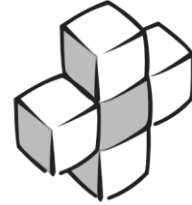




SMACC

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



Bible Study Series:

Ephesians



Our Mission:

To glorify God together in response to his grace

by making disciples of Jesus Christ

About These Studies

These studies were written by various SMACC leaders for use among young working adults and university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

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Table of Contents

Study 1: "Spiritual Blessings" (Ephesians 1:1-14)	3
Study 2: "Only By God's Grace" (Ephesians 1:15-2:10)	6
Study 3: "A New Community" (Ephesians 2:11-22)	10
Study 4: "Unveiling of the Mystery" (Ephesians 3:1-13)	14
Study 5: "Seeking the Fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-21)	17
Study 6: "Unity of the Body" (Ephesians 4:1-16)	20
Study 7: "A New Life" (Ephesians 4:17-32)	23
Study 8: "Be Careful How You Walk" (Ephesians 5:1-21)	26
Study 9: "Don't Play Play With Marriage" (Ephesians 5:22-33)	29
Study 10: "Living under the Lordship of Christ" (Ephesians 6:1-9)	32
Study 11: "Spiritual Warfare" (Ephesians 6:10-24)	37
Appendix: Ephesians Application Sheet	40

Study 1: “Spiritual Blessings” (Ephesians 1:1-14)

Getting started

When was the last time you received a gift or were chosen for something important? How did you feel?

- Purpose of the introduction question is to set the tone for what it means to be chosen/given something of value
- Ties to the application points of the study

Context

1. Who wrote this letter and who was it addressed to?

- Draw attention to the fact that Ephesians are faithful believers if no one catches this, v1 is important as it sets the scene for the rest of the letter and future studies

Digging in

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. List down all the spiritual blessings that Paul mentions.

- Refer to the phrases highlighted in yellow for the main blessings that Paul talks about in this portion of the letter
- This would be a good point for everyone to break up into pairs/small groups, interactive point of the study

* Suggested follow-up: Have the Ephesians obtained all these blessings yet?

- If need be, draw attention to v11-14; the Ephesians and Paul “have obtained an inheritance” but they were also “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.”

- May be helpful to explain biblical timeline and overlap of the ages

- Otherwise, talk about how because there is an inheritance that awaits them, they have incentive to remain faithful as they have been

4. What do the following words mean?

- a. Holy - set apart, made different from
- b. Blameless - unable to find fault in someone, above reproach
- c. Predestined - chosen, planned from the beginning
- d. Adopted – brought into one’s family, raised as one’s own
- e. Redeemed – atonement, to release someone from something, to gain possession of something by exchange (not the same as “free”, think of redeeming gifts with a voucher)
- f. Sealed – secure, confirmation of something, to make something official (like signing a contract or obtaining a royal stamp/stamp of approval)

- It is good if the bulk of the time used to explore the meaning of the text is concentrated here, as these words highlight what exactly we have received from God and the manner which we received it in
- Another chance to break up into pairs/small groups and discuss

* Suggested follow-up: What do these words reveal about the blessings God has given us?

- We have done nothing to deserve the blessings God lavishes upon us; predestination, adoption and redemption highlight this (v4)
- Allow the group to explain what each of these words mean to them personally and flesh out definitions only if necessary

5. What does “the mystery of his will” refer to? (v9)

- Important to initiate discussion and ask what people think God’s will is, allow others to hear from each other
- Verses 9-10 and 11-12 make God’s will explicit; He wants to unite all things in Jesus, so that He will be glorified

* Suggested follow-up: What is at the centre of God’s will?

- This is a point where the focus should shift from us being at the centre to God being at the centre, we are recipients of spiritual blessings but it is ultimately for God’s glory

6. What does it mean to be “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”? (v13-14)

- Question acts mainly as a platform for discussion about the role of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of future inheritance in God
- It is alright if we do not provide a strict definition of what this means at this point in the series, how the Spirit works in God’s people will be expanded upon in future studies and provides a “cliff-hanger” for curious people

- Hint to the following references in the letter if it feels discussion is going off tangent: Eph 1:17-21, 2:18-22, 3:4-6, 4:1-4, 5:18-21

* Spend as much time as you can in application! Ideally, 70% of time should be spent exploring the passage and 30% of time should be spent applying and praying!

Application

7. Knowing you have received spiritual blessings from God, what can you do to glorify God now?
8. How have you not been putting God at the centre of your life?
9. How can you encourage others to stand firm until they obtain their inheritance from God?

Prayer

10. What can you be praying for after today's study?

Study 2: “Only By God’s Grace” (Ephesians 1:15–2:10)

Getting started

1. Imagine that someone gave you a lottery ticket as a gift, knowing full well that it would be the winning ticket to a billion-ringgit prize. How would it change your life?

Context/Recap

Ephesians, a letter by Paul, was written while he was imprisoned in Rome and addresses the faithful believers in the churches in Ephesus and the surrounding regions. In Ephesians 1:1-14, Paul reminds the Ephesians of God’s spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ - so that all things will be united in Christ to the praise of His glorious grace. Paul assures them that their inheritance is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 1:15-2:10

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. Why does Paul thank God for the church in Ephesus?

Because he has heard of their faith in Jesus and their love towards all the saints.

Helpful follow-up question: Why is this important? Why is Paul thankful for this?

As we move on from Eph 1:1-14, we have seen that God has made known the mystery of his will through Christ and that the Ephesians have believed in him through hearing the word of truth/the gospel (v13) (HEAD). However, Paul is thankful for the genuine conviction of their HEARTS as they put their faith in Jesus and for their love for one another (HEART) which are perhaps seen through their actions (HANDS). Their conviction is genuine as it is seen in all 3 areas – head, heart and hands.

Optional follow up question or if people ask: What does it mean to pray unceasingly?

· It doesn't mean literally 24/7 praying for them but rather to remember the Ephesians constantly in his prayer. That means praying for them over and over again and doing that often. This shows constant dependence on God in prayer.

· It also shows how Paul never gave up on praying for them or grew complacent. He never slowed down, never stopped even as the church remained faithful (not just when they are struggling as Christians).

Ephesians 1:15-23

4. What does he hope that God will grant the Ephesians?

· He prays for wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him (HEAD), having the eyes of their hearts enlightened (HEART) so that they know:

- i. The hope to which he has called them
- ii. The riches of his inheritance in the saints
- iii. Immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe

5. What does Paul mean when he prays for these things?

Try to tie back to last week's study!

For i and ii,

- Follow up Q: What is the hope to which He has called them? The hope we have in Christ (v12).
- Follow up Q: What is the inheritance in the saints? The inheritance (eternal life) that we have obtained having been predestined (v11).

For iii, (Hint: What is interesting about the way Paul describes God's power and what He has done?)

- Follow up Q: What is this immeasurable great power and what does it have to do w the Ephesians and us?

· Take note of the language Paul uses here – RICHES of His glorious inheritance (v18), IMMEASURABLE GREATNESS of his power (v19), GREAT MIGHT (v19).

· Why does he take time to talk about who God is in the middle of praying for them? Paul prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, the same God the Father that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly places, put all things under his feet and has made Jesus FAR GREATER THAN ALL POWER AND AUTHORITY, that same God that has power and authority to do all that has also raised us from the dead. (2:6) He also works in us to help us in our unbelief and to hold fast to the gospel through His Holy Spirit whilst in the here and now. (1:13-14)

· We can see that as God puts Christ as head over all things and of the church, he fills all things with himself.

LEADER'S NOTES: So far, we have seen how God has chosen his people (for the purpose of the praise of His glorious grace) and have enabled people to have faith in Christ and to love others. This is where the study gets a bit more personal. Tread w caution but be as straightforward as possible.

Ephesians 2:1-10

6. What does Paul mean by “we were dead in our trespasses” (Chapter 2:1-4)?
 Paul doesn't say that we were SICK/UNHEALTHY in sin. Sickness can be treated, you can choose to take medication. But rather, we were DEAD in sin. Dead people can't do anything, they can't save themselves, they can't choose not to sin. That's their default mode - helpless. Our default mode was helpless too – in sin. Our very nature was to reject God.

7. How has God shown us the immeasurable riches of His grace (2:7)?
 Despite us rejecting him and denying him of His rightful rule over our lives, in his love, he showed us mercy and grace by saving us from our sins by sacrificing his perfect and blameless son, Jesus, and enabling us to have faith in Him. Now we can be seated with Him in heaven.

8. What does it mean for us to be “alive in Christ”? (cf. Romans 6:1-14)
 “Like the rest of mankind” (2:3)– Shows an element of God establishing a holy nation for himself. We are UNLIKE the rest of mankind. Thus, we are to act differently. We have been crucified with Christ, such that sin and death is no longer our master. But not only did we die w Christ, but we have also been raised with him – to live a life that is so new and different that Paul considers it a new creation.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

9. Can we boast in our works? Why or why not? (cf. Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Bringing Things Together

10. Fill in the following summary table

Our state	Dead to Sin	Alive in Christ
Who is our master?	Satan - Course of this world - Prince of the power of the air (referring to the spirit of the world being Satanic) - Spirit ruling over the sons of disobedience	God

We are by nature?	Children of wrath	Children of God
How are we living?	Living in the passion of our flesh, carrying out desires of the body and mind	Living in Christ for good works that glorify God (seen in v10 as God has predetermined)
What is our destiny?	Eternal wrath/condemnation/death (v3)	Eternal life/communion w God

Application

11. Reflect on your answer to the launch question. What is our response towards God's gift of eternal life to us?

There are really only two ways to live. Direct them back to the summary table again. Do we choose eternal life in Christ or eternal condemnation?

12. Read Ephesians 2:10 again. How does this look like practically?

Helpful follow up question: What do good works mean? When we think about good works, we think about initiatives that don't necessarily need God and the gospel.

13. Have we been walking this way? How can we pray to be more diligent in it?

If you have da guts, feel free to ask: HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS TO YOU ACTUALLY?

Study 3: “A New Community” (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Theme: Paul reminds the Gentiles that they were excluded from relationship with God, but are now united with the Jews as one man, through the blood of Christ.

Aim: We are united with all those who have been saved through Christ so we should reflect this in the way we treat and relate to one another. Our status before God is also entirely dependent on Christ's work!

Supporting Truths

§ Formerly, the Gentiles were cut off from God's people, in particular the covenant promises, and so were far from God.

§ Reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles is achieved at the cross where Jesus abolishes the law with its commandments and creates a new humanity.

§ Both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God the same way through the death of Jesus and the work of the Spirit.

§ The church is the fulfillment of the temple as God dwells in them by his Spirit.

Objectives

By the end of this study students will:

§ Understand that reconciliation between Jew and Gentile and people and God has been achieved through the death of Jesus and is manifest in the church.

§ Be challenged to live at peace with one another accepting everyone to be a part of the church.

§ Know that the church is the fulfillment of the Old Testament temple because God dwells in his people by his Holy Spirit that he has given them.

Applications

Students should:

§ Put their trust in Jesus' death and become a part of the new humanity in Christ that has its citizenship in heaven.

§ Welcome everyone to be a part of the church and live at peace with them because we have been united in Christ.

Passage Structure

v11-13: Gentiles were formerly cut off from God's people and far from God but now have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

v14-15: God made peace between Jews and Gentiles through the death of Jesus which abolished the law with its commandments and creating a new humanity in Christ.

v16-18: Both Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled to God through the death of Jesus and the work of the Spirit.

v19-22: God's people are built together into a temple that is indwelt by God by his Spirit.

Passage Notes

- In this chapter, Paul describes the amazing transformation that God has brought about in believers, firstly in reconciling us to himself (v1-10), and secondly reconciling us to each other (v11-22)
- The sign of being one of God's people was circumcision (v11). This traced back to Genesis 17 where circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:11) to make his name great (17:4-5), make him into a great nation (17:6), and give them the land of Canaan (17:8). Everyone who was part of God's people was to be circumcised (17:10-13) and anyone who was not was to be cut off from amongst God's people (17:14).
- It was the nation of Israel that God had adopted as his own. It was this nation who had God's law, the ability to relate to him and were custodians of God's promises to Abraham, such as to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Gentiles (non-Jews) being not a part of Israel and not circumcised, were excluded from being God's people, leaving them without hope and without God (v11-12). The Jews were near to God, but the Gentiles were far from him (v13).
- Because the Jews were God's people and the Gentiles were not, great hostility existed between them. Even though Israel was meant to be a light to all the nations and bring blessing to them, they instead looked down upon them with contempt because they did not follow God's law. As a result, the Gentiles also despised the Jews.
- But through his death, Jesus brought peace between these two parties (v14). Because of his death the Gentiles could be saved and included amongst God's people (v13). The wall that divided Jews and Gentiles was torn down as the law with its commandments was abolished (v15).
- He did this by creating a whole new humanity (v15) in which both Jews and Gentiles were reconciled to God by his death on the cross (v16). Now, both Jew and Gentile could call on the name of Jesus, be saved, and become a part of God's people. In doing so, they were reconciled to one another (v16). Through Jesus, both Jew and Gentile now have access to God the Father, by the Spirit (v17-18).
- This means that now Gentiles are fellow citizens with the Jews as God's people (v19) and members of God's family (v19). As the people of God, they are likened to a temple, with the apostles forming the foundation, Christ being the Cornerstone which determines the shape of the building (v21) and the rest of God's people being the bricks and mortar (v22).
- The physical temple building of the Old Testament in Jerusalem has been replaced by God's people who have become a dwelling for God's Spirit (v22).

Getting started

1. Why is that people from different backgrounds, cultures and races find it so hard to get along? Why do attempts at uniting different people often fail?

Context/Recap

So far, we have seen that God has given every spiritual blessing to those who trust in Jesus. We have learnt that God's eternal plan for the universe is to unite everything under the rule of Jesus. Even though we were dead in sin, we were saved by God's grace through the death of Jesus. Today, we will learn that not only does Jesus' death reconcile us so we are at peace with God, but it also brings us peace with one another. No matter what nation or culture we are from we can be part of God's people and citizens of heaven.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. 'Therefore' (v11) – means Paul is giving the Ephesians an instruction based on what he has already written. How does this passage relate to the salvation Paul has described in 2:1-10?

4. What does Paul want the Ephesians to remember? Why do you think Paul wants them to remember this?

5. Things change significantly from verse 13 onwards! Paul proudly announces that God brings an end to the great division by giving us hope and help.

a. What does it mean that Christ has become “our peace”? (v. 14)

b. What kind of peace has Jesus brought?

c. What is the “dividing wall of hostility” that separated Jew and Gentiles? How has it been abolished?

d. Do you have to be Jewish to be saved and be one of God’s people? Why? Why not?

6. What difference does Jesus make to Gentiles like us who were once cut off from Christ? (compare verses 11-12 and verse 19-22)

7. What do we learn about God's house (the church) from vs20-22? How might this affect the way we treat one another?
8. How would you summarise the central message of these verses?
9. Why is it that only the cross unites believers from different backgrounds, cultures, and races?

Application

10. What assurances can we take from this passage concerning our status as Christians?
11. Is there anyone whom God does not welcome into his church? Why?
12. Do we continue to see divisions within the church or UCF? What does this passage challenge us to do about those divisions?
13. How can we ensure we are built on the foundation of the apostles?

Prayer

14. What can we thank God for in the light of this study? What can we pray?

Study 4: “Unveiling of the Mystery” (Ephesians 3:1-13)

Getting started

1. When was the last time you knew about an important secret that you wanted to tell everyone around you? What was the secret?

Context/Recap

So far, we saw Paul has written a letter to the Ephesians while he is imprisoned in Rome. He reminded them of God’s spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ to them even when they were dead in our sins. We also learnt that we are now at peace with God and with one another through Jesus’s blood.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
3:1-4	Paul’s Apostolic Ministry
3:5-6	The Gospel Mystery Unveiled
3:7-11	Paul’s mission to bring this gospel mystery to the Gentiles
3:12-13	Do not lose heart as we have the confidence in God’s eternal purpose realized in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 3:1-4

3. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter? And why is Paul in that situation? What does it mean when Paul says he is the prisoner of Jesus?

Paul was in a prison in Rome, he was a prisoner of Rome for about 4 years. He did not call himself the prisoner of the Romans but the prisoner of Jesus recognising that Jesus is his master and he is the steward of God. He is in prison because he was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles).

4. What does a steward do?

A steward is someone who manages something on behalf of someone. The thing does not belong to him but he has it for a period of time. And he has the duty to manage it well and let it increase and prosper.

5. What did Paul receive and what was his role as the steward of God’s grace? (Col 1:26-27)

Paul has received the revelation of the mystery of Christ. Which is Christ has come to unify the Jews and Gentiles in one body through the gospel which Paul has written briefly in chapter 1 of the letter. Jesus has revealed this mystery to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-7)

Ephesians 3:5-6

6. During what time was the mystery hidden?

1 Peter 1:1-12 Prophets studied and sought to know when Jesus would come but could not because it was not revealed, even the angels didn't fully understand it. The full realization of who Christ was (and what his blood has done for us) was not fully revealed to the people until after the giving of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:8-10)

7. What is the content of the mystery? (Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Cor: 12:12-13, Romans 8:14-17)

That Gentiles are now fellow heirs with the Jews who will receive all the spiritual blessings (in chapter 1) prepared by God. Gentiles and Jews are now united as one body of Christ and are now members of God's new family, and we will be glorified with Jesus one day.

Ephesians 3:7-11

8. What was Paul's duty as the minister according to the gift of God's grace?

He is bound to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles.

9. Why did Paul regard himself as the least of all the saints?

Because before Jesus revealed the mystery of the gospel to him on the road to Damascus, he not only did not believe in Jesus but he was persecuting those who believed in Jesus. He was unworthy of God's grace but deserve of God's wrath more than anyone.

10. What made the transformation of Paul possible? And what is he doing as a response?

It was entirely depending on the gift of God's grace to him, changing his heart and now he is dedicating his life to service his Master by bringing to light to everyone the mystery hidden in God for ages.

11. Why did Paul eagerly preach the mystery of the Gospel to everyone especially the Gentiles?

To make known the wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (which refers to angelic beings) and the whole host of heaven. Who in turn will also glorify God when they behold what God has done to the church (1 Peter: 1-12)

12. The unveil of God's mystery through Jesus Christ was God's eternal purpose, what does this say about God?

God's purpose doesn't change. His plan his eternal and perfect. This should give us the confidence to constantly putting our faith in Him.

Ephesians 3:12-13

13. What did Paul urge the Ephesians to do?

Paul urge them not to lose heart over what Paul is suffering for them, which is their glory.

Application

14. God's mystery was hidden for ages (even angels and prophets do not have the privilege to know the mystery) until it was fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul as the faithful steward risked his life and suffer so much to bring light of this mystery to the Gentiles (which is us).

- a. Did we cherish this mystery that was revealed to us? (through the Spirit and the Bible)

- b. As compared to Paul, do we regard receiving the gospel as the gift of God's grace?

- c. Have we been quick to lose heart when we face difficult times in our walk with God?

15. Think about what you answered in the first question, does the Gospel mystery excites and urges us to tell it to everyone around us?

Prayer

16. What can we thank God for in the light of this study? What can we pray?

Study 5: “Seeking the Fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Getting started

1. As a Christian, what do you most often find yourselves praying for?

This question is to get us thinking about what we typically prioritise in our prayers for ourselves and each other.

Context/Recap

We’ve made it about half-way through the Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. We have seen God’s grace through Christ and how it unites us all as Christians, and soon Paul will go into how we are to live with this newfound truth. But before he does, Paul has another prayer to share.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
3:14-15	Who the prayer is addressed to (God the Father)
3:16-19	Paul’s appeal to God the Father
3:20-21	The doxology

Paul’s prayer can generally be broken up into three parts. He begins with addressing the one who he prays to, followed by presenting his prayer for the Christians, and ends by giving glory to God.

Ephesians 3:14-15

3. Paul begins with, “For this reason...”. What reason is he talking about? (cf. Eph. 2:19-3:1)

Paul begins this prayer following the same idea that he begins on in 3:1. Context tells us that Paul began talking about his unique ministry to the Gentiles because Jesus work on the cross (see 2:13-17) has united both Jew and Gentile. Hence, Paul’s prayer seems to be sprung out of this wonderful truth

4. What is Paul’s position when he prays? Why do you think he does this?

He bows his knees. During Paul’s time, most people stood up to pray. Paul’s action of kneeling reveals a sense of not only humility, but reverence. It may also show a heightened feeling of intent, which seems to fit the prayer. Either way, Paul knows that the God he is praying to deserves all the reverence he can muster.

Ephesians 3:16-19

5. What does Paul pray for the Ephesians?

v16-17a	That they might be strengthened with power in their inner being so that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith.
v17b-19	That they, being rooted in love may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp the extent of Christ's love that surpasses knowledge

Note: Inner being here can be paraphrased as "in the depths of my being". The expression is synonymous with "heart".

6. What is the role of each person in the Trinity here?

The Father grants, the Spirit strengthens and Christ dwells in our hearts.

7. What does it mean to be strengthened with power in your inner being (cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27)?

This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart to grow in knowing God and in living in obedience to his commands.

8. What is strange about the statement made in verse 19?

This passage is oxymoronic; it contradicts itself. Paul prays that we would 'know' the love of Christ that 'surpasses knowledge'. This seems impossible, until we factor in verse 20 onwards.

9. In verse 19, we see that the goal of knowing the love of Christ is to be filled with all the fullness of God. What does this mean (cf. 1:22-33 and 4:13)?

To attain the stature of the fullness of Christ (individually) but this is only possible together as a functional church. The church is the fullness of Christ (cf. 1:22-23) and yet we are to strive to attain this fullness.

Ephesians 3:20-21

10. What does verse 20 remind us about God? Does this change the way we think about verse 19?

God can do far more abundantly than all we even ask or think. Paul is so confident of this fact; in verse 19 the love of God is beyond comprehension, and in verse 20 God's actions are beyond expectation or thought. A cosmic, limitless God can open our limited minds.

11. How is God glorified in verse 21?

Paul prays that God's glory be shown in the church and in Christ forevermore. Recall that in Ephesians 3:10 Paul mentions that the church reveals the manifold wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Application

12. In what ways has this passage challenged your understanding of the purpose of this fellowship?

13. In what ways has this passage challenged you to pray as a Christian?

Prayer

14. Close by praying for each other, using Ephesians 3:14-21 as a guide.

Study 6: “Unity of the Body” (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Getting started

1. Imagine you are doing a group project. What must happen for the team to work together well? What will happen if one member doesn't do their job?

Context/Recap

Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians while he was imprisoned in Rome and reminded them of God's spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ to them even while they were dead in their sins. In Ephesians, Paul also talks about how we are now at peace with God and with one another through Jesus's blood. He reveals to us the mystery of Christ: which is that Gentiles are fellow partakers in the gospel.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 4:1-16.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
1-6	Maintain unity and peace as we have been united in Christ
7-10	We have been given gifts to serve
11-13	The body is given teachers to equip the church for the work of ministry
14-16	A mature church is one that isn't thrown by deceitful doctrines and builds itself up in love

Ephesians 4:1-6

3. What is the calling we have received? (Eph. 2:11-18)

It is the call to be at peace with God and with one another. At one point we were separated from God and each other (2:11-12) but have been brought near by the blood of Christ (2:13-16). Diagram shows peace with God is found in Christ, leading to peace between Jew and gentile (each other) – can be drawn out

4. How does Paul call the Ephesians to live with one another?

He wants them to live “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” – meaning to take every effort to maintain unity. Why? – v4-6: because through the Gospel we have been united to Christ and with one another.

5. What things could cause us to divide against one another?

The answer for this question may vary largely. However, Eph 4:17 – 5:14 addresses 4 reasons.

Pride – you think you are better than you are

Arrogance – feeling self-important and showing contempt for others

Selfishness – Being concerned about your own interests, needs and wishes while ignoring others

Falsehood – Intentionally saying something untrue

6. How can we avoid these divisions?

v2: by being humble, gentle, patient and being with one another with love.

7. How do we live at peace with one another:

a) During congregational service?

b) While serving on the same team with others?

c) During the regular week outside of church?

Ephesians 4:7-10

8. Who has been given gifts?

v7: each one of us. Not some people. Not anyone is left out of God's generosity. Each one of us who is in Jesus Christ is gifted.

Ephesians 4:11-13

9. What are the specific gifts Paul mentioned in v11? What is their role?

Their role is to equip the saints for work of service, which leads to the building up of the church to maturity.

10. Who does the work of ministry? Do we often think of church like that?

The saints (you and I) are the ones that do the work of ministry. Sometimes we go to church and all we would want to do is be a sponge and absorb all that we can. Only the people on duty or speaking or leading are serving, but not us. That is incorrect: the church is like a body where every person has a role to play.

11. In what ways can we use our gifts and perform the work of ministry in:

a) Our community?

b) Church?

c) During the rest of the week?

going out for dinners with each other, offer to read the bible together, pray for a person, help people with transport, speak to friends and family about Jesus

12. What does God want his people to be like?

a) How can we help ourselves grow towards maturity?

read the bible and pray regularly, attend UCF and church, serve others and not focus on ourselves, attend an equip course, have an older mentor

b) How can we help others grow toward maturity?

read or do one to ones with another Christian, encourage others to attend church or bible study regularly, work at being able to speak about Jesus in your daily conversations

Ephesians 4:14-16

13. What does a mature church look like?

a) It does not get led astray by false doctrine (v14)

b) It will speak the truth in love (v15)

c) Each part does their work (v16)

14. Why is truth AND love important in our speech? What if we don't have either one?

Both of these characteristics of our speech are very important. If we speak the truth, but we don't speak in a loving way, we are likely to hurt someone, or they might not listen to what we say. Our speech is too hard and harsh. If we speak lovingly, but don't say the truth, then we will mislead people. We might just tell them what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear. Either way, if our speech lacks truth or love it will be unhelpful for the listener.

Prayer

15. Pray for one another, especially in light of the passage.

Study 7: “A New Life” (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Getting started

1. What is the purpose or goal of your life? (i.e. What motivates you as you live your life every day?)

Context

In last week study, we saw that Paul urges us to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, because through the Gospel we have been united to Christ and with one another. We should avoid division by being humble, gentle, patient and being with one another with love.

We also saw that each one of us is to be equipped to do the work of ministry to build up the body of Christ. The goal is the unity and maturity of our church, that we may resist false doctrine. We do this by speaking the truth to one another in love.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 4:17-32.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
17-19	Stop living as your old self.
20-24	But rather live a new self as you learned Christ.
25-32	Live out the Christ-likenes

Ephesians 4:17-24

3. Paul insist the Ephesians must no longer live like the Gentiles. How does Paul describe the Gentiles?
What is the key problem with their way of life?
 - Their minds are futile: they are being ignorant/ not being able to understand about the life that God intended us to live.
 - They become callous (heartless), living their lives according to sensuality and impurity (follow desire and live up sinful/immoral lifestyle).
 - Key problem: The hardness of their heart against God - which is exhibited in a self-centred way of life. This is at the heart of sin. Adam and Eve wanted to take the place of God. They wanted to be the ones who decided what is good and bad, right and wrong.
4. In what ways are people in our society like this?

- Our society teaches us the idea that being happy is the most important thing in our lives, we should pursue our happiness as we live our lives.
- Society also teaches us to aim for successfulness in lives, strive for excellence in our career, get the best material possessions like luxurious houses, cars, etc
- For the sake of these, many people are willing to lower down their moral standards. E.g. People are willing to slander their competitors in career, people being sexually immoral to fulfil their desire, people stealing their company resources for their own usage. This all exhibits a self-centred way of thinking and living.

5. Why should the Ephesians live differently from the Gentiles?

- Because they have learned Christ: hearing about him and being taught the truth. (v20-21)
- From hearing the gospel and learning about God, it will transform the way we live our lives.
- Christ should be the focus of how we live our lives instead of our sinful desire

6. How should the Ephesians live instead?

- Put off old self (our old lifestyle) which is corrupt because of our sinful desire.
- Transform our minds (no longer think according to our sinful desire, but according to the truth)
- Put on new self (new lifestyle) created by God in His likeness, which is living in God's righteousness and holiness. (Live it out!)
- The life of Christ becomes our example because it is him that we are growing up into (4:13). Christ is the image of God and we are to bear his likeness.

Ephesians 4:25-32

7. Paul gives many examples of how the old way of living is different from the new. Use the following table to examine them.

8.

Verses	NOT...	BUT...	Reason
4:25	Speaking falsehood	Speak the truth with neighbour	We are members of one another
4:26	Sinful anger	Sorting out disputes quickly	Give no opportunity to the devil
4:28	Stealing	Honest work	We are meant to help those in need
4:29	Corrupting talk	Saying things that is good for building up	Give grace to those who hear what we say
4:30	Grieve the Holy Spirit	-	By him we were sealed for the day of redemption

4:31-32	Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and slander	Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another	God in Christ forgave you
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9. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." (v30). What does this verse tell you about the Holy Spirit?
- The Spirit, who is a person not a "force" and can therefore be upset or grieved.
 - He is not happy with "corrupting talk" which destroys the unity he is trying to build amongst us.
 - To please him we should live out whole lives in holiness just as we were created in Christ to do (v24) as God's unified people reconciled to God and to one another.

10. What do all the aspects of the 'new self' have in common?
- They are all from God's character, and they are how God wants us to live: being righteous and loving to one another.
 - They are all about putting God and others as the focus of our lives rather than ourselves.

Application

11. Should you be able to tell that someone has become a Christian simply by observing their behaviour? Why?
12. How can we guard ourselves from unwholesome talk?
13. If we are modelling Christ in the way we relate to each other, how will this look practically?

Prayer

14. v32 tells us the most important, basic Christian attitude, which is to be kind, loving and forgiving to another as God has forgiven us in Christ. Are there times when you struggle to love or forgive others? How can we be praying for you so that you can be more loving and forgiving?

Study 8: “Be Careful How You Walk” (Ephesians 5:1-21)

Getting started

1. If someone asks you "What does it mean to walk as a Christian?" how would you respond?

Context

In last week’s study on Ephesians 4:17-32, we were taught to put off our old self and put on our new self in Christ. Since we are one in Christ, our former lives which were corrupted in deceitful desires shall no longer remain; now we are renewed and transformed in Christ to pursue true righteousness and holiness in the likeness of God till all things unites in the fullness of time. We saw how it was applied practically in the latter part of the chapter, which bring us back today as we continue on chapter 5, emphasizing how we live a holy life in love as children of light and of those who are wise.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 5:1-21.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
1-5	How to be imitators of Christ/ walk in love as Christ did for us
6-16	Why should we not be imitators of the world/ walk as children of the light in Christ
17-21	Imitators of Christ as a body of Christ

Ephesians 5:1-5 – Therefore, be imitators of God

3. Above all that has been written in chapter 4, we are to imitate God (v1), v2 continues on talking about walking in love. On what basis do we walk in love?

V2b as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Hence, Christ is the pattern and motive of love that mark our walk; (John 15:13)

What kind of love are we to imitate? (Source: DesiringGod.com)

1. the depth of Christ's love for you. The giving of himself is the demonstration of his love.
2. the cost of his love was himself—his life. It was not just money or time or energy or inconvenience or even suffering; it was the full extent of sacrifice. He gave himself.
3. this love and this self-giving was for you. "Christ loved you, and gave himself. Paul is talking about believers (Ephesians 2:8). He gave himself for you.
4. God the Father was pleased with this act of self-sacrificing love. When God bowed down over the love that his Son poured out for us on the cross, it was a fragrant aroma to him. God loves the Son's love of us.

4. What are not proper to be named among saints? Why? (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Ephesians 1:1&4)
-Sexual immorality (Includes all sexual sins like adultery, sex outside of marriage and homosexuality) and all impurity or covetousness (Exodus 20:17); All those are considered as love for self (self-pleasure, self-satisfaction and selfish desires) and worldly possessions (2 Timothy 3:1-9). But saints of God are not to think and act in this kind of love, instead be imitators of Him as his beloved children to walk in the love that Christ has shown for us and also for the Father.
-Saints are holy ones, called to be holy (Ephesians 1:1&4)

5. V4 tells us that filthiness, foolish talk or crude joking are out of place, what examples can we see in us or around us? What should be the response?

Thanksgiving (right way of speaking) instead filthy, foolish talk or crude joking

6. What does it mean for those who are sexually immoral or impure or an idolater to have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God? (cf. Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30)

From Ephesians 1:13-14, we know that in Christ we have heard the word of truth and believe in the gospel of salvation, we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who guarantees our inheritance and possession of the kingdom of Christ and God, so those who are not in Christ will have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 5:6-16 – Therefore, do not become partners of them

7. In v6 “Let no one deceive you with empty words...”:

(a) Who is “no one”? (Ephesians 4:17-19)

Those who are in darkness and living in impurity

(b) Why is it so serious to not be deceived with empty words? (cf. Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:10)

Wrath of God upon sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:10); remember that we are beloved children of God (Ephesians 5:1)

8. In v7, what is (or are) the justification(s) of not partnering with them? (cf. Isaiah 9:2, 1 John 1:5-7)

Because we are now light in the Lord, hence we should be walking as children of light instead of darkness.

9. How should we then walk as children of the light? How is it different from darkness?

-Fruit of light =fruit of the spirit (Galatians 2:22-23)

-Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord

-Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose (correct and convince through argument because v14 (Isaiah 9:2, 26:19), but not slander and gossip).

-Be careful to walk wisely, making best use of time because the days are evil

Ephesians 5:17-21 – Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is

10. In v17, we are to understand the will of the Lord, what is the will of the Lord? (cf. Ephesians 1:5, 9-10; 4:22-24)

-To walk in love, walk as children of light (5:7-9) and walk wisely

-Can take reference from Ephesians 1:5, 9-10; 4:22-24

1:5 we know he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will

1:9-10 we know God's will is to unite all things and bring it in submission to Christ.

-So in light of that yes, it's obeying him in true righteousness and holiness (4:24). Being careful how you walk, not as unwise but wise.

11. What is the picture of being filled with the Spirit instead of getting drunk with wine? (cf. Colossians 3:16)

-Address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart; give thanks to God the Father in Jesus's name (prayer, John 16:23)

-Building one another, particularly the body of Christ in song and music; giving thanks to the Lord through prayers

-Instead of debauchery (1Peter 4:4)

Application

12. "Be imitators of God, as beloved children.....for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." We know we are called to be holy (as our new self is created after His likeness).

Reflect on the following areas, are there ways in which we still live as those in darkness? When others take a look at our lives, would they know that we are children of light?

- A. Thoughta
- B. Speech
- C. Actions

13. Every gathering with the body of Christ, what should be the purpose of singing songs and music?

Prayer

14. How can we pray for one another, especially in light of our walk with the Lord?

Study 9: “Don’t Play Play With Marriage” (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Getting started

1. What criteria would you have for the person who would become your future spouse?
2. What do you think makes a good marriage?

Context/Recap

Paul has showed us God’s big plan to make sinful people like the Ephesians (and us) his people. He did this through Jesus’ death and resurrection and now, we can have an intimate relationship with Him. Having Jesus as our (head) ruler, we’re called to love each other and build each other up since we are his (body) people. We must live differently from the world: to be selfless and separated from our sinful tendencies; to live like people saved by God.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 5:22-33

3. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
22-24	How wives should relate to their husbands; the authoritative structure set by God
25-27	How and why Christ loves the Church; the model of godly headship/ husband
28-30	How husbands should relate to their wives; selfless love that is as strong as selfish love
31-33	Conclusion: Marriage is serious stuff - it reflects unity between God and His people

4. Why does Paul instruct the Ephesian wives to submit to their husbands?

“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” (V22) Paul draws the logic that there is a specific order in our relationships. Christ is the head of the Church and that is why the Church submits to Him. Likewise, God has appointed the husband as the head over the wife - creation comes with a design for man and woman. V22b is key as it clearly mentions that wives are to submit to their husbands “as to the Lord”. This is a voluntary act of submission as none of us are forced to submit to Jesus. Therefore, a wife is not forced to submit to her husband but she should do so willingly. According to Paul’s reasoning, if submission to her husband is demeaning for a wife, then submitting to Jesus is demeaning for all Christians. Most importantly, Jesus submitted to His Father’s will (Luke 22:42).

5. How should husbands love their wives?

Since the beginning of the passage, Paul is drawing a comparison between marriage and Christ's relationship with the Church. Husbands are to love their wives the same way Jesus loved the Church (V25). Jesus' example of being self-sacrificing goes to the extent of dying for His Church. If husbands are to be like Christ, they ought to love and care for their wives selflessly: doing all things for the good and welfare of their wives.

6. What is Jesus most concerned about in His unique relationship with His Church?

Jesus desires for the church to be sanctified (set apart) through the cleansing power of God's Word so that He could present the church in splendor to himself. Holiness is relational - God cannot be united with unholy people, it goes against His character (Leviticus 11:44-45). So, Christ made us holy by making us his. In the OT, if God's people touched anything unclean, they become unclean (and by extension unholy) and they would have to consecrate themselves to God via a ritual. For us, we were unholy sinners but made holy through relationship with God when we put our trust in Jesus to rely on His work on the cross for our sin.

7. How can a husband loving his wife be loving himself (V28)? Is Paul confused?

Paul's theo-logic is shown in V29 where he argues that as individuals, men will hardly abuse their bodies with starvation or physical neglect. In a way, husbands must show love and respect to their wives the same way they would to themselves. However, if we stop there, we have merely practical advice without reason. Husbands should love their wives this way because Jesus nourished and cherished His people who are members/ parts of His body - the head and the body function as a unit.

8. Look at v31. How do you think God feels about divorce? (cf. Gen 2:21-25, Matt 19:5-6).

This quotation is taken from Genesis 2:24 after God had created man and woman. Marriage between man and woman was part of God's design in creation. Making a change to this design is an absolute insult to God, the Creator and a distortion to his workmanship. That's why Jesus made that famous remark in Matthew 19 that we hear a lot in weddings. Marriage is not ever easy, that is why Paul spends all these verses to teach the Ephesians about how love one another within marriage.

Application

9. Knowing how biblical marriage points toward Christ's relationship with the Church, how can you be sure of Jesus' love? (cf. Rom 8:38-39)

Turn back to questions 3 and 4 to see how much Jesus loved and continues to love us. He was totally and utterly invested in saving us (V25-27) from sin that we might enjoy life with God. Paul makes it clear in Romans 8 that nothing can stop God from loving us.

10. Assess the statements below:

(a) "Happy wife, happy life"

(b) "True love is being with the person who accepts me for me"

(c) "You need to start loving yourself more if want others to love you"

11. Are your criteria for a spouse aligned with God's word?

Let's be careful to address people who might be dating non-Christians or may be struggling with same-sex attraction. These people are not looking for a theological discussion. Instead, they need firm and gentle support. This is a good time to bring up dating is meant for marriage and marriage is for ministry (Gen 2:15,18). Also, singleness is as much a gift as marriage. We can serve God with either gift and all will experience the ultimate marriage in Heaven. We don't need to feel pressured by society that glorifies marriage. The important thing is God's glory.

Prayer

- Pray for the married couples in church to model the union between Jesus and the Church
- Pray that those who are single will serve God well in their singleness.
- Pray that we will all be satisfied by Jesus and not our relationships


Book recommendation

Not Yet Married by Marshall Segal

Study 10: “Living under the Lordship of Christ” (Ephesians 6:1-9)

Big Idea: Living in obedience to God’s delegated, earthly authorities as we live in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Getting started



obey
/ə(ʊ)ˈbeɪ/

verb

submit to the authority of (someone) or comply with (a law).
"I always obey my father"

synonyms: do what someone says, take/accept orders from, carry out/follow the orders of, be dutiful to, **heed**; submit to, defer to, be ruled by, bow to, give way/in to, yield to, surrender to, truckle to

1. Do you think that obedience/submission is a sign of weakness or passivity? Why or why not?

- Yes: You don’t have a say in decision-making, only following orders, seem as less important/less power...

- No: Out of respect to the authority, team-work...

Context

Share and recap about what you have learned in Ephesians 1-5.

- C1-3: New Life (in Christ), New Family (Jews and Gentiles unity)

- C4-5: walking and living as Christ calls us to--Paul is telling the church how to conduct themselves and relate with one another in this new relationship/status of being in Christ.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 6:1-9.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title
1-3	
4	
5-8	
9	

3. State the types of relationships in the following verses below. Briefly explain who should do what.

Verses	Relationships	Instructions given by God through Paul
6:1-3	Children obey parents in the Lord	Obey parents in the Lord (for this is right); Honor them (that u may...) *notice the pattern: command, then the reason for it.
6:4	Parents teaching their child	V4
6: 5-8	Slaves serving their masters	V5-8
6:9	Masters treating their slaves	(Sincere heart, doing the will of God, stop threatening...)

Ephesians 6:1-4: Children & Parents

4. How are children to obey their parents? Why?

- Obey... 'in the Lord', for this is right

- v1 shows that God does not see children in the family as less important/ have no responsibility in His kingdom. God includes and gives commands to these group of young people too.

- As children learn to obey their parents; they are setting the stage for obedience throughout their lives. They are learning respect authorities. Eg. to obey the voices of authority in school, government, etc, that will become part of their lives in the future. Ultimately, they are learning to walk in obedience to the Lord when they walk in obedience to their parents

- 'in the Lord' in v1 also means that children are to obey their parents as long as the teachings/actions of parenting are according to God's will. If the verse just stops at "Obey your parents.", then if there is bad parenting (eg, asking a child to sell drugs for the parent's benefit), that is totally not what God would desire to see. (More in Ques4.)

***Add ques: where do we draw the line to what age children can stop obeying their parents? / When do children stop obeying their parents?

- It's hard to draw the line. We don't see Paul doesn't give an explicit age to when a person is still called a child or when he/she becomes an adult. Whatever age we are, we are called to honor our parents.

*that should guide us to think about how we respond to our parents even if we do not think we have to obey them because we are 'adults'. The ultimate thing guiding our conduct is our desire to be making decisions under Christ's lordship.

5. How does 'honour' differ from 'obey'? Why should children honour their father and mother? (cf. Deut. 5:16; Ex 20:12)

- Obey: to follow the commands or guidance/to do as one is told; Honor: to respect and love

- Reason to do so “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (one of the 10 Commandments)
- There is an assurance attached to this command, it is guaranteed.
- What if our parents don't really deserve our obedience, and we know that because of their teachings/ commands that are against “the Lord”? Can't obey, but can honor them (v2). How would you respond in a way that is still honoring them if they say/their actions are not what God says is right? Children should honour their parents even if the parents are demanding and unfair.

6. What does Paul mean by ‘do not provoke your children to anger’? Explain with real-life examples. How, then, are fathers to bring them up?

- Shows that there is actually bad parenting due to sin.
- Examples: telling them what to do all the time, punish severely for small things, do not care of the children's activity, showing favoritism among the children, by being overprotective, overcritical, neglectful, verbally/ physically abusive, etc. Just remember that the examples are all not pleasing God (contrary to what He desires us to do)
- Fathers are to guard their children, protect them, nourish them, and are held responsible by God to raise them so that they might honor the Lord in their adulthood, to be imitators of Christ (Eph 5:1-2).
- Besides, the purpose of parental discipline is to help children grow, not to provoke them to anger or discouragement. Parents to bring the children up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
- ***Add. Ques: Do you think the fact that Paul addresses only the ‘Fathers’ (v4) means that mothers do not play a role in teaching their young ones?
- The language of father-sonship, God the Father and the Son.
- At that period, was a patriarchal society. But in today's context, parenting requires both dad & mum's effort. However, the way of disciplining and teaching their children is different (*notice how you would sometimes not tell your father about certain things but to your mum, you would share it all out, or vice versa?). They hv distinct roles, but they equally share the parenting responsibilities.
- Also in v1, “Obey your parents...” shows that not just the children who have the responsibility to obey; but parents have the responsibility to teach their children obedience.

Ephesians 6:5-9: Bondservants & Masters

7. Who are the slaves really serving as they work?

- Paul reminds the slaves that the earthly masters are temporary and that they ultimately belong to Christ.
- “with fear and trembling” – with respect for the rightful authority of the master and keen anxiety to leave no duty undone. And as if they are serving the Lord – in integrity with the same wholehearted devotion they would give the Lord.
- Not with eyeservice: We are not to work with eyeservice (working only when the boss is looking) / as men-pleasers (only care about pleasing people), but with good will (a good attitude, not complaining) doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.
- the One you ultimately should want to please is your Father in heaven. In God's eyes, we are all equal.
- Slaves are to obey their earthly masters with respect, fear, and sincerity – just as they would obey Christ. They are to serve wholeheartedly, as they were serving the Lord.

8. Why is the master forbidden to treat his slave however he wants?

- V9, masters to treat slaves in the same way, coz our heavenly Father is the same father for slaves and masters, and He shows no favoritism.

- Masters are to give up threatening and other forms of harsh treatment. They do this knowing that they are themselves slaves of their Supreme Master in heaven - and He judges without regard to wealth or position.

9. How might this section of the Scripture apply to us today, especially in a world where slavery is rare?

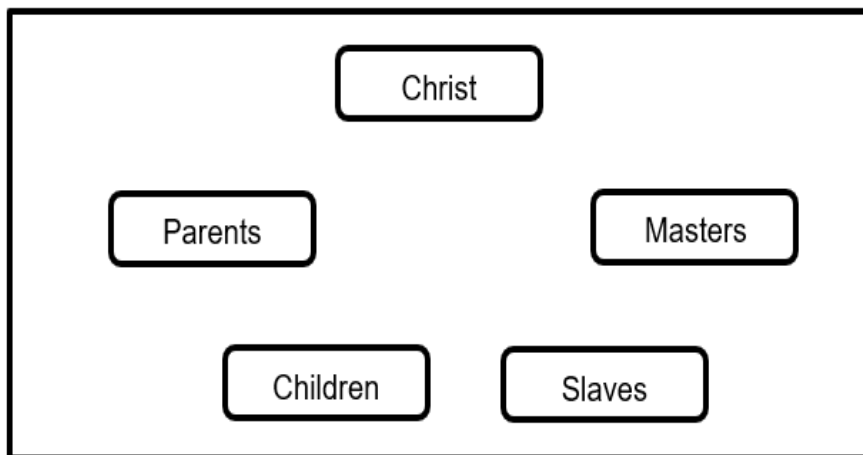
***Before that, can ask what are their opinions on the main responsibilities of bondservants/slaves and masters in the olden days?

- Slaves are to work for the masters, to obey them when they're told to do. Masters have to pay their salary, to provide a good working environment...

- Back then, a bondservant(slave) is counted as part of the master's family. The slave is bought by the master to work for him.

- In today's context, abusive employers, unsatisfied workers...

10. In the box below, draw arrows to indicate who submits to who.



Bringing It Together

11. How would you summarise Paul's instructions in one sentence?

- Train them to think of a big idea :)

Application

12. Reflect on the current state of your relationship with your parents/employer(s). Based on what we learned about how God want us to relate to one another today, share about any areas/attitude in your life that you think you'll need to change?

13. Reviewing what we have learned so far from the book of Ephesians, how does the submissive attitude help us in our maturing process to

a. build up a church?

b. become more like Christ?

Prayer

14. Pray for one another, especially to consider how submission looks like in our capacity.

Study 11: “Spiritual Warfare” (Ephesians 6:10-24)

Theme: We should prayerfully put on the full armor of God we can be fully protected and stand firm against the devil’s attacks.

Aim: To put on God’s gospel armour, so that we would prayerfully stand fast firm in the face all opposition.

Supporting Truths

§ Be strong in the Lord’s mighty power of resurrection (cf. Ephesians 1)

§ We are not merely struggling against flesh and blood, but rather the powers of the dark world (5:8-14) and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

§ In order to win the war against the devil in battle, we will have to be equipped (armed to the teeth) with the armour of God.

§ This armour must be worn prayerfully, trusting in Lord.

Objectives

By the end of this study students will:

- Understand what it means to put on the full armour of God.
- Understand why it is crucial to put on the full armour of God.
- Think about how we should be alert and praying to stand firm in the battle against the devil’s schemes.

Getting started

1. If you were a soldier going to war, what would you wear in order to protect yourself from getting injured or killed? (Note: you should answer this question base on your own experience / imagination / fashion sense / etc.)

Context/Recap

This final stirring passage is not just about our personal battle with evil; in the context of the whole letter, it is about the big ‘battle of the gospel’, with God’s holy people on one side (backed by God himself), and the devil and all his forces on the other. At stake is the proclamation of the gospel, the perseverance of God’s people, and the ongoing unity and growth of the church.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. What do you think Paul means by - “be strong in the Lord?” How do we do it? (v11)
4. Who is the enemy that we face? How does 1:19-22 encourage us as we consider the battle?
5. Having been armed with God’s armour and power, what outcome should we be looking for?
6. What are the parts of the full armour of God we are to put on?

Piece of Armor	What does it represent?

7. Congratulations, you have discovered the full armour of God! Very well done! Now you will have to draw it! (You didn’t see that coming, did you?)
8. How does God’s armour assist us in the battle?
9. How have these armour pieces been described earlier in Ephesians?
 - Belt of truth: 1:13, 4:15, 4:21, 5:9
 - Breastplate of righteousness: 4:24, 5:9
 - Shoes with readiness of the gospel of peace: 2:14-17
 - Shield of faith: 1:15, 2:8, 3:12, 3:17, 4:5, 4:13, to extinguish arrows of the evil one
 - Helmet of salvation: 1:13
 - Sword of the spirit: 1:13, 4:30, 5:18

10. What do you learn about the armour from these Old Testament passages?

- Isaiah 59:17 – the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate of righteousness.
- Isaiah 31 – the shield of faith
- Isaiah 11:4-5 – “Truth bound around his sides”
- Isaiah 52:7-10 - the shoes of the gospel of peace

11. Considering Q8 & Q9, what then does the armour represent, and how do you wear it?

12. What do we learn about prayer from verse 18-20?

13. Why is prayer so important in the battle?

14. Why is Paul sending Tychicus to them?

15. What is Paul’s final prayer for this church? How does it summarise Paul’s message in the rest of the letter?

Application

16. When do you think you’ll find it hardest to stand firm?

17. What will be helpful to remember when those times come?

18. Think about the various pieces of armour in which of these areas are you vulnerable?

19. Think about the various pieces of armour in which of these areas are you vulnerable?

20. Consider your prayer life. How does passage encourage you in prayer and shape your prayers?

