



One: A Study of Ephesians

Introduction to Ephesians

Ephesians 1:1-2

Summary:

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is an anthem to the sovereign grace of God displayed toward sinners in Christ. It contains some of the worst news ("you were dead in your trespasses and sins") and best news ("but God . . . Made us alive with Christ") in all of Scripture. In view of this grace, Paul calls believers to "live worthy of the calling" we have received. One expression of this life is found in the context of a local church. Many Christians living in North America treat their relationship with the church as one of hopping, shopping, taste testing and playing the field. They become church floaters, never putting down roots, never committing. Others give up and stay home. Paul leaves no room for Christians to follow either pattern. God's family is a holy temple for the Lord, the dwelling where God lives, and God's masterpiece. God has blessed, loved and chosen us individually. Why would He view us collectively any less significantly? We become ONE in Christ both with the Father and with each other. We are the church in all its glory and weakness. We are the body of Christ - called to display God's wisdom as we follow the Spirit to do the work of Christ. Church is not optional. It is who we are not where we go. (CSB Study Bible & The Way NLT)

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, wrote the letter to the Ephesians. He may have written it at about the same time as he wrote Colossians and Philemon from prison, most likely in Rome.

Ephesus was one of the largest and most impressive cities in the ancient world. It was positioned at an intersection of major trade routes in a significant political, religious and commercial center of Asia Minor. The city played a significant role in the early spread of Christianity.

Paul traveled through Ephesus toward the end of his second missionary journey. (AD 52)

Paul returns to Ephesus for a 2 1/2 year ministry. (AD 54)

Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (AD 56)

Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians (AD 61)

Of the 155 verses in Ephesians, over half contain identical expressions to those in Colossians. Ephesians presents a bigger finished picture that is meditative, instructive and expansive.

Paul writes of the oneness of Jewish and Gentile believers. Becoming one in Christ. Oneness is not possible without love. The phrase "in Christ" is found almost 30 times in the letter.

The Symmetry of Ephesians
Chapters 1-3 and Chapters 4-6
Spiritual Wealth - Spiritual Walk
Position of Believers - Practice of Believers
Doctrine - Duty
Belief - Behavior
Heritage in Christ - Life in Christ
Work of Christ in Believers - Work of Christ Through Believers

"Above all, this is a letter of encouragement and admonition, written to remind believers of their immeasurable blessings in Jesus Christ; and not only to be thankful for those blessings, but also to live in a manner worthy of them. Despite, and partly even because of, a Christian's great blessings in Jesus Christ, he is sure to be tempted by Satan to self-satisfaction and complacency."
- John MacArthur

"Paul presented the gift of God in Christ and the benefits we receive so clearly that we cannot help but ask ourselves if our lives reflect that reality as they should." - Charles Swindoll

Four of the many themes found in Ephesians.

1. The Person of Christ
2. The Purpose of the Church
3. The Power of the Holy Spirit
4. The Purity of the Faith Walk

There are two primary themes in Ephesians

1. Work of Christ.
2. Walk In Christ.

Life Application Questions

1. Why is context important to understanding the Word of God? (Who, Where, Why, What?)
2. What stands out to you about the city of Ephesus and/or the overview of the Letter to the Ephesians?
3. Why was Ephesus important to Paul? Why is this letter important to the church today?
4. Which are you more interested in: a) What God has done for us in Christ or b) What God expects for us to do together unified with Christ and other believers?
5. Share verses or themes from Ephesians that you already know.
6. What was your life like before you met Christ? How did you come to know Christ as the Son of God and Savior of your life? What impact does your faith have on your life today and those you know and love?
7. PRAY: Thank the Lord for preserving His Word for His Glory and for our benefit. Thank Him for His plan of redemption and unity in Christ. Ask the Lord to speak to you and to the church during this study of Ephesians.