

# Ephesians

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# Our possessions in Christ

## Lesson 1

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### A. Introduction

#### Read Ephesians 1:1-2

1. Paul wrote this book from Rome whilst in prison. Although Paul was on trial for his life, his greatest concern was for the spiritual needs of the church he had founded. Acts 19:1-20.
2. Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ. Today saints are often considered extra-spiritual servants of God, but in the Bible all believers in Christ are called "saints". Acts 9:13, 32, 41.
3. Paul's greeting is, "Grace and peace to you ..."  
Grace is unmerited favour. We have peace with God because of His grace. Grace was at the centre of Paul's thinking when he wrote this book. Acts 20:24.
4. This book is divided into three sections:
  - a) The riches that we have in Christ.
  - b) The life that we are to live in Christ.
  - c) The warfare that we will encounter as we live in Christ.
5. Many Christians are not able to stand against the enemy. They live defeated Christian lives because they do not have a revelation of their inheritance in Christ.

Paul first talks about what we have in Christ as a foundation for his teaching in later chapters on living a victorious Christian life.

### B. Chapter One

#### Read Ephesians 1:3

**Illustration:** A true story is told of a poor family that lived for many years finding it difficult to survive. Some years after the father of this family had died in poverty, one of the largest deposits of gold was discovered just under the surface of the ground their home was built on. They were rich, but because they did not know it, they had lived in poverty.

Many Christians today are living as paupers, not realizing the tremendous wealth they have in Christ. Paul lists the riches that are ours in this first chapter of Ephesians.

### C. Riches from the Father

#### Read Ephesians 1:4-6

1. Chosen – Ephesians 1:4.
  - a) The initiative was God's. He chose us. John 15:16.

What a confidence! We might wonder if such a glorious God would want us. Scripture is clear that out of God's great love, He chose us for Himself.

- b) "Before the foundation of the world" God desired that we be His.
- c) "To be holy, blameless in His sight". The God who chose us to be holy, has the power to make us blameless.

**2. Adopted – Ephesians 1:5.**

- a) "In love" – Out of His Father heart of love, He adopted us into His family.
- b) "Predestined" – Before the world was formed, God desired that we be His.
- c) "In accordance with His pleasure" – God takes pleasure in His children.
- d) "In accordance with His will" – When we are enjoying the Father, we are right in the centre of His will.
- e) "To the praise of His glorious grace" – We are a praise to His grace.
- f) "Freely given us in the One He loves" – We have all the riches because we are in Christ.

**3. Given Grace – Ephesians 1:6.**

We cannot make ourselves acceptable to God. We are acceptable now only because we are in Christ. Ephesians 1:8, He "lavished" grace on us. God gives grace in abundance.

**D. Riches from the Son**

**Read Ephesians 1:7-12**

**1. Redeemed us. Ephesians 1:7.**

- a) Redeem means, "to rescue by paying a price".
- b) In the time of Jesus one could buy a slave, and often slaves were bought and set free.
- c) Jesus bought us and set us free with His blood. John 8:36.

**2. Forgiven us. Ephesians 1:7.**

- a) If one man sins against another, the man sinned against may become resentful toward the man who has sinned against him. God does not become resentful when we sin against Him because God is love and resentment is not love.
- b) However, because God is a just God, He requires punishment for sin. Jesus

paid that penalty for our sins with His blood.

- c) When God forgives us, He releases us from the just punishment for our sin. In Christ, God sees us as if we had never sinned. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

3. **"Made known to us the mystery of His will". Ephesians 1:9-10.**

In Christ our eyes are opened to know God and to do His will. John 17:6, 26. Colossians 2:3.

What a privilege! God promises great blessings for those who know Him and walk in His ways. Joshua 1:8.

## **E. Riches from the Holy Spirit**

**Read Ephesians 1:13-14**

1. **Sealed us. Ephesians 1:13.**

A seal on a document proves that the document is real. The Holy Spirit proves that we belong to God. Romans 8:9.

2. **Guarantees our inheritance. Ephesians 1:14.**

The Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing that what God has promised us, will indeed come.

## **F. To the praise of His glory – Ephesians 1:14**

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are responsible for these riches. All I can do is receive them through grace by faith. All of the glory then goes to God. We are a praise and a glory to God.

## **G. Revelation of our riches**

**Read Ephesians 1:15-16**

1. In the first verses of Ephesians we are told what our possessions are in Christ. Not that we **could** possess these things, but rather a stated fact. These **are** our possessions in Christ.

2. However, these possessions will do us no good in our walk with Christ unless we know what we have. It is only the Holy Spirit who can give us that revelation. John 16:12-15.

We need to receive this revelation in our hearts. "... the eyes of your heart ..." Ephesians 1:18a; Matthew 13:9, 13.

**Illustration:** A person may have a large gift deposited into his bank account. He needs to know what is in his account to take advantage of it. God wants us to know what is in our spiritual account.

We need to pray for ourselves and others to receive this revelation. "... remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking ..." Paul prays that our eyes would be opened.

## H. Four things to know

Read Ephesians 1:17-23

### 1. To know God better. Ephesians 1:17.

The more time we spend in fellowship with someone the more we will get to know him or her.

God does not want us to just know about Him, but rather to know Him. Knowing God better should be our primary goal in life. Philippians 3:10. Out of our knowing Him will come a confident Christian walk. 2 Peter 3:17-18.

### 2. To know the hope of our calling. Ephesians 1:18.

Without Christ we were without hope. Ephesians 2:12.

In Christ we have a living hope. 1 Peter 1:3. Our hope is for all that eternal life promises us. Titus 1:2. Our hope is an anchor for us in any storm that life may bring. Hebrews 6:18-19.

### 3. To know the riches of His inheritance in the saints. Ephesians 1:18.

a) "Glorious inheritance". We need to know what our spiritual riches are. They are glorious and worth far more than the temporary things of this earth. Romans 8:17.

b) We have been told what some of our riches are, but we need a revelation in our hearts of what we have in Christ. This revelation will get our hearts focused on heavenly things rather than earthly things. Colossians 3:1-4.

c) Not only has God given us our inheritance, but we are God's inheritance. 1 Kings 8:53.

### 4. To know God's power. Ephesians 1:19.

a) His power is "incomparably great". What can compare with the power that raised Christ from the dead?

b) That power is available "for us who believe", Romans 8:11. That power has seated Christ in heaven far above every other power. Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-10. That power has placed us in Christ. We are part of His body, "the fullness of Him".

### Memory Verse

Ephesians 1:3, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ".*

# Our position in Christ

## Lesson 2

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### A. Introduction

In chapter 1 we were told of the possessions that we have in Christ. Now in chapter 2 we are looking at the position we have in Christ. This will help us to rest in all the riches that God has given us.

**Illustration:** A man is taken into a store and shown all the valuable goods that are on the shelves. He is told, "Everything you need is here, and you can have it whenever you want". He has a hard time enjoying his new possessions though, because he is not sure if it is really right for him to have them. What a difference it would make for him, if he knew his father was the store owner and he had inherited the store.

### B. Our position without Christ

Read Ephesians 2:1-3

#### 1. Dead in transgressions and sins. Ephesians 2:1.

The person without Christ is dead spiritually, though alive physically. 1 Timothy 5:6. He has been separated from God. Isaiah 59:2.

That is why Jesus said that we need to be born again. Though we have been born once physically, we now need to be made alive spiritually. John 3:3.

#### 2. Disobedient to God. Ephesians 2:2-3.

Three forces are seen working together to keep the unbeliever in disobedience.

- a) The **world** – "the ways of the world". Romans 12:2.
- b) The **devil** – "the ruler of the kingdom of the air". Ephesians 2:2.
- c) The **flesh** – "the cravings of our sinful nature". James 1:14.

#### 3. Objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:3.

As much as the God of love loves the sinner, He hates sin. Habakkuk 1:13. God must deal with sin because His nature is holy and just. Hebrews 9:27-28.

So man without Christ is condemned to suffer God's wrath. John 3:18.

This terrible picture of man without Christ; dead in sin, bound by the world, the devil and the flesh and under God's wrath, makes us wonder why God would save us. The next two verses tell us why.

### C. Why God changed our position

Read Ephesians 2:4-5

1. **God's love. Ephesians 2:4.**

Notice the words "but God" in this verse. We were lost "but God", who is love, delivered us. It is God's initiative. 1 John 3:8.

"Because of His great love". How great a love this is! While we were rejecting God, He reached out to us and saved us by the death of His own Son. Romans 5:7-8.

2. **God's mercy. Ephesians 2:4.**

Out of God's heart of love we receive mercy. God does not give us what we deserve, but has compassion on us. Psalm 103:8.

Notice God is "rich" in "mercy and grace". Ephesians 2:4, 7. Someone has said, "In His mercy He does not give us what we do deserve, and in His grace He gives us what we do not deserve". Praise God for His riches!

**Read Hosea 11:3-9**

The Bible is a story of God's mercy; God's people rejecting Him and so deserving God's wrath, but God reaching out in mercy over and over again to His people.

3. **God's grace. Ephesians 2:5.**

Grace is unmerited favour. We do not deserve salvation and there is nothing that we can do to earn our salvation – "it is a gift, not by works" Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.

**Illustration:** A businessman wanted to give a large donation to a Christian organisation. When the businessman tried to hand a cheque to the leader of the organisation, the leader would not take it. He insisted that the organisation was not worthy to receive the gift but they would all try to work harder and some day maybe they would deserve the gift.

This illustration seems ridiculous but this is what many Christians are doing; trying to earn God's gifts. All the riches and the position God has given us are ours now as a **free gift through God's grace**. We cannot earn them, they are ours **now**.

What God has done for us shows the "incomparable riches of God's grace". Ephesians 2:7. Indeed, what can compare to God's grace?

**D. Our position in Christ**

**Read Ephesians 2:5-13**

1. **Made us alive. Ephesians 2:5.**

According to verse one, we were dead in our transgressions and sins. Now, verse five says, we are alive with Christ. John 5:24.

That is not just eternal life, but also abundant resurrection life now. John 10:10.

Christ not only died for our sins but He rose from the grave to give us new life. Romans 6:5.

We need to receive this fact by faith to walk a victorious Christian life. "We are risen with Christ". Romans 6:11.

2. **Raised and seated with Christ. Ephesians 2:6.**

In Ephesians 1:20-22, we are told that Christ is seated in authority at the right hand of the Father with power and dominion over all things. Philippians 2:9-10.

Now in Ephesians 2, we find that God has seated us with Him. Every power is at our feet, including Satan. Christ has defeated Satan and we are in Christ, therefore Satan has no authority to harm us.

In Genesis 3:15 it is prophesied that Satan would strike the heel of Christ, but Christ would crush Satan's head.

**Read 1 Peter 5:8-9**

Satan still strikes at our heels today, but we must understand that he is crushed under our feet. We can resist him, stand firm in our position in Christ and Satan must flee. James 4:7.

3. **God's workmanship. Ephesians 2:10.**

The Greek word used here, translated workmanship, is "poiema" from which we get the English word "poem".

What a tremendous work of God's grace. We, who were lost, bound by sin and objects of wrath, have been made a wonderful "poem".

**Read Jeremiah 18:1-6**

We are not a poem unto Him by works that we have done, Ephesians 2:9, but by His work in us. He is the potter and we are the clay.

Notice the stated fact again. We *are* a poem – not we *might become one*. In receiving by faith what we already are, we will "do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do".

**Illustration:** If you tell a child that he is useless, never does anything right and will never amount to anything, he will believe it and be defeated and will never achieve his full potential. On the other hand, if you speak positively to a child, telling him how great he is, he will rise up in faith and live to his full potential.

God says you are risen with Christ, seated in authority over the enemy and a beautiful poem to Him. Let us rise up and be who we are in Christ.

4. **Brought near. Ephesians 2:13, 18.**

Our sin had separated us from God. Ephesians 2:12; Isaiah 59:2. But at the Cross

the curtain to the Holy of Holies was split, symbolizing our access now, through the blood of Jesus, into God's presence. Ephesians 2:18.

**Read Hebrews 10:19-23**

We must enjoy God's fellowship by faith. The blood of Jesus has given us free access to the Father.

**Illustration:** A man loved a lady and married her. After they were married, the man longed to have fellowship with the lady. She was afraid of the man and, because of the sinful life she had lived, she kept her distance from him, kept her eyes down and never looked at or talked to him. How heartbroken the man was!

God longs to have fellowship with us. The blood of Jesus has brought us near and so let us enjoy God's fellowship. All the good things He has for us will come out of that fellowship.

Now we have peace. Ephesians 2:14. When man is separated from God, there is no real peace for man. John 14:27, Christ is our peace.

**Memory Verse**

Ephesians 2:6, *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”*.

# Our power in Christ

## Lesson 3

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### A. Introduction

In Chapter 1 we looked at the possessions that are ours in Christ, and in Chapter 2 we learned of the position we have in Christ that gives us the confidence to enjoy our possessions. Now, in Chapter 3, we are going to look at the power that enables us to receive our possessions and position in Christ.

**Illustration:** A man is taken into a store and shown wonderful goods that are available to him; everything that he needs. The man is also told that his father owns the store and that as his son, the man is heir to all that is in the store. He is told that he is free to take anything in the store that he wants. There is one problem though. The man is totally paralysed and so he can only lie on a bed and stare at all the wonderful things that are his, unable to partake of them.

God does not leave us like this, telling us of all the wonderful possessions that are ours and the position we have – without giving us the power to enjoy them.

### B. The calling

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

1. **Paul's ministry. Ephesians 3:1, 2, 7.**

Before telling us about the source of power, Paul reminds us of his credentials for making such statements.

2. **God's purpose. Ephesians 3:10.**

- a) God will reveal His glory through His Church.
- b) We will only experience God's blessings as we work together with His Church.

His Church is made up of both Jew and Gentile. All who believe in Christ. Ephesians 3:6.

3. **The privilege. Ephesians 3:11-12.**

Before telling us about our need to pray, Paul reminds us of the confidence we have to approach God. We are **in** Christ.

### C. The prayer

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

1. **"For this reason". Ephesians 3:1, 14.**

Here is the inspiration for prayer: "For this reason" I pray. It is the knowledge of what God has given us and who we are already in Christ.

We pray with confidence. We are not begging from God something He might or might not give us. We are receiving by faith something that has been secured for us already in Christ.

2. **"I kneel before the Father". Ephesians 3:14.**

Notice the different physical postures that describe our spiritual posture in Christ.

We were **dead** in sin but now in Christ we are **seated** at the right hand of the Father. We will be exhorted in Chapter 4 to **walk** and in Chapter 6 to **stand** against Satan.

Before we can **walk** and **stand** in Christ we need to know that we are **seated** in Christ.

Notice there is another posture mentioned here and that is **kneeling**. Sometimes we will kneel physically, but the kneeling that God is really looking for is a bowing of our hearts. The person who will lay hold of everything that God has for him is the person whose heart is completely surrendered in prayer to Him.

3. **"The Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name". Ephesians 3:15.**

We are not praying to some impersonal force, but to our Father.

- a) Remember when you pray that we have been adopted into His family and are "members of His household". Ephesians 1:5; 2:19.
- b) Jesus said that if a natural father desires to give good gifts to his children, how much more will our heavenly Father give to us. Matthew 7:9-11.

Our Father in heaven has perfect love for us. He does not have any favourite children. He loves us all the same. We can pray with absolute confidence.

4. **"I pray that out of His glorious riches ..." Ephesians 3:16.**

The riches of this world are insignificant compared to the "glory" of the spiritual riches God has for us.

His riches are so glorious because they are so abundant. All the riches of heaven and earth are His. That is a big bank account to draw from. When we pray, let us remember that it is out of His glorious abundance that we **will** receive. Jeremiah 33:9.

When we begin to enjoy God's glorious riches then all other riches will lose their hold on us.

5. **“He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being”.**  
**Ephesians 3:16.**

- a) Here is where the power comes from. It is the power of the Holy Spirit.

We need the power of the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord. Acts 1:8. That same power that Christ had. Luke 4:1.

When we are in Christ, that power comes from within us. The Spirit is within us, available to give us power. Romans 8:9. The Spirit's power is released as we pray. Acts 4:29-31.

- b) Some people are trying to serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Illustration:** A family had a home and next to their home was a power pole. The family heard that the power in the electrical lines coming to the pole could light and heat their home and give power for many other things that would help them. The family went to seminars on how to hook up wires, plugs and light fittings in their home. They put all the wires in place and hooked everything up as they had been taught. The man told his wife to buy a good heater and a kettle, but when she plugged them in, they would not work. When they turned the light switch on, the lights did not work. Someone had to tell the man that he had failed to hook the power from the pole up to his home.

You can go to church and even Bible College and learn all about your possessions and position in Christ and how to serve Him. If you never get plugged into the power, it will be of little use to you.

We get plugged into God's power when we come to Christ and when we ask the Father for the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. **"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith". Ephesians 3:17.**

- a) Here is another key to God's power in our lives: All that God has for us is received by faith. You cannot see it with the natural eye.

**Read Hebrews 11:1.** Faith is believing what we cannot see.

- b) To walk in the victories of Ephesians chapter 4, 5 and 6, we must first **know** who we are as described earlier.

Ephesians 3:17 does not refer to receiving Christ for the first time. This letter is written to Christians. All that we are in Christ must be more than knowledge in our minds. For us to walk victoriously, these truths must dwell in our hearts.

- c) We need to pray for the faith to receive this revelation in our hearts, and we should pray as Paul did, for others to receive this revelation also.

**Read 2 Kings 6:15-17**

Like Elisha, let us pray that our eyes are opened to our spiritual advantages.

7. **"Being rooted and established in love". Ephesians 3:17-19.**

- a) Here is the third key to a victorious Christian life – the love of God.

Again, it is not good enough to just know with our minds that God loves us. We must have the fact that God loves us "rooted and established" in our hearts. **Read Romans 8:28-39.**

- b) How could Paul face all the trials that he did and still walk victoriously?  
Answer: "We are **more** than **conquerors** through Him who **loved** us". Romans 8:37.

When we face problems, our first temptation is to doubt that God loves us. But we should know that God is for us and not receive any condemnation that would rob us of our victory.

Our declaration needs to be the same as Paul's:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31.

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies". Romans 8:33-34.

That you "may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ". Ephesians 3:18.

We must pray for God's power to give us revelation in our hearts of how abundant God's love is for us.

"... to know the love that surpasses knowledge". Ephesians 3:19.

We cannot completely understand with our minds why God loves us. We have to receive it in our hearts as a fact by faith.

8. **"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us". Ephesians 3:20.**

- a) Let us pray in complete confidence. It is God's power that is at work in us.
- b) Let us pray in expectancy. We are not trusting in our own resources, our churches' resources or the resources of any other person. We are trusting in the resources of the God who can do much more than we can even imagine.

How much can you imagine? God can do much more!

9. **"To Him be glory".**

- a) All that we have comes from God – so all the glory goes to Him.
- b) Let us pray that we would experience these **three** things in our lives and that they would be experienced in the members of His Church for His glory.
- i) **His Spirit.** Ephesians 3:16.

- ii) **Faith.** Ephesians 3:17.
- iii) **The love of Christ.** Ephesians 3:18.

These are the three keys that will give us power to enjoy our possessions and position in Christ.

### **Memory Verse**

Ephesians 3:20, *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power ..."*

# Our service in Christ

## Lesson 4

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### A. Introduction

#### Read Ephesians 4:1

Having revealed to us who we are in Christ, Paul then challenges us to walk in what we have been called to.

When we consider how high our calling is, "seated with Christ", how should we be living?

Live a life worthy of your high calling, – behaviour that is a credit to such a position.

**Illustration:** A man may be chosen, as a member of a village, to be the chief of the village. He would find that, with his new position, there would be a greater expectation from the people of the village as to how he lived. The man might even find it difficult to live a life worthy of his new position.

Remember when we are in Christ, His power is at work in us to live the life He has called us to.

### B. We are one

#### Read Ephesians 4:4-6

**"There is one body". Ephesians 4:4.**

We may be different members, different churches and different denominations, but Christ only has one body on the earth. We all together make up that body. 1 Corinthians 12:12-20.

For God's body to be effective in the earth, we must work together in harmony. 1 Corinthians 12:21-27.

**Illustration:** I would have a problem if my hand started fighting with my leg.

We are one, let us live as one.

### C. How to live as one

#### Read Ephesians 4:2-3

##### 1. **"Make every effort". Ephesians 4:2-3.**

- a) God has only one body. What God is going to do in the earth He will do through His body. He is not interested in solo Christians. He wants to work through us as we work together as His body.

- b) When offended by others in the body, we may think, "Well, we don't need them anyway". But that is a lie. We need each other in the body, and we should work together with each other in harmony.

**Illustration:** If my hand stops working with my arm, then not only is my arm and hand hindered, but it will affect the rest of my body as well.

- c) The natural man wants to be independent, therefore we will have to make every effort to be interdependent and work together with the body of Christ.

## 2. **"The unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace". Ephesians 4:3.**

- a) Because God wants His body to work together, He will pour out His blessings when we are in a spirit of unity. Psalm 133.

- b) Here is a key to keeping this unity: It is the bond of peace.

The things we are saying or doing: Do they bring God's peace or do they sow discord? James 3:17-18.

The things we are saying may even be right, but are we using wisdom in the way we say them? Perhaps the time is not right to say them.

Peace will bond us together. Keep the bond of peace. Colossians 3:15.

## 3. **"Be completely humble and gentle". Ephesians 4:2.**

- a) To be humble is the opposite of being proud and of thinking ourselves better than others.

"Selfish ambition or vain conceit" destroys unity. Philippians 2:2-4.

- b) We need to be **completely** humble to keep unity in the body. Gentleness in our interaction with others is a result of humility.

Again, we can say and do the right things, but if we are harsh or abrupt in our dealings with each other, we can offend and break down unity.

We must make every effort to be completely humble and gentle. It will take effort on our part. 2 Peter 1:5-7.

## 4. **"Be patient, bearing with one another in love". Ephesians 4:2.**

- a) Consider how patient God is with us. Romans 5:8. We keep missing the way, but God keeps on loving us. Jeremiah 31:3.

- b) He wants us to love each other with the same patient love. Matthew 5:44-45. Love does not give up on others, even if they continue to offend us. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

**Illustration:** A famous Chinese Christian leader, Watchman Nee, tells the story of a Chinese farmer who had a rice field on the side of a hill. He had to

pump water to his rice field with a treadmill pump. One night his neighbour, who had two fields below his, drained the water from the top field into his own fields. This happened night after night to the point that the farmer became very upset. Determined to love with God's love, the next day the farmer pumped water for his own field and also for the fields of his neighbour. This show of God's love had such an effect on the erring neighbour that eventually he gave his heart to Christ.

- c) It is the love of God that will win the world to Christ, not Christians fighting with each other and with their neighbours.

## **D. Gifts given to the Church**

**Read Ephesians 4:7-11**

### **1. Not all the same gift. Ephesians 4:7.**

God has apportioned grace to us to function in His body in different ways. 1 Corinthians 12:18.

We cannot compare ourselves to others or be upset that we do not have the same gift that somebody else has.

**Illustration:** My hand does not get upset that it does not function like my eye. Both my eye and my hand recognise what their functions are and get on with doing their individual tasks. Therefore my body functions properly. If all the parts of my body tried to function in the same way that my eye does, I would have a big problem.

### **2. Through Christ's ascension. Ephesians 4:8-10.**

Christ's death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, not only set captives free, but also released gifts to His Church.

### **3. Five leadership gifts. Ephesians 4:11.**

- |    |             |                    |                                     |
|----|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) | Apostles    | govern             | authority in the Church.            |
| b) | Prophets    | guide              | give prophetic direction.           |
| c) | Evangelists | gather             | bring in the lost.                  |
| d) | Pastors     | guard              | watch over the flock as a shepherd. |
| e) | Teachers    | give the grounding | build upon the Word.                |

These have become known as the fivefold ministry.

## **E. The purpose of the five leadership gifts**

**Read Ephesians 4:12-16**

### **1. To release ministries. Ephesians 4:12.**

Many believe that the work of the Church is to be done by these five ministries.

These ministries are to release each member of the body into the ministry they are called to.

Some in the Church will be called to the fivefold ministry. They should be trained and encouraged into their ministry.

Others in the Church are called to different works of service. 1 Peter 4:10. They also need to be trained and released into their ministry.

## 2. **To build up the body. Ephesians 4:12-13.**

### **Read Ephesians 4:16**

- a) "As each part does its work". For the body to be strong and effective, every member must be functioning.

Many ministers wear themselves out because they are trying to do all the work of the ministry.

We must have a vision to release each member of the Church into his/her ministry.

- b) Many are not functioning in the Church because they feel they are not called to the fivefold ministry. But the individual function of every member is vital to a strong body.

**Illustration:** My natural body has many "supporting ligaments" and parts that are not visible, as well as parts that are visible, like my hands and mouth. If these supporting ligaments, although not visible, are not functioning then my visible members cannot function properly and my body is weak.

The five ministries are more visible, but that does not make the ministry of those less visible any less important. We need every "supporting ligament" to be functioning. Ephesians 4:16.

## 3. **To keep from error. Ephesians 4:14.**

- a) The five ministries will keep the Church from error by their strong ministry.
- b) More importantly, they keep the Church from error by releasing members into their ministry.

A functioning Christian is a strong Christian. We become weak when we do not exercise ourselves in our gifting.

## **F. Conclusion**

### **Read Ephesians 4:15-16**

This is a reminder of the theme of Ephesians and this chapter.

#### 1. **"From Him"**.

Not only is Christ the head of this body, but all the life and power comes from Him. It is because of our possessions, position and power in Christ that we can function in His service.

2. **"Speaking the truth in love"**.

- a) It is good to speak the truth, but it must be in love.
- b) It is love that builds the body up in unity.
- c) Remember the "measure" is Christ's love. Ephesians 4:13.

3. **"Joined ... each part does its work"**.

- a) Every member has a function in the Church.
- b) Each member needs to work together with the other members.
- c) Then we will be mature and the body will be effective.

**Memory Verse**

Ephesians 4:16, *"From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work".*

# Our walk in Christ

## Lesson 5

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### A. Introduction

#### Read Ephesians 4:17

We are His body, the expression of Christ in the earth. Christ wants to reveal Himself to the world through His body. How will the world see Christ if we are living like the world? We must make it our goal to walk like Christ, "to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ". Ephesians 4:13.

### B. Not like the world

#### Read Ephesians 4:17-23

#### 1. Wrong minds. Ephesians 4:17-18.

- a) Notice the words here that speak of the mind: "Thinking", "understanding", "ignorance".

What we think upon affects our actions. Proverbs 23:7, KJV.

- b) The unsaved person has been "darkened in understanding" because Satan has blinded their minds, 2 Corinthians 4:4. Therefore, their thoughts are "futile". They may come with very clever-sounding philosophies and ideas, but these only produce death, not life. Romans 8:6-8.

#### 2. Wrong hearts. Ephesians 4:18-19.

"... due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity ..."

Giving in to sin hardens our hearts. Hebrews 3:13. The more we sin, the more we lose the sensitivity of our conscience, and the easier it becomes to sin. Romans 2:15.

Sin is very dangerous. It may seem innocent at times, but each little sin hardens the heart and therefore makes us vulnerable to more sin.

#### 3. Wrong actions. Ephesians 4:19.

- a) What we dwell upon in our mind becomes a desire in our heart and from there gives birth to sin. James 1:14-15.
- b) People think that sin will satisfy them, and for this reason sin is increasing in the earth. Matthew 24:12. Sin creates "a continual lust for more". Man has to go on to greater sins to try to be satisfied.

**Illustration:** A Christian leader started looking at pornographic magazines. It began with just a look now and then, thinking it would do no harm. Soon lust

had a hold of his heart and he was visiting pornographic movies. He always thought that he would be able to stop. After all, he loved his wife and was in the ministry, but what his mind was full of got into his heart and craved more and more gratification. Eventually, he slept with a prostitute. Just once, he thought, but it became a habit he could not stop. Sin demanded more and more, until soon his ministry was destroyed.

- c) But sin is never satisfied. Only righteousness satisfies. Matthew 5:6.

Sin is very dangerous and therefore must be quickly repented of or it will destroy.

## C. A different life

### Read Ephesians 4:20-24

#### 1. A change of thinking. Ephesians 4:23.

What we think about is very important. That is why the Bible says we need to renew our mind.

#### Read Romans 12:1-2

We are not to be conformed to the world's way of thinking, but to renew our mind with God's way of thinking found in His Word. We are not ignorant like those who are lost. We have been given the truth – God's Word. Ephesians 4:20-21. We must remove any thought that does not line up with God's way of thinking. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

#### 2. A change of heart. Ephesians 4:22.

- a) It is out of our heart that God's life flows. John 7:38. For this reason we must be on guard against what we allow into our heart.

#### Read Proverbs 4:20-23

Notice verse 21 – the need to keep God's Word in our heart. As we meditate on God's Word with our mind, the Word gets stored up in our heart, guarding our heart.

- b) What we store in our heart will inspire us to good or to evil. Matthew 12:35.

**Illustration:** One Christian may give in to thoughts of doubt and discouragement. Soon the heart will become fearful and lacking in confidence in Christ. Another Christian meditates on the Word, storing God's promises in his heart. "I am the righteousness of Christ", "I am chosen", "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

One Christian is guarding his heart and is therefore living a victorious Christian life. The other Christian has not kept his heart in God's Word and is therefore living a defeated Christian life.

- c) We should put off the old self with its "deceitful desires". The desires of the heart are indeed deceitful. They claim to satisfy but they actually hinder the flow of God's life in us.

### 3. A change of actions. Ephesians 4:24.

- a) The mind and heart affect the actions, but the will of man still has the last say. We have a choice. Daily we must choose God's ways. Luke 9:23.
- b) We are challenged to put off the old lifestyle like an old coat and put on the new lifestyle like a new coat.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said to the people, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go". John 11:44. The grave clothes were dirty, smelly and were not what a living man should wear.

We were dead, but are now alive with Christ. The old lifestyle belongs to the dead. We must take it off. It is dirty and stinks.

## D. Some things to take off

### Read Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2

#### 1. Lying. Ephesians 4:25.

- a) The Bible calls Satan the "father of lies" (John 8:44), but Jesus Christ is called the truth, John 14:6.

We have been called into the truth. But when we lie, we are speaking Satan's language.

- b) We have to stop lying; it does not belong to the lifestyle of Christ. Colossians 3:9. We are not to lie to each other as Christians, because we are members of the same body. Ephesians 4:25. Do I want to harm my own body?

#### 2. Anger. Ephesians 4:26-27.

- a) "In your anger do not sin". Jesus was angry at sin, but He loved sinners. Psalm 97:10.

- b) Anger in our heart against others is as displeasing to God as murder. Matthew 5:21-22.

"Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry". Anger should be repented of quickly, not left in our heart overnight. Remember that what is in our heart will affect our actions. Anger left to fester in the heart will lead to other sins, including even murder. Proverbs 14:17.

- c) "Do not give the devil a foothold". When we give in to anger, we open the door for Satan to work in our lives and also bring destruction into the body of Christ. It is not without reason then that the Bible says that a wise man will "overlook an offence". Proverbs 19:11.

**3. Stealing. Ephesians 4:28.**

- a) "... must steal no longer". Stealing in any form has no place in our new lifestyle and must, therefore, be discarded. Matthew 19:18.
- b) "... but must work". The new lifestyle is to work hard to provide for our needs. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13.
- c) Stealing starts in the heart as greed. Judas opened his heart to greed, and soon he became a thief and a betrayer of Christ. John 12:6.
- d) "... that he might have something to share". God's remedy for greed (that leads to theft) is giving. 1 Timothy 6:17-19. God turns people around from being takers to becoming givers and, the more we give, the more He makes sure we have something to give. Luke 6:38.  
We must take off the old garment of stealing and put on the new garment of giving.

**4. "Unwholesome speech". Ephesians 4:29.**

- a) Unwholesome speech can take many different forms: Cursing, slander, gossip, back-biting, etc. These belong to the old garments.
- b) "Only what is helpful for building others up". The following is a good guideline for our speech – does it build others up or does it tear them down? Positive words of faith and encouragement build us and others up. Negative reports and criticism pull down and bring discouragement.
- c) Again the key to wholesome speech is what we fill the heart with. Jesus said, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks". Matthew 12:34.  
We need to meditate on God's promises and ensure that our heart is full of good things. Philippians 4:8.

**5. "Whatever grieves the Holy Spirit". Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2.**

The Holy Spirit is grieved by sin.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another". This is the test of whether we have grieved the Holy Spirit or not – the love of God. The Holy Spirit's whole motivation is the love of God. Galatians 5:22-23.

"Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us". Remember God's love is sacrificial and looks for the best for others. Everything we think, meditate on in our heart, say and do, should be in the love of God. This is our new lifestyle!

**Memory Verse**

Ephesians 4:22-24, *"You were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"*.

# Our separation in Christ

## Lesson 6

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### A. Separated in holiness

Read Ephesians 5:3-7

1. **Sex is holy.**

God designed sex to be enjoyed by two people, a man and a woman joined in marriage. The two people become one flesh. Matthew 19:4-6.

This intimacy of union is actually a picture of our union with Christ. Ephesians 5:31-32.

For this reason Satan hates this union and will try everything to defile it. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20. Any sexual involvement outside of marriage is immorality and therefore sin in the eyes of God.

2. **"Not even a hint of any kind of impurity". Ephesians 5:3.**

Here is the standard for us. Anything that even hints at sexual impurity is a big warning sign to the Christian.

The Christian today is being bombarded by thoughts and pictures of sexual immorality through magazines, films, television, radio, etc. Satan knows that if he can fill the Christian's mind and heart with sexual impurity, then immorality will soon be the result.

We need to guard our eyes and our thoughts from anything that even hints at impurity, because we are separated unto the Lord.

3. **"Not even a hint of greed". Ephesians 5:3-5.**

"A greedy person, such a man is an idolater", verse 5. If we open our heart to greed for the things of this world, we become like one who bows down to idols because soon there is less and less space in our heart for God.

Christ should always have first place in our heart. If we put Him first, we can trust that He will supply our needs. Matthew 6:33. God is able to prosper us, but many people who have run after prosperity have cooled in their service of God and have even fallen away from the Lord.

4. **"Obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking". Ephesians 5:4.**

What is in the heart is spoken out of the mouth, but what is spoken can also feed the heart.

"... which are out of place". We want to be full of Jesus' thoughts, Jesus' speech and Jesus' actions. Everything else is out of place.

**Illustration:** A pig farmer was in the mud with his pigs when he received notice that he was to appear before the king at the palace, to enter into the king's service. The pig farmer travelled to the king's palace. But when he entered the king's court, he was stopped by officials who asked him to remove himself from the palace. The farmer, standing in his overalls and boots, covered in mud and smelling of pigs, showed the officials the letter that summoned him to the king's court. The court official said to the farmer, "You may have been summoned to the king, but your filthy attire is out of place for one who will represent the king".

We have been summoned to the service of the King of kings. Let us remove everything that is not fitting for representatives of our King.

"... but rather thanksgiving". The key to removing improper language is to fill our hearts and mouths with gratitude to the Lord. Thanksgiving fills us with faith that keeps the rubbish of the world away. 1 John 5:4.

5. **"Let no one deceive you". Ephesians 5:5-7.**

"... with empty words". The empty words of some teach that once Christ has saved us, it does not matter how we live. Romans 6:1-2.

God's word challenges us to a new lifestyle that is not of the standard of this world. 2 Corinthians 6:17.

"... has any inheritance in the kingdom". Christ's blood saves us, but a sinful lifestyle will rob us of the blessings God has for us in His kingdom. "God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient". It is because of sin that God will judge the earth. "Therefore do not be partners with them". Do not join in the same lifestyle that is bringing them destruction.

## **B. Separated in light**

### **Read Ephesians 5:8-14**

1. **"You were once darkness, but now you are light". Ephesians 5:8.**

Notice it does not say, "You were in darkness and now you are in light". We are in the One who is light, Jesus Christ. John 12:46. Christ says we **are** the light of the world. Matthew 5:14.

"Live as children of light". How can light live in darkness?

**Illustration:** Have you noticed what happens when you turn a light on in a dark room? Do the darkness and light have fellowship together? No, the darkness runs away.

God does not want any mixture with the ways of the world in our lives.

2. **"Find out what pleases the Lord". Ephesians 5:10.**

We cannot line our lives up with the way the world lives or even with the way other Christians live. There are always those who will find an excuse to

compromise God's Word.

"... fruitless deeds of darkness". The ways of the world will not bring the good fruit God has for our lives. Galatians 5:22-23.

We should live to please the Lord. In every situation, how has He called me to live?

"... goodness, righteousness and truth". Here are the things pleasing to God. Let us make our decisions in the light of God's goodness, righteousness and truth.

3. **"It is light that makes everything visible". Ephesians 5:12-14.**

If we give in to the ways of darkness then our way becomes hazy and we are likely to stumble and fall.

"... shameful to even mention what the disobedient do in secret". Talking about sin only promotes darkness. We should be careful not to defile others by testifying in too much detail about sin. Romans 16:19.

When we walk in the light it makes our way so much clearer and darkness will be exposed in the lives of others and they will repent and turn to the light.

## C. Separated in wisdom

### Read Ephesians 5:15-17

1. **"Be very careful then how you live". Ephesians 5:15.**

We have just been reminded of God's calling to us as the Church: to reach out and touch the world as His light.

Now we are reminded to be "**very careful**" that we do not give in to darkness, or we will not be effective as His light.

It is God's power working through us that will produce the fruits of light, but we have to **take care** that we allow the fruits to be produced in us.

2. **"... not as unwise but as wise". Ephesians 5:15.**

God has given us His Spirit to make the Word come alive to us and give us wisdom.

As we remain in the Word and in the Spirit, we will be kept in wisdom and will understand God's will in every situation. Ephesians 5:17. Jesus said that we were not just to stumble along through life but to use wisdom. Matthew 10:16.

3. **"... make the most of every opportunity". Ephesians 5:16.**

God has called us to shine as lights to the world, but if we are not careful we can waste time. Satan will encourage us to idle our time away so that we will not be effective for God.

God wants us to use our time wisely. We must be alert and take advantage of every hour, living wisely. 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6.

## D. Separated in the Spirit

Read Ephesians 5:18-20

### 1. **"Instead be filled ..." Ephesians 5:18.**

This is about drinking wine, but it is also true of anything else that becomes a stronghold in our lives. People do a lot of other things to try and fill the emptiness inside of them.

There is only one answer for that emptiness and that is to be filled with the Spirit. John 4:13-14. Not only will the Spirit of God satisfy the emptiness with the presence of God, but He will also give the power to overcome any addiction and will set us free from every bondage.

**Illustration:** Many Christians working with those addicted to drugs have found that people can be set free if they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Heroin addicts, for example, normally go through a very painful withdrawal process when they stop taking heroin. Most find the desire for heroin so strong and the withdrawal too painful to stop taking the drug. On the other hand many heroin addicts and addicts of other drugs, who have come to Christ and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, have been set free from their drug addiction with relative ease.

### 2. **"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord". Ephesians 5:19.**

One of the things that help us to walk in the Spirit is keeping praise and worship to the Lord in our heart. Psalm 22:3. KJV

Three ways of singing to the Lord are given here:

"Psalms" – singing scriptures to the Lord. Psalm 47:7.

"Hymns" – singing songs composed by people. Mark 14:26.

"Spiritual songs" – singing in tongues as the Spirit inspires. 1 Corinthians 14:15.

"Always giving thanks ... for everything". We can always find something to thank God for in every situation. 1 Thessalonians 5:18. An attitude of gratitude will keep us in the faith that causes us to walk victoriously.

### **Memory Verse**

Ephesians 5:15-16, *"Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil".*

# Our relationships in Christ

## Lesson 7

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### A. Introduction

#### Read Ephesians 5:21

In this lesson we will study some principles of authority and submission in different relationships.

Both those having authority and those submitting need to keep verse 21 in mind. Let us honour God in all our relationships. He is the one who has given authority and has called us to submit. He is the one whom we are serving.

### B. Wives

#### Read Ephesians 5:22-24

##### 1. God's divine order for marriage. Ephesians 5:22-23.

- a) "... the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church ...". Christ has delegated to the husband a place of authority in the family.
- b) "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord". Wives have to come to a place in their heart where they acknowledge their husband's role as leader in the marriage.

There is a lot of pressure from the world today for wives not to follow this divine order. The wife that does not submit to her husband comes out from under God's covering for her and opens herself and her marriage to the enemy's attack. Ecclesiastes 4:12.

"... as to the Lord ...". The wife who is submitted to Christ will not find it difficult to submit to her husband.

##### 2. Not a bondage, but a blessing. Ephesians 5:24.

"... as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands ...".

As both husband and wife submit themselves to Christ's lordship, God's blessings are released in the relationship. It is not for the husband to dominate the wife and her to become a slave. It is for both to honour each other and recognise each other's roles.

When Christ is the centre of the home, no-one is bound, but each is blessed and released in Christ.

## C. Husbands

### Read Ephesians 5:25-33

1. **"Husbands, love your wives ..." Ephesians 5:25.**

Here is God's standard for authority in His kingdom. It is love.

The greater the authority one is given, the greater an example of sacrificial love one will have to be. Mark 10:42-45.

Husbands are not to use their position of authority as an opportunity to take advantage of their wives.

2. **"... as Christ loved the church ..." Ephesians 5:25.**

Christ does not force us to submit to Him, He woos us with His love. Matthew 11:28.

The husband who loves his wife with Christ's love will not have a problem with his wife about her submitting to him.

3. **"... and gave Himself up for her ..."**

Christ's love is sacrificial love. That means the husband does not demand things be done the way he wants them done. The husband, who loves his wife as Christ loves the Church, is ready to consider his wife's opinion, her desires and needs. He wants to bless his wife. Colossians 3:19.

The description of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 should be the goal of every husband in his relationship with his wife.

4. **"... a radiant church ..." Ephesians 5:26-27.**

The Church is the bride and Christ is the bridegroom. One day we will be united with Him in heaven. Revelation 19:7.

A bride wants to present herself beautiful and clean to the bridegroom on her wedding day. God wants us to keep washing ourselves in His Word so that we might be the pure and radiant Church Christ is looking for when He returns.

5. **"He who loves his wife loves himself". Ephesians 5:28-31.**

The marriage relationship makes of the two one body. Ephesians 5:31. If the husband harms his wife, he is harming himself. Ephesians 5:29.

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". This truth is certainly proved in the marriage relationship, Acts 20:35.

**Illustration:** A husband who selfishly looks after himself and neglects his wife is harming himself and finds he is not really satisfied. However, when he gives himself to his wife in love, seeking to bless her and satisfy her needs, he blesses

himself and so he finds God's blessings and great satisfaction in his own heart.

6. **"... I am talking about Christ and the church". Ephesians 5:32.**

The union of husband and wife is a picture of the union of Christ with His Church. Christ is in us and we are in Him. Our marriage should be an expression of that union.

7. **Keys to a healthy marriage.**

**Read again Ephesians 5:33**

We need to be reminded that God's ways are not the world's ways. If we follow God's plan for marriage, our marriage will be blessed. The husband will love his wife and the wife will respect her husband.

## D. Children and parents

**Read Ephesians 6:1-4**

1. **"Children, obey your parents ..."**

"... this is right". The first reason given for children to obey their parents is because God commands it. Proverbs 6:20.

Children lack the wisdom that comes with age to make the right choices in every situation. They need to understand that as well as their parents, God knows what is best for them.

"... in the Lord ...". Obey them out of reverence for the Lord. Colossians 3:20.

2. **"... the first commandment with a promise ..." Ephesians 6:2-3.**

The second reason to obey your parents is because God promises a blessing. "... that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life ...", Ephesians 6:3.

"Honour your father and mother ..." To honour means more than obeying. To honour is to respect, to love and to regard them highly. If a child wants God's blessing in his life, he will look beyond his parents' faults and seek to respect, love and regard them highly.

3. **"... do not exasperate your children ..." Ephesians 6:4.**

Parents are not to take advantage of the authority they have by being too hard on their children. Colossians 3:21. Children need much encouragement and love to grow in a healthy way. "... instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord".

Children need to be disciplined in love and instructed in love, not lectured in anger. The parents that want God's blessing in their home will choose God's way for their home and not aggravate their children, but bring them up in God's love and His

Word. God's blessing comes when we do things God's way.

**Illustration:** A father was always shouting at his teenage son and striking him. The father felt that the son was not respecting him enough. This treatment only exasperated the son and caused him to respect his father even less. The father began to seek the Lord for a solution. God challenged him to love his son. The father began to build a better relationship with his son. When there were differences of opinion, the father would sit and discuss the problem with the son, letting the son share his opinions, but in love guiding his son on the right course. Soon a bond of mutual love and respect was built that brought God's peace into the home.

## E. Employees and employers

### Read Ephesians 6:5-9

#### 1. **"... obey your earthly masters ... as you would obey Christ". Ephesians 6:5.**

God is not just talking to slaves here; He is talking to all of us. Everyone comes under someone's authority in the work place. That authority has been ordained by God. Romans 13:1.

God commands us to be obedient to earthly authorities the same way we would obey the Lord, "with respect ... with sincerity of heart". We need to ask God to give us a heart of submission, not just outward obedience.

#### 2. **"... as if you were serving the Lord, not men ..." Ephesians 6:7.**

We should do every task, no matter how small it is, as if we were serving Christ. We will do every task much more diligently, whether it is seen or not seen by others, when we are doing it as unto the Lord.

**Illustration:** An employer found that his employees would not work when he was not watching them. He had one glass eye and one good eye, so one day, as he was leaving, he took out his glass eye and put it on a post. He said to the men, "You must work hard because I am leaving one of my eyes here to watch you". When the employer was gone some of the men kept working but others thought it a joke and sat down. The employer was watching the men from a distance with binoculars so he could see which men stopped working. When he came back, the employer called out those men who had stopped working and chastised them. Everyone was amazed. After that everyone worked hard when the employer was gone because the glass eye was looking at them.

God does not have false eyes. He sees our very thoughts at all times.

#### 3. **"... the Lord will reward you ..." Ephesians 6:8.**

God promises to bless us if we choose His ways and are diligent in all that we do. Matthew 25:23.

4. **"... masters, treat your slaves in the same way" Ephesians 6:9.**

The employers are not to take advantage of their position of authority. Employers are to deal with their employees as representatives of the Lord. They are to rule with God's love. God's love is not partial but treats each one the same. 1 Peter 5:3.

**Memory Verse**

Ephesians 6:6-7, *“Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you are serving the Lord, not men”.*

# Our warfare in Christ

## Lesson 8

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### A. We are involved in warfare

**Read Ephesians 6:10-11 "... take your stand against the devil's schemes".**

1. We must understand that when we give our lives to Christ we enter a war. Satan's kingdom of darkness is threatened by God's "glorious church". Ephesians 3:10. Therefore he will try by every "scheme" to destroy the believer's testimony and scatter the Church. John 10:10.
2. In our warfare with Satan we are not challenged to try and win a victory, but rather to stand in the victory that was already won for us at the Cross.

For this reason, before we are exhorted to stand against the enemy in chapter six, we are given a revelation of our position in Christ in chapters one, two and three.

**Read Ephesians 1:20-21 and 2:6**

We can stand because of our position of authority, which is that we are seated with Christ.

### B. Know your enemy

**Read Ephesians 6:12**

1. **"... our struggle is not against flesh and blood ..."**

Satan will try to deceive Christians so that they will fight with each other and so break down the unity that makes the Church effective.

In our warfare we must realise that God has not called us to fight each other, but rather to love each other. Matthew 5:44.

It is time for Christians to stop fighting one another and to recognize the enemy behind their conflict and come against him. Matthew 16:23. We are not to be ignorant of Satan's schemes. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11.

2. **"... rulers, authorities, powers, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"**

Satan has a kingdom of demons. Matthew 12:24-29. These demons are working under his direction to carry out his destructive influence in the earth. 1 John 5:19.

Satan seems to have given different levels of authority to his demonic host and they have different responsibilities and even control different areas of the world. Daniel 10:12-14.

## C. Put on your armour

Read Ephesians 6:13-17

1. **"... put on the full armour of God ..." Ephesians 6:13.**

The pieces of our spiritual armour are likened to the different pieces of armour that a Roman soldier wore to protect himself in battle. To be effective, a soldier would have to put on his "full armour". He would never think of going to battle without each of his pieces of armour in place. The soldier knew that if he left part of his armour off, that part of his body was vulnerable to the enemy's attack and he would not be able to stand against the enemy.

As Christians we are involved in a much more important battle. Let us make sure each day that every part of our life is protected with God's spiritual armour.

2. **The helmet of salvation. Ephesians 6:17.**

The helmet protected the head.

Satan's main attack is against the mind. 2 Corinthians 11:3. He will try to put thoughts into our mind that are contrary to the will of God. Matthew 16:22-23.

When our mind is covered with the assurance of our salvation we will be able to stand firm against Satan and resist his attacks.

3. **The breastplate of righteousness. Ephesians 6:14.**

The breastplate on a Roman soldier covered the heart and vital organs.

When we stumble on the way, Satan, the accuser, will try to weigh us down with condemnation. Romans 8:1-2.

Our heart must be covered with the assurance of our righteousness in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21. This assurance of righteousness through the blood of Jesus will keep our heart in an attitude of victory. 1 John 1:9.

We also keep our breastplate on by walking in righteousness. Ephesians 4:1.

4. **The belt of truth. Ephesians 6:14.**

A soldier's belt held the rest of his armour in place.

Satan works through lies and is out to deceive the believer. 2 Corinthians 11:14.

Our armour will be held in place as we remain in God's Word, the truth, and as we live truthful lives. Ephesians 4:25.

5. **"... feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace". Ephesians 6:15.**

The Roman soldier wore sandals that protected his feet and allowed him to move

quickly.

Christians need to be quick to move where God wants them in the service of His gospel. We will stay in God's peace when we stay in God's will. Romans 2:10. The Christian who is always ready to share the gospel is a victorious Christian. Revelation 12:11.

**6. The shield of faith. Ephesians 6:16.**

Satan's greatest strategy of attack is to bring fear and discouragement because it robs us of our faith. Joshua 1:9.

We are victorious as we walk in faith in all that we are and have in Christ. We must guard our heart against anything that brings doubt and unbelief. Hebrews 12:2.

The shield of faith will extinguish all the enemy's "flaming arrows" of unbelief, so that they do not get through to us.

**D. Take up your weapons**

**Read Ephesians 6:17-18**

**1. The sword of the Spirit as a defensive weapon. Ephesians 6:17.**

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God – Sharper than a double-edged sword. Hebrews 4:12.

We need the sword of the Spirit as a defensive weapon to stand against the devil's attacks as he tries to distort the truth, so as to trap the Christian. Matthew 4:6.

For this reason we need to be students of God's Word and have a solid understanding of the truth, that we might not be deceived. Like Jesus, we can defeat Satan's attacks with the Word of God. Matthew 4:7.

**2. The sword of the Spirit as an offensive weapon.**

**Read Matthew 16:18-19**

The Word is also an offensive weapon with which we can attack the strongholds of Satan.

Jesus said that the gates of hell would not overcome the Church. This means that Christians will come against satanic strongholds and those strongholds will not be able to resist the attack.

"Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven". Jesus is not talking about the heaven where He reigns but the spiritual realm over the earth where Satan and his demon forces dwell. Ephesians 2:2; 6:12. This means that here on earth we can bind Satan's influence and loose those things that have been bound by him on earth.

We can only come against Satan with the authority of God's Word.

**Illustration:** A group of Christians were praying for a girl who was bound by demons. As they prayed for the girl's deliverance, one of the demons spoke and said, "You have no influence over us and we are not going to leave. This girl belongs to us". Some of the new Christians were shaken by this, but others began to use God's Word. They spoke to the demons with authority using the Word to command the demons to come out. "Demons, according to Colossians 2:15, Christ stripped you of authority at the Cross". "Now according to Ephesians 1 and 2, we are seated with Christ in authority over every power". "We bind you according to Matthew 18:18 and loose this girl from your grip". Standing on these and other scriptures they soon saw the girl set totally free.

### 3. **Prayer as a defensive weapon. Ephesians 6:18-20.**

It is only in God's power that we can stand against the enemy, and God's power is released in our lives as we pray. Ephesians 3:16.

"Always keep on praying". We must walk in an attitude of dependence upon the Lord, drawing strength from Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

"... be alert and always keep on praying". We cannot relax our defensive armour, but must always be on guard for the enemy's attacks. Mark 14:38.

"... praying for all the saints". Remember God wants us to work together as a body. God has made us so that we are dependent on each other's prayers. Ephesians 6:19-20.

"... pray in the Spirit". We need God's power released in our prayers to pray effectively. Romans 8:26-27.

### 4. **Prayer as an offensive weapon. Ephesians 6:18.**

It is through prayer that we can do warfare against Satan's strongholds. Mark 9:28-29. As we pray God can show us areas of demonic influence over individuals, cities and even nations.

Through prayer we can bind the demonic influences and release the people and areas that have been held captive.

**Illustration:** An evangelistic team was preaching the gospel in a tent in a densely populated area of Africa. People were coming to Christ and were ministered to in many different ways each night. However, the team felt that something was blocking the full release of God's power in the tent and the harvest of souls that God wanted. The team began to pray and God showed them some demonic strongholds over the city they were ministering in. They agreed together and broke the strongholds in heavenly realms through prayer. After this the tent was full each night and God moved mightily in power.

God wants us to use prayer to break the influence of the kingdom of darkness in the earth and see God's will done. Matthew 6:10.

## **E. Conclusion**

### **Read Ephesians 6:21-24**

Ephesians starts with grace and peace and ends with grace and peace.

The peace God wants us to walk in comes from walking in God's grace. All God has for us, our victorious warfare, and all He wants us to walk in, are all by God's grace.

**It is only as we rest in Him that we have life.**

### **Memory Verse**

Ephesians 6:11, *"Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes".*