



Ephesians

God's eternal plan to
unite all things in Christ

Key Themes

Purpose of the letter – communicate and emphasize God’s eternal plan to unite all things in Christ.

Grace, identity, and unity are interlocking themes:

- grace assigns identity
- identity encourages unity
- unity is evidence grace and identity have taken root

Prayer – an indispensable tool in our arsenal

- to and in the Spirit for wisdom and insight
- for Christ to come into our hearts
- for endurance and deliverance for ourselves and our brothers

“But God . . .”

Grace: The Foundation of the Christian Life

Grace is introduced in Ephesians 1

“He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world . . . to the praise of the glory of His grace that He has freely bestowed on us . . .” **(1:4-6).**

Grace is explained Ephesians 2

- Humanity’s hopeless condition contrasted with **“But God...”** (2:4–5).
- Salvation is **by grace through faith, not works** (2:8–9).
- Grace levels the ground for all believers

What do you do for a living?

Identity: Who We Are in Christ

1. Identity bestowed; Not earned

- blessings given freely
 - Adoption (1:5)
 - Redemption (1:7)
 - Sealed by the Spirit (1:13)
- unconditional.
- not performance-based.

What do you do for a living?

2. The Mystery of our identity -- Eph. 3:4-6

“ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

What do you do for a living?

3. Identity assures Purpose

“For we are God’s handiwork, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Eph. 2:10).

Calling leads to identity; our purpose is methodically exposed within the body.

Unity

- **Equal footing:**

Since all believers stand equally before God, every ethnic, social, and spiritual barrier collapses.

Christ **destroyed the dividing wall of hostility** between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14).

- **One new humanity:**

“ . . . by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself **one new humanity** out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he **put to death their hostility.**”

Eph. 2:15–16

Unity

- **Believers become:**

Fellow citizens; members of God's household; a temple joined together (Eph. 2:19–22)

- The church's **unity** displays God's **manifold wisdom** to the heavenly realms.
(Eph. 3:10).
- **Unity** is both a **command** and a **destination** (Eph. 4:3, 4:13).

Unity

The Language of Unity in Eph, 4:4-6

- One body
- One Spirit
- One hope
- One Lord
- One faith
- One baptism
- One God and Father

Unity

Unity is portrayed as an **ongoing process** –

“*In him* the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.
²² And *in him* you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Eph. 2:21–22 (NIV)

“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the **unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:11–13 (NASB 95)

Paul's Prayer for His Brothers

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

¹⁶ I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Eph. 3:14–21 (NIV)

Behavior of the Believer

Ephesians 4:2–3 — Lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”.

Ephesians 4:17 — "Walk no longer as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds".

Ephesians 4:22–24 — "Put off your old self... be renewed in the spirit of your minds... and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness".

Ephesians 5:6–8 — "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light".

Unity in the home

**“... always giving thanks to God the Father for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
21 and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Eph. 5:20–21**

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church". (vv.5:22–23)

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her". (v.25)

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right". (v. 6:1)

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (v. 6:4)

Unity in the Workplace

⁵ Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Ephesians 6:5–9 (ESV)

Spiritual Warfare

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places". Eph. 6:11–12

With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and petitions for all the saints. Eph 6:18

"Now to him who is **able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,** according to his power that is at work within us . . ." Eph. 3:20-21

Highlights of Ephesians

- The radical nature of divine grace; “BUT God . . .”
- Identity: tension between positional truth and practical reality
“in Him”; union with Christ
- God’s purpose: unite heaven and earth; restore harmony
- Our new identity should drive a new behavior; strive for unity
with others, within our homes, within the workplace
- Put on the full armor of God
Pray for strength and deliverance
Pray for our brothers