ leads the church, what is a husband commanded to do? (Eph 5:25)*

A husband is to love his wife, just as Christ loves the church. As we see in Christ, this kind of love is sacrificial (giving of ourselves) and unconditional. It's not just about feelings. It's an act of our will.

*What is the husband's goal as he loves his wife? (Eph 5:26-27)*

Like for Christ and His church, we are to help our wife grow in Christ and become holy and blameless.

REFLECT: How can a husband practically help his wife grow in holiness in Christ?

*As Paul reflects on the husband's role, what great truths do we glean about Christ? (Eph 5:25-27)*

Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. He sanctified us by washing us clean of our sins, so that we may be holy and blameless. Praise God for what Christ has done for us and what He has made us!

*What else is a husband called to do in marriage according to Eph 5:28-30?*

He is to love his wife as his own body, just as Christ loves His body (the church). Like Christ does for His church, a husband is to nourish and cherish his wife; just as he does for his body.

*Why does Paul emphasise that a husband is to love his wife as his own body? (Eph 5:31)*

When a husband marries, he is joined to his wife, and they become one (Gen 2:24). A husband ought to view his wife as being part of him. That's why Paul says "he who loves his own wife loves himself" (v.28).

*What happens when a husband & wife live out their God-given roles in marriage? (Eph 5:32-33)*

We show to our kids and the world the unity and the relationship between Christ and His church. In a husband, people see what Christ is like, and in a wife, people see what our right response is to be.

**Note:** Jesus shows husbands and wives how they ought to be in our separate roles. Wives, consider Christ's submission to the Father. Husbands, consider Christ leading and loving His church.

**Summary:** Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves.

## 16. A Life of New Relationships – at Home and at Work

**Review:** *What role does a wife have in marriage? What example is she given? (Eph 5:22-24, 33)*

A wife is to be subject to her husband in everything, just as the church submits to Christ.

*What role does a husband have in marriage? What example is he given? (Eph 5:23, 25-33)*

A husband is to be the head of his wife, leading like Christ leads the church. He is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and he is to love and care for his wife as he does his own body.

### **Children and parents (Eph 6:1-4)**

*If we are in Christ, all of our relationships are to be holy. What does Paul say next in Eph 6:1-3?*

Children are to obey (and honour) their parents; which is even declared in the Ten Commandments.

*Is Paul just addressing any child? Who do you think he is specifically addressing? (cf. Eph 6:1b)*

He is addressing Christian children – those “in the Lord”. They are to especially obey their parents.

REFLECT: We can often assume that our children won’t become Christians until later on in life. According to what is implied in Eph 6:1, what should we hope for? (cf. Mark 10:13-14)

*How should we understand the promise in Eph 6:2-3?*

We know that not all godly Christians who obeyed their parents when young will live a long life. This is a general truth. But obedience to the Lord and to parents leads to a fuller life of peace and joy.

*How are Christian fathers to raise their children? (Eph 6:4)*

They are not to exasperate or provoke their children to anger (frustration), but bring them up with discipline and instruction in the Lord; ie, they are to train (disciple) their children consistently and correctly that they may know Christ and follow Him.

REFLECT: In what ways can fathers (and mothers) exasperate their children?

*Did you notice that Eph 6:4 is addressed to fathers? How should we understand this?*

Both parents are to be involved in disciplining and instructing their children, but a father should take a lead role in this. Since he is the head (Eph 5:23), it follows that he should be head of his children.

REFLECT: How well do Christian fathers in our society live out Eph 6:4? What stops them from fulfilling their God-given role to disciple (discipline and instruct) their children in the Lord?

### **Slaves and masters; or workers and bosses (Eph 6:5-9)**

*How are Christian slaves to serve their masters? What attitudes should fill their heart (Eph 6:5-7)*

They are to be obedient to their masters at all times, and not just when their master has their eye on them. They should work with fear and trembling (ie, working well to avoid punishment), and sincerely.

*Paul seems to support slavery in this passage. Why doesn’t he condemn its practice?*

We often think of slavery as it was in the 18th century, when masters terribly abused their slaves. In the NT, slavery was a way of life that helped people have work; just as we have bosses who employ workers. The thrust of the NT is for a slave to gain their freedom (1 Cor 7:21-22), but if they can’t, then they are to remain as a slave; but a good slave for Christ’s glory.

*In our society we don’t have slaves and masters. How are we to relate to these instructions?*

We may not have slaves and masters, but we are to use these instructions for workers and bosses.

*As a Christian working for a boss, how should we work? (Eph 6:5-7; Col 3:22-25)*

We are to work not just for our boss, but for the Lord; ie, we are to work as if serving Christ.

REFLECT: Contrast a Christian’s work ethic with a non-Christian’s. What is to be different?

*What benefit comes if a Christian worker (slave) works well for his boss (master)? (Eph 6:8)*

His earthly master may not reward him, but his heavenly Master will. He’ll receive great reward (Matt 5:12). Also, they become a credible witness of the Gospel and a good ambassador for Christ.

*What are Christian bosses (masters) called to do? (Eph 6:9)*

Just as workers are called to work well for their masters, Christian masters are to treat their workers well; ie, they are not to abuse them, but provide for them good pay and working conditions.

*What do Christian bosses and Christian workers have in common? (Eph 6:9; cf. also Eph 5:30)*

They have the same Lord, and they are brothers/sisters of the same family; God’s family.

How does Eph 5:21 serve to summarise the section from Eph 5:22 to 6:9?

If we are in Christ, whether we are a wife or husband, child or parent, a slave or master, we are to serve one another out of reverence for Christ. As we do, we will be serving the Lord Christ for His glory.

**Summary:** In Christ, be subject to one another (Eph 5:21); whatever our status in life might be.

## 17. A Life of Spiritual Warfare

**Review:** *How should children and parents live before Christ? (Eph 6:1-4)*

Children are to obey their parents, and parents (especially fathers) are to disciple their children well.

*How should slaves and masters (or workers and bosses) live before Christ? (Eph 6:5-9)*

Slaves are to serve their masters, and masters are to serve their slaves, as if serving Christ.

### The Spiritual Battle (Eph 6:10-13)

*After instructing us in how we should live as Christ's church, and how we should live in our relationships, what are we confronted about as we live for Christ? (Eph 6:10-12)*

We need to be aware of the spiritual warfare we are engaged in.

*Why does Paul need to remind us of the spiritual warfare we are in? (cf. also 2 Cor 2:11)*

In our western society, we tend to neglect or forget about the spiritual warfare we are engaged in.

*What do we learn about our enemy from Eph 6:11-12 as well as Rev 12:17 and 1 Peter 5:8?*

Satan is a schemer – he's out to trip us up. He seeks to destroy us and intimidate us (like a roaring lion). He rules over this fallen world. He is at war with Christ and His people, and he uses his army of demons as well as the people of this fallen world to try and destroy Christ's people.

*Why do we need a thorough knowledge of the enemy and an understanding of his schemes?*

We will not take serious the need to be prepared for the spiritual battle that we are engaged in.

*What is the first thing we are to do as we engage against Satan? How do we do this? (Eph 6:10)*

We are to be "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power". We do not stand against Satan by our own power, or even by some spiritual gift. It is in Christ's power alone that we stand. We have His power when we are walking in His Spirit; ie, when we are committed to serve Christ and to do His will.

*Twice Paul tells us to put on the armour of God. Four times he tells us what this does. What is it?*

The armour of God enables us to **STAND** against Satan. Cf: A soldier in battle needed to stand. Without this right position, he was not able to engage the enemy or defend himself. It's the same with us.

*Paul mentions in Eph 6:13 about standing our ground in the "day of evil". What "day" is this?*

They are particular times and days when we are under attack from Satan. We experience many days where things are "quiet". But Satan will attack us from time to time and we need to be ready. Cf. Jesus was tempted after His baptism, but it didn't end there. The devil looked for another time (Luke 4:13).

### The Armour of God (Eph 6:14-17)

*Paul highlights five physical pieces from a Roman soldier's armour as a picture of the spiritual armour we need to stand against Satan. What's the first piece? What does it stand for? (Eph 6:14)*

The first piece is the belt. For a soldier it held everything together. Our belt is TRUTH. We need to be truthful, as well as live by the truth – God's truth. Truth will hold everything together.

*In the second half of Eph 6:14, what is the second piece of armour? What does this stand for?*

The second piece is the breastplate. It protected a soldier's vital organs, like the heart. Our breastplate is RIGHTEOUSNESS. We need to live righteously in order to protect our heart from desire and temptation.

*What is the third piece of armour? What does this stand for? (Eph 6:15)*

The third piece is boots. It enabled a soldier to walk and stand. Our boots are the GOSPEL. We need to be about the GOSPEL – looking for opportunities to go and share the message of peace and hope with others, and to stand for the Gospel. Without this, we will waste our life and be defeated by Satan.

*What is the fourth piece of armour? What does this stand for? (Eph 6:16)*

The fourth piece is the shield. It protected a soldier from arrows or spears. Our shield is FAITH in God. By it we extinguish arrows from Satan such as doubt, or the lack of assurance that we are forgiven, etc.

*What is the fifth piece of the armour? What does this stand for? (Eph 6:17a; cf. also 1 Thess 5:8)*

The fifth piece is the helmet. It protected the head. Our helmet is our HOPE – the hope of salvation. It protects our mind from being distracted with the temporal things of this world.

*The final part of our armour is for offense. What is it? What does this stand for? (Eph 6:17)*

For a Roman soldier it was a sword. Our sword is the WORD OF GOD. With it, we are able to cut down the lies of our enemy, like Jesus did when He was tempted (cf. Matt 4:1-10).

**REFLECT:** *Do you know God's Word well enough to defeat Satan's lies? How could you improve this?*

We need to read and meditate and even memorise God's word and learn to use it well.

**Summary:** Without the armour of God we will not be able to stand against Satan. So, put it on!

## 18. A Life of Prayer and Peace

**Review:** *As we live in this fallen world, what are we engaged in as Christians? (Eph 6:10-13)*

We are engaged in spiritual warfare. Satan will oppose us and scheme against us.

*What must we do to stand against Satan? (Eph 6:10-11, 14-17)*

We must be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power, and we must put on the full armour of God.

### Pray Always (Eph 6:18-20)

*In the context of spiritual warfare, what does Paul go on to command us to do in Eph 6:18?*

Paul commands us to pray – to pray and to keep on praying; ie, pray always (cf. 1 Thess 5:17).

*What instructions are specifically given for prayer by Paul in Eph 6:18?*

We need to pray on all occasions – whether we feel strong in Christ, or whether we are being tempted; whether we are full of faith, or whether we are struggling with doubt, etc. We need to be alert, being aware of what’s happening with our heart and mind - and pray. We need to pray for God’s people as together we engage in spiritual warfare and seek to stand for Christ against Satan.

*What did Jesus teach us in regard to temptation (spiritual warfare) and prayer? (Matt 26:41)*

We need to be constantly watching and praying. We need to watch ourselves as we have wayward hearts, and we need to watch each other in love, because we have a tendency to go astray. How true it is that the spirit is willing, but our flesh (fallen nature) is weak (cf. also Matt 6:13).

*What do you think it means to pray in the Spirit? (Eph 6:18; cf. also Eph 5:18 and Rom 8:9)*

To pray in the Spirit means to pray with the Holy Spirit leading us, and not ourselves leading us. It’s to pray for God’s kingdom to come and God’s will to be done, rather than our kingdom to come and our will to be done. We pray in the Spirit when we continue to allow God’s Spirit to fill us (Eph 5:18).

**REFLECT:** When we are in the Spirit, the Spirit also intercedes for us (Rom 8:26-27). How does He intercede? How does that make you feel about prayer?

*In Eph 6:19, what also does Paul request? Why?*

He requests that they pray for him. This is because Paul was conscious that Gospel ministry can only be done effectively as God gives us the words (Mark 13:11), as well as the boldness to speak (Acts 4:31).

*As Paul asked for prayer, how did he view himself? (Eph 6:20)*

He calls himself and “ambassador in chains”. He clearly saw himself as an “ambassador for Christ” (2 Cor 5:20); representing and speaking for Christ our king. Whether he was in chains or free, he was first and foremost an ambassador for Christ.

**REFLECT:** How do you view yourself? Do you see your main position in life as an ambassador for Christ?

### Peace, Love and Grace (Eph 6:21-24)

*What do we learn in Eph 6:21-22 about Paul’s heart toward a fellow Gospel worker?*

Paul had a real love and appreciation for fellow Gospel workers. He called Tychicus a “dear brother and faithful servant”. He could trust him to go and encourage the Ephesians. We are not in competition with each other but are to rely on one another and work together for Christ’s Gospel and God’s kingdom.

*As we come to the end of Ephesians, what does Paul desire for the Ephesians? (Eph 6:23)*

He desires for them to know God’s peace and love in the midst of spiritual warfare. God’s peace is beyond comprehension (Phil 4:7) and His love is great (Eph 2:4). They flow from our Father and Jesus.

*How should we understand the phrase “love with faith” in Eph 6:23?*

The Greek word for “with” can be translated “in the midst of”; ie, in the midst of having faith in God the Father and the Lord Jesus, we experience God’s peace and love. Thus, they come to us through faith.

*What is the very last thing Paul writes about in his letter to the Ephesians? Why? (Eph 6:24)*

He tells them about grace. Grace is the key to the Gospel and God’s dealings with us through Christ. God saved us to “the praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph 1:6); we have been saved by grace (Eph 2:8); we have been gifted by God’s grace (Eph 4:7). The whole Christian life comes to us by God’s grace through Christ.

*Although all can receive God’s grace through Jesus, who truly experience it in full? (Eph 6:24)*

God’s grace is experienced by all “who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love”. Only those who have trusted in Jesus and who love Him dearly, know and experience the richness of God’s grace.

**REFLECT:** How does God’s grace affect the way you view and approach God, and the way you live life?

**Summary:** Pray always, and by faith in God and love for Christ, know God’s peace, love and grace.

