



BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Book Of
EPHESIANS

Modern Narrative Project

A Contemporary Rendering, Context,

Meaning & Commentary

Based on the King James Version

ROOT-TO-FRUIT

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EPHESIANS

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BIBLE:ESSENCE

Bible Study Project

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EPHESIANS

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This publication is intended for educational, devotional, and study purposes. Readers are encouraged to consult additional biblical translations and scholarly resources when conducting biblical research and study.

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DEDICATED TO GOD AND MY SON
... MY SON, MAY YOUR HEART FIND THE LORD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GEMMA, for opening the door so I could see.

PASTOR PHIL, for acknowledging and encouraging me to believe big and be fearless - giving clarity to the path I was seeing.

PREFACE

First, thanks for picking up this book. If there is anything good in these pages, give credit to God; anything weak or flawed, that’s on me. I wrote this out of gratitude—a small way to give back, hoping maybe it lights the path for someone else, just like Scripture has done for me:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

My journey to faith wasn’t in a moment of crisis, in despair, or some dramatic story. No lightning bolts, no instant conversion. Honestly, it was more like water slowly carving its path over time.

Back at University, nearly 40 years ago, my friends were genuinely fired up about their faith and invited me along. They, and their invitation for me to believe there is a God, are the reason I got baptised. It wasn’t about church pressure; I just knew I wanted what they had, even if I didn’t truly understand what it was. But one thing was becoming clear to me: I was experiencing something I came to understand as the work of the Holy Spirit.

After University, the real world arrived. For years, my faith stayed quiet and private. I said the Lord’s Prayer every day. I tried to live with an open hand and hoped God had a plan for me, especially when life made no sense. I tried never to judge others too quickly, because I could never know the whole story or what was in another person's heart. God alone sees all things and judges perfectly.

Still, I rarely set foot in church. My life was busy, and I worked most Sundays. I also hardly knew anyone who talked about their faith openly.

I tried reading the Bible, but wrestling with the King James Version just felt impossible. When I was baptised, there wasn’t the choice of Bibles we have today. Sure, I believed there was something bright and life-giving in its words. I wasn't rejecting the King James Bible. I simply couldn't understand much of its language.

Then, a couple of years ago, everything shifted.

I lost my job in a way that wasn’t fair. My father passed away—not long after celebrating sixty years with my mother. My son was also close to a breakdown—he had been working too hard. Soon after that, I moved into my mother’s home so that I could care for her.

I believe Scripture calls us to care for our own (1 Timothy 5:8), and there are times when that responsibility has to come before my ability to attend church. Leaving my mother to attend church is not always safe, and that has made regular attendance difficult.

This has never been a rejection of the Church or of Christian fellowship. Quite the opposite. My heart is entirely with God, and I genuinely believe that caring for my mother is where God wants me to be. She is slowly losing her hearing and vision, with Alzheimer’s taking away more of who she is each day.

It is a hard season, and it continues to be. But I don't resent where I am. With all my heart, I believe this is where I am meant to be, and where I want to be.

The quick succession, timing and intensity of these events in my life began to feel like part of God’s plan for me.

It was then that I found solace in the Bible, just as life felt cracked wide open. And yet, in that brokenness, I noticed what I’d missed before—God actually draws close to people whose hearts are shattered (Psalm 34:18). When I ran out of my own strength, I learned how much I could lean on His:

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Bible became more than something I was trying to understand. It became something I needed, even a passion. I honestly cannot imagine where I would be now without it.

Caring for my mother meant I couldn’t run from thing to thing anymore, and I like to be busy. It also meant that I didn’t have as much time or access to friends, especially as I now lived in a new area. Life slowed down, and income dropped to just enough to cover bare necessities.

But in that quiet, a new door opened.

I started volunteering as a driver—just helping elderly and vulnerable people who simply needed a lift—and, in many cases, a lift in more ways than one. I also started sharing my faith. It’s a small thing, but it felt right—my passengers lifted me as much as I lifted them, and I felt comfortable sharing my faith.

James reminds us that caring for those in need is an important expression of faith (James 1:27).

That volunteering drew me back to church, and—probably for the first time ever—I found myself having real conversations with God. Not just polite, thank-you prayers that I had always done, but honest ones where I was asking for help. I no longer felt guilty about asking God for help, as though doing so somehow meant I didn't trust the path God had given me.

I was forming a relationship with God.

And something shifted. I started to realise that God doesn't just help; He guides us, and I was beginning to learn to listen (Proverbs 3:5–6). I also started seeing the Bible not simply as a set of instructions, but as a guide for how to live.

I also began to see something about Christian fellowship that I hadn't really considered before.

Human beings naturally form communities. We make friends, find people we are comfortable with, and over time those friendships become established. There is nothing wrong with that. But Scripture calls us to something beyond simply gathering with the people we already know.

My own circumstances have sometimes left me on the edge of those established friendships. Even when I am able to attend church or volunteer, I often have responsibilities waiting for me at home. Sometimes I have to leave as soon as I can. At other times, I stay longer than I should because there is work that needs doing before I can return home.

I don't want that to be mistaken for being unfriendly or uninterested. Quite the opposite. I want fellowship. I want friendship. I want to feel that I belong.

This experience has taught me to be cautious about judging what I see in another person. I may see someone who does not stay, does not talk much, or seems distant, but I cannot know the circumstances behind what I see. God sees the whole story; I see only a small part of it.

That does not mean we should never exercise discernment. There are times when we need to recognise what is right and wrong, protect ourselves or others, and act when something is clearly harmful. But I believe we should be very slow to turn an observation into an assumption, an assumption into a judgement, and a judgement into exclusion. This has become clearer, while studying the Bible.

There may be someone standing on the edge of a church who desperately wants to belong. There may be someone carrying a burden that nobody else knows about. There may be someone searching for God who is quietly watching how Christians treat one another.

And that matters.

There are already enough barriers between people and God without Christians unintentionally creating more.

Jesus gives us a powerful picture of this in the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine sheep, but when one goes astray, he goes looking for it. The ninety-nine are not unimportant. But neither is the one.

That image has stayed with me.

If someone is struggling to understand Scripture, perhaps we should not simply assume that they will eventually find their way. If someone is standing on the edge of a Christian community, perhaps we should not simply accept that they are outside it. If someone appears distant, perhaps we should remember that we do not know their whole story.

Sometimes all that is needed is for someone to notice them, make room for them, and make sure they are not quietly left on the outside.

I don't say any of this as a criticism of the Church, and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers. I say it because Scripture has made me increasingly aware that following Christ changes not only our relationship with God, but also the way we see and treat other people.

Perhaps that is one of the things God has been teaching me through this season:

I cannot know another person's whole story, but I can choose not to become another barrier in their way.

So, I decided to really read the Bible, cover to cover.

My memory has always been atrocious, so I started typing out every verse, hoping the hands-on effort would help me absorb the words more effectively. Next to each King James verse, I wrote out what I thought it meant in plain English and started researching to gain more clarity.

Partly, I did it because I'd missed years of church teaching, and because I had put down the Bible in the past because of the frustration of not understanding more clearly the words that I read. But mostly, I did it for my son—he's autistic, he's exhausted, and as his father, I wanted to understand Scripture well enough to explain it to him. So, I decided to tackle my frustration with the Bible head-on.

Breaking it down for him became my main reason for all this—a way to do what Deuteronomy 6:6–7 calls us to:

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...”

After I finished the first chunk, I showed it to my pastor because I wanted to be sure I hadn't missed the mark. He encouraged me greatly and told me to keep going.

So, I did.

Book by book, it grew, and I kept one thing front and centre:

“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

“Let me be clear about what this is, and what it's not.”

This is not a rewrite of the Bible, or any sort of replacement for it. Scripture is the foundation:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

I haven't altered the Scripture itself. Every King James verse is there in full, so you can clearly see what is Scripture and what is my attempt to explain it. What I have written alongside it is simply plain-English meaning and explanation—for people who are new to the Bible, even the young, to help them move towards understanding what is being said.

“Call it a companion, not a substitute. I call it Bible:Essence Project as it is simply that, the essence of the Bible.”

That line matters to me. I’ve tried to make the language simpler, not shrink the meaning. Where a verse is difficult to put into plain English, or where faithful Christians have understood it in more than one way, I try to say so rather than pretend there is only one possible interpretation.

This isn’t a new idea. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Levites read God's law and then explained it so everyone could understand. When Philip came across the Ethiopian man in Acts 8, that man admitted he couldn't understand Scripture without help. And Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

“Unless you speak words that are easy to understand, how will anyone know what you’re saying?” (1 Corinthians 14:9).

Helping people understand Scripture has always been part of the life of God's people. I'm simply trying, in a very small way, to do the same.

There are many Bible studies and guides written by people who have a passion for God and a desire to share what they have learned. I make no claim to be different in that respect. I am simply another person who has found something in Scripture that I want others to have the opportunity to discover.

I didn’t write this as a scholar, and I don’t expect you to read it as though you’re taking a course. I’m simply an ordinary person whose faith deepened later in life, who still gets stuck on difficult passages, and who wanted to find a way into Scripture—for myself, for my son, and perhaps for you too.

Perhaps coming to a deeper understanding later in life has given me a perspective that can help someone else who is only just beginning that journey.

I’m not claiming to have all the answers, and I certainly don’t want you to take my explanations as a substitute for Scripture. Please check what I’ve written against the Scripture alongside it, and where something is difficult or open to more than one interpretation, I will try to say so.

My hope is not that you take my word for anything, but that my efforts might help you engage with God's Word for yourself.

If you already know the Bible well, I hope you'll forgive the simplicity of some of the explanations. They aren't written because I think Scripture is simple, but because I remember what it felt like when it wasn't.

And if you find that I've misunderstood something, I hope you'll test my words against Scripture, as I have tried to do myself.

I’m not looking for money or recognition. Most of these last few years, I’ve been caring for my mother and using whatever spare time I could find to chip away at this project. In a strange way, the two have gone hand in hand.

My prayer is that these efforts, offered to God, will do the quiet work in your heart that His Word began in mine.

I’m trusting, as Isaiah says, that God's word never returns empty—it always does what He intends (Isaiah 55:11).

Honestly, my hope is simple:

“That these pages help you move from feeling stuck with the text to beginning to understand it—and that, somewhere along that journey, you encounter God, as I did.

I hope you come to feel the love of the Bible as I do, and feel blessed by the wisdom of God’s Word as it shines through its pages.

I am continually in awe of the Bible. Although it was written more than 2,000 years ago, the wisdom it contains is just as relevant today as it has ever been—and, perhaps more than ever, that wisdom is needed now in our world.”

And if that happens for even one person, then all the time and effort that went into these pages will have been worth it.

Don’t worry if you struggle like me to remember Bible verses. Be assured that as you read, the verses will enter your heart, soul — and even your bones!

May God bless you, and may His Word do in your heart what it has done in mine. **Amen.**

Methodology Declaration:

The research for this Bible Study was conducted using a variety of sources, including Bible study plans available through YouVersion, other Bible study books, websites, and AI tools.

AI was used as a research and reference tool, rather than as a means of generating the Bible Study itself. Where AI was used, I used a platform that allowed me to submit the same prompts to multiple AI models and compare their responses. I then analysed and cross-referenced the information provided, with the aim of identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or potential AI “hallucinations.”

The research from these various sources, including the AI-assisted research, helped me to develop my understanding of the subjects discussed and influenced some of my thinking. However, the content and wording presented in this Bible Study were written by me, based on my own understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the research.

If you’ve enjoyed what this Bible study has revealed to you, why not visit my website, where you’ll find many more resources that reveal the wonder and awe of the Bible? www.root-to-fruit.faith

Book Summary: Ephesians

The book of Ephesians is a profound letter written by the Apostle Paul, likely from prison, unveiling God's grand cosmic plan to unite all things in Christ. It primarily addresses the groundbreaking reality of both Jewish and Gentile believers forming one cohesive body—the Church. The letter systematically explores the spiritual riches and blessings believers possess in Christ, outlines the profound mystery of the Church's identity and purpose, and provides practical guidance for living a life that reflects this divine calling, characterised by unity, holiness, and love within relationships and in spiritual battle against spiritual forces.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 1

Ephesians Chapter 1 begins with Paul's greetings and then launches into a magnificent hymn of praise (a doxology) celebrating God's boundless grace. This chapter reveals God's eternal blueprint, initiated before time began, to elect, adopt, redeem, and spiritually bless believers through Christ. It highlights the profound work of Jesus in offering forgiveness through his sacrifice and the sealing presence of the Holy Spirit as a down payment on a guaranteed future inheritance. The chapter culminates with Paul's fervent prayer for the Ephesians to gain deep spiritual insight, enabling them to grasp the immensity of their hope, the glorious wealth of their inheritance, and the extraordinary, resurrection-power of God, which was fully displayed in Christ's supreme exaltation over all authority, positioning him as the sovereign head of the Church.

1:1 *(KJV) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

(B:E Project) This letter comes from Paul, someone sent out as Jesus Christ's official representative, not by his own choosing but because that's what God wanted for him. He's writing to the people in Ephesus who have devoted their lives to God and who trust in Jesus Christ.

Context: This is the opening line of the letter, following the normal format for ancient letters: writer, recipients, greeting. It sets up Paul's authority as an apostle before he launches into the letter's big themes.

Meaning: Paul is establishing who he is and why anyone should listen to him - not as a self-appointed guru, but as someone he believes was specifically commissioned. The word translated 'saints' doesn't mean perfect people; it means people set apart for a purpose, ordinary humans given a new identity. That idea - that your identity can be reset, that you can belong to something bigger than your circumstances - is the whole engine of this letter.

Lesson: I chose Paul for this work not because he had impressive credentials, but because he was willing. The same is true for you: your worth isn't measured by your résumé or your past, but by whether you're willing to be part of something greater than yourself.

See Also: Colossians 1:1-2 opens almost identically - the two letters were likely written and sent around the same time, covering similar ground. Romans 1:1 shows Paul using the same self-introduction pattern elsewhere.

1:2 *(KJV) Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (B:E Project) May you receive God's undeserved kindness and inner peace, coming from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Context: This is the standard greeting Paul uses to open his letters, combining a Greek word for 'grace' with the Jewish greeting of 'peace' (shalom).

Meaning: This isn't just a formality - it's a compressed statement of the whole gospel. 'Grace' means favour and kindness you haven't earned; 'peace' means wholeness, not just an absence of conflict but a settled, secure state of being. Paul wishes for the two things people spend their whole lives chasing - unearned acceptance and genuine inner calm - and says they come from a relationship with God, not from achievement.

Lesson: Peace isn't something you have to hunt down or manufacture through control. I offer it freely, the way you'd hand someone a gift, not a reward they had to win. Stop striving for a moment and receive it.

See Also: Romans 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 1:3 use nearly the same wording - it's Paul's standard letter-opening across his writings, showing how central this pairing of grace and peace was to his thinking.

1:3 *(KJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*
(B:E Project) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us every spiritual blessing there is, in the heavenly realm, because we belong to Christ.

Context: This verse opens one long, soaring sentence in the original Greek (verses 3-14) - a single outpouring of praise that lays out God's whole plan for humanity before Paul gets to anything practical.

Meaning: Paul isn't talking about money, health, or good luck here - he's talking about something deeper: identity, belonging, purpose, forgiveness, hope. His claim is that every one of these has already been given, not promised for later - it's a done deal, available now, not something you have to perform your way into.

Lesson: I want you to notice what's already yours before you go looking for what you lack. Gratitude for what has already been given is the starting point for a free life - not gritted-teeth striving for more.

See Also: 2 Corinthians 1:3 opens with the same 'Blessed be the God and Father' formula. Colossians 1:3-4 covers similar ground of thanksgiving at the start of a letter.

1:4 *(KJV) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*
(B:E Project) God chose us to belong to him even before the world existed, so that we could be holy and without fault in his eyes, living in love.

Context: Paul pushes the timeline back as far as it will go - before creation itself - to show that being chosen by God isn't a reaction to anything you did; it was planned from the start.

Meaning: This is a huge claim about security: your acceptance isn't contingent on a good day, a clean record, or getting your act together first. It was decided before you existed to mess anything up. 'Holy and without blame' doesn't mean flawless performance; it describes the intended end result - integrity and wholeness - reached through love, not fear.

Lesson: You were wanted before you'd done a single thing to deserve or earn it. That's not a licence to be careless with your life - it's the foundation that lets you stop performing for approval and start living from love instead of anxiety.

See Also: 1 Peter 1:20 speaks of Christ being 'foreordained before the foundation of the world'. Colossians 1:22 uses the same language - 'holy and unblameable' - for what God's work in Christ achieves.

1:5 *(KJV) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
(B:E Project) He decided in advance to bring us into his own family as his children, through Jesus Christ, simply because that's what he wanted to do.

Context: Paul continues the sentence begun in verse 3, moving from being 'chosen' to being formally adopted as family.

Meaning: Adoption in the ancient world was a legal, permanent, and deliberate act - an adopted child had full rights, not second-class status. Paul is saying this wasn't reluctant or grudging on God's part; it was his 'good pleasure' - something he wanted to do, the way a parent wants their child, not something he was talked into.

Lesson: I don't relate to you as a distant employer checking your output. I relate to you as family - by choice, with full rights and full welcome. Let that change how you approach every difficult day: you're not on probation.

See Also: Romans 8:15 says believers have received 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father'. Galatians 4:4-5 makes the identical point about adoption through Christ.

1:6 *(KJV) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
(B:E Project) All this so that people would praise him for his glorious kindness, which he generously gave us through the one he loves.

Context: This verse marks the end of the first of three sections in Paul's long opening praise-sentence, each ending with a similar phrase about God's glory.

Meaning: Paul keeps circling back to the point that none of this - being chosen, adopted, accepted - was earned. It was freely given ('made us accepted') as a gift flowing from the person God loves most, Christ. The purpose isn't to make you feel indebted, but to make you marvel at generosity that doesn't calculate what it's owed.

Lesson: Notice how differently you feel when you receive a genuine gift compared to a payment you've earned. I want you to know: this is a gift. Let it produce gratitude and wonder in you, not a sense of debt to repay.

See Also: This 'to the praise of his glory' phrase recurs in verses 12 and 14, forming a three-part refrain across the whole opening blessing - worth reading together as one unit.

1:7 *(KJV) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*
(B:E Project) Because of Jesus and what he did, we are set free and our wrongs are forgiven - all thanks to how enormously generous God's kindness is.

Context: Here Paul narrows from the big cosmic plan to the specific means by which it happens: Christ's sacrificial death ('his blood').

Meaning: 'Redemption' is a word borrowed from the marketplace - buying someone out of slavery or debt. Paul's claim is that whatever you owe, whatever has you trapped, has been paid off - not by your own effort, but at real cost to someone else. Forgiveness here isn't grudging tolerance; it's described as flowing from riches, from abundance, not from scarcity.

Lesson: Whatever debt you're carrying - guilt, shame, mistakes you can't undo - I paid it, not because you groveled for it, but because that's the kind of love I have. You are free to walk forward instead of dragging that weight.

See Also: Colossians 1:14 uses almost word-for-word the same phrase: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins' - the two letters clearly share this core statement.

1:8 *(KJV) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*
(B:E Project) He poured this kindness out on us generously, along with all the wisdom and understanding we need.

Context: Paul continues describing the lavishness of God's grace, now adding that it comes with insight, not just forgiveness.

Meaning: The word 'abounded' suggests overflow, not rationing. Paul is pairing grace with wisdom - this isn't blind, thoughtless generosity, but a gift that also equips you to understand your situation and make sound choices. Freedom and clear thinking go together here, not freedom and confusion.

Lesson: I don't just forgive you and leave you directionless. I give you the clarity to actually live well afterwards. Ask for wisdom, not just relief - both are on offer.

See Also: James 1:5 promises that God 'giveth to all men liberally' when wisdom is asked for. Colossians 1:9 shows Paul praying specifically for the Colossians to be filled with 'wisdom and spiritual understanding'.

1:9 *(KJV) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*
(B:E Project) He let us in on the secret of his plan, the one he had already decided on and set in motion himself.

Context: Paul introduces the word 'mystery' - a key term he'll return to in chapter 3 - meaning a truth once hidden, now revealed, not something spooky or unsolvable.

Meaning: This is an important reframe for a modern reader: nothing here is meant to stay obscure or exclusive to insiders. Paul's whole point is the opposite - a plan that used to be concealed has now been opened up and made knowable to ordinary people, not just a religious elite.

Lesson: I'm not interested in keeping you in the dark or making you jump through hoops to access truth. What was once hidden, I hand over freely. Curiosity is rewarded here, not punished.

See Also: Colossians 1:26-27 develops the same idea of a 'mystery' formerly hidden but now made manifest to God's people - essential companion reading to this verse.

1:10 *(KJV) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*
(B:E Project) His plan, when the time is finally right, is to bring absolutely everything together and unite it under Christ - everything in heaven and everything on earth.

Context: This is the climax of the 'mystery' Paul just mentioned - the ultimate goal of God's whole plan, not just for individuals but for the entire universe.

Meaning: This is a strikingly big vision: not just personal salvation, but cosmic reconciliation - fractured, scattered, conflicting things being drawn back into unity. For a reader worn down by a fragmented, divided world, this is a claim that division isn't the final word; unity is where things are heading.

Lesson: I care about the whole picture, not just fixing your one problem in isolation. My aim is to mend what's broken everywhere - relationships, communities, even creation itself - and I invite you into that bigger repair work.

See Also: Colossians 1:16-20 makes an almost identical claim about all things being created in Christ and reconciled through him - read alongside this verse, it's practically a parallel passage.

1:11 *(KJV) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
(B:E Project) Through Christ we were also given an inheritance, marked out in advance according to the plan of the one who carries out everything exactly as he intends.

Context: Paul returns to the theme of being 'chosen' from verses 4-5, now framing it as receiving an inheritance - a family's guaranteed future.

Meaning: An inheritance isn't wages you work for; it's something passed on because of relationship. Paul is emphasising that this isn't random or uncertain - it flows from a purposeful, capable God who actually gets things done, not from luck or fate.

Lesson: You don't have to control every outcome yourself to have a secure future. Trust doesn't mean passivity - it means resting in the fact that things are held by someone reliable, even when your own grip feels shaky.

See Also: Romans 8:17 calls believers 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ'. Colossians 1:12 gives thanks for being made 'partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light'.

1:12 *(KJV) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*
(B:E Project) All this so that we - the ones who put our trust in Christ first - would live in a way that brings praise to his glory.

Context: Paul likely has in mind Jewish believers like himself, who trusted in the promised Messiah before the good news reached the non-Jewish world - a distinction that becomes central in chapter 2.

Meaning: The purpose clause here matters: none of this is for self-congratulation. The point of being blessed is to become a kind of living advertisement for the generosity behind it - not showing off, but showing what God is like through a changed life.

Lesson: What you do with what you've been given matters. Let your life point beyond itself - to the source of the good things in it - rather than becoming just another trophy for your own résumé.

See Also: Romans 1:16 - 'to the Jew first, and also to the Greek' - reflects the same order Paul assumes here, salvation reaching the Jewish people first before opening fully to everyone.

1:13 *(KJV) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
(B:E Project) And you too were included, once you heard the true message - the good news that you could be saved - and once you believed it, you were marked as God's own by being given the Holy Spirit he had promised.

Context: Paul switches from 'we' (likely Jewish believers) to 'you' - directly addressing the largely non-Jewish Ephesian readers, showing they are included on equal terms.

Meaning: A 'seal' in the ancient world was a mark of ownership and authenticity, like a wax seal on a letter or a brand marking livestock as belonging to someone. Paul's claim is that receiving God's Spirit is proof - not a vague feeling, but a concrete, guaranteed sign - that you genuinely belong, regardless of your background.

Lesson: Belonging isn't reserved for people who tick the right ethnic or cultural boxes. Trust is the only entry requirement I ask for, and once given, it's sealed - permanent, not provisional.

See Also: 2 Corinthians 1:22 uses the same sealing image: God 'hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit'. Ephesians 4:30 later warns believers not to 'grieve the holy Spirit... whereby ye are sealed'.

1:14 *(KJV) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*
(B:E Project) That Spirit is like a deposit guaranteeing the rest of what's coming to us, until we fully receive what's been bought for us - and again, all this so that God gets the praise.

Context: Paul closes the long opening sentence (verses 3-14) with this image of a down payment, tying the individual's experience back to the ultimate goal of glorifying God.

Meaning: An 'earnest' was a legal deposit in ancient commerce - a partial payment guaranteeing the rest was coming. Paul's point is that whatever a person experiences now (a sense of God's presence, transformation, hope) is real but partial - a genuine down payment on something much fuller still to come, not the whole thing yet, but proof it's guaranteed.

Lesson: Don't mistake the down payment for the full picture - what you've tasted of goodness and peace already is real, but there's more coming than you can currently imagine. Hold on with patience; the guarantee is solid.

See Also: 2 Corinthians 5:5 repeats the exact phrase 'the earnest of the Spirit'. Romans 8:23 speaks of believers having 'the firstfruits of the Spirit' while still waiting for full redemption.

1:15 *(KJV) Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*
(B:E Project) Because of this, ever since I heard about your trust in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people...

Context: The letter shifts here from praise to prayer report - Paul explaining what he does when he thinks of the Ephesians.

Meaning: This is a simple but telling detail: Paul judges the health of their faith by two visible things - trust (an inward disposition) and love (an outward, practical one). He's not impressed by claims alone; it's the combination of belief and demonstrated care for others that catches his attention.

Lesson: I don't just want your private belief in me - I want to see it overflow into how you treat other people. Faith that never shows up as love for others is only half the picture.

See Also: Colossians 1:4 opens with almost the same words: 'since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints' - another close parallel between the two letters.

1:16 *(KJV) Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*
(B:E Project) I haven't stopped thanking God for you, and I keep mentioning you whenever I pray.

Context: Paul, likely writing under house arrest in Rome, describes his ongoing prayer life for a church he may not have personally founded or visited in a while.

Meaning: This is a quiet but significant model: gratitude and intercession as habits, not one-off gestures. Even confined and limited in what he can physically do for them, Paul's persistent care takes the form of consistent, unglamorous prayer.

Lesson: You don't need grand gestures to show someone you care. Consistent, quiet attention - remembering people, holding them in your thoughts - is itself a powerful form of love, even when you can't do anything else for them.

See Also: Philippians 1:3-4 and Colossians 1:3 show Paul using this same pattern of constant thanksgiving and prayer at the start of his letters.

1:17 *(KJV) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*
(B:E Project) I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you a spirit of wisdom and insight so you can truly know him.

Context: This begins Paul's first great prayer in the letter (1:17-19), asking not for material blessings but for deeper spiritual perception.

Meaning: Notice what Paul actually asks for: not comfort, wealth, or an easy life, but clearer sight - the ability to really understand what's already true. He assumes the Ephesians already have blessings (chapter 1's opening); what they need now is the insight to grasp what they've got.

Lesson: I'd rather give you clear eyes than easy circumstances. Ask me for understanding before you ask me to change your situation - often it's your perspective, not your circumstances, that most needs to shift.

See Also: Colossians 1:9 has an almost identical prayer: that believers 'might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding'.

1:18 *(KJV) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*
(B:E Project) I pray your inner understanding would be flooded with light, so you can know what hope he's called you to, and how rich and glorious the inheritance is that he shares with his people.

Context: Paul continues the prayer begun in verse 17, now specifying exactly what he wants their new insight to grasp.

Meaning: The image of 'enlightened eyes' suggests something previously dim becoming clear - not new information exactly, but a shift from theoretical knowledge to felt, vivid understanding. Hope and inheritance are treated as riches worth truly seeing, not just believing on paper.

Lesson: Hope loses its power when it stays abstract. I want it to become vivid and real to you - not just something you nod along to, but something that genuinely changes how you feel about tomorrow.

See Also: Colossians 1:27 speaks of 'the riches of the glory of this mystery' and 'the hope of glory' in near-identical language.

1:19 *(KJV) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*
(B:E Project) And I pray you'd grasp just how immense his power is toward those of us who believe - the same mighty strength that's actively at work.

Context: Paul's prayer moves from hope and inheritance to a third thing he wants them to understand: raw, active power available to believers now.

Meaning: This isn't abstract theology; it's meant to be practically reassuring. The claim is that the same power that operates in the universe is directed, specifically and currently, toward people who trust - not a distant, unavailable force, but one that's 'toward' and 'in' them.

Lesson: You're not left to face life's hardest moments purely on your own willpower. There's strength available to you beyond your own resources - draw on it rather than exhausting yourself trying to manage everything alone.

See Also: Philippians 3:10 speaks of wanting to know 'the power of his resurrection'. Romans 1:4 links Christ's resurrection to being declared powerful.

1:20 *(KJV) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*
(B:E Project) This is the same power God used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his own right hand, in the position of highest honour.

Context: Paul now gives the concrete proof of the power just described - it's the same power seen historically in Christ's resurrection and exaltation.

Meaning: Being seated 'at the right hand' was the ancient world's way of describing the position of highest authority and honour next to a ruler. Paul is pointing to a specific, historical demonstration of power - not a vague spiritual feeling, but an event with real, world-changing consequences.

Lesson: The power that reverses death itself is the same power available to you in your ordinary struggles. If it could overturn the worst outcome imaginable, don't assume your situation is beyond its reach.

See Also: Psalm 110:1, quoted throughout the New Testament, is the Old Testament root of 'sit at my right hand'. Acts 2:33-34 has Peter making the same connection at Pentecost.

1:21 *(KJV) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*
(B:E Project) Christ is now positioned above every ruler, authority, power, and title that exists - not just in this world, but in whatever is still to come.

Context: Paul piles up terms for power and authority (some carrying specific meaning to readers familiar with ideas about spiritual and political forces) to stress Christ's supremacy over literally everything.

Meaning: For ancient readers, worried about hostile spiritual powers or oppressive political rulers, this was deeply reassuring: nothing outranks Christ, now or in the future. It's a claim about ultimate authority that relativises every other power structure a person might fear.

Lesson: Whatever feels like it has power over your life - fear, circumstance, other people's opinions, systems that feel bigger than you - none of it has the final word. Let that shrink your anxiety down to size.

See Also: Colossians 1:16 and 2:10 both use similar lists of 'principalities and powers' to describe Christ's supremacy. Philippians 2:9-10 echoes the theme of a name above every name.

1:22 *(KJV) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*
(B:E Project) God has placed everything under Christ's authority, and made him head over everything, for the sake of the church.

Context: Paul draws the exaltation described in the previous verses down to a very specific, personal application: this supreme, cosmic authority is given for the benefit of ordinary believers gathered together (the church).

Meaning: This is a striking turn - ultimate cosmic power isn't described as distant or abstract, but as directed towards a specific, practical purpose: benefiting a community of imperfect people. The image of 'head' suggests both authority and intimate connection, like a head to a body.

Lesson: The greatest power in existence isn't aloof from you - it's committed to you, personally connected to the community you belong to, working for your good, not just displaying itself from a distance.

See Also: Psalm 8:6 is the Old Testament root of 'put all things under his feet'. Colossians 1:18 states plainly: 'he is the head of the body, the church'.

1:23 *(KJV) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*
(B:E Project) The church is his body - the full expression of the one who fills everything, everywhere, completely.

Context: This closes chapter 1 with a rich, somewhat mysterious image: the church described as Christ's 'body' and 'fullness', a theme Paul will expand throughout the letter.

Meaning: Calling the church his 'body' suggests intimate union, not a building or an institution but a living, connected organism. 'Fullness' suggests completeness - the church isn't incidental, but somehow the visible expression of Christ's presence in the world.

Lesson: You're not meant to live this out alone, disconnected from others. Whatever you're becoming, it's meant to happen in genuine connection with other people, functioning together like parts of one living thing.

See Also: Colossians 1:19 and 2:9 both use the language of 'fulness' dwelling in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27 develops the 'body' image for the church in much greater practical detail.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 2

Ephesians Chapter 2 explains how everyone, both Jewish and non-Jewish people, was once spiritually lifeless because of their bad decisions and rebellion against God. We all lived selfishly, influenced by evil forces, and were headed for God's judgement. But because God is so incredibly loving and merciful, He brought us back to life with Jesus Christ. This amazing rescue, called salvation, is a free gift from God that we receive through faith; it's not something we can earn by doing good deeds. In fact, God specially created us to do good things He planned for us long ago. The chapter then focuses on how non-Jewish people (Gentiles) were once completely separated from God's chosen people (Israel) and had no relationship with God or any hope. But Jesus, through His death, broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles, bringing them together into one new unified group. He brought peace and made both groups right with God. Now, both Jewish and non-Jewish believers can come directly to God the Father, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are no longer outsiders but are like full family members in God's household, built together as a holy place where God lives by His Spirit, with Jesus Christ as the most important foundation stone.

2:1 *(KJV) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

- (B:E Project)** As for you - you used to be spiritually dead, trapped by the wrong things you did and the way you lived.
- Context:** This opens the second movement of the letter: after describing the cosmic plan in chapter 1, Paul now zooms in on the Ephesians' own personal history, using shockingly blunt language.
- Meaning:** 'Dead' isn't a metaphor for feeling low - it's Paul's diagnosis of a total condition: unable to reach towards God on your own, the way a corpse can't reach for anything. It's a stark starting point precisely so that what follows (being made alive) can land with its full force.
- Lesson:** I don't ask you to pretend you were fine all along before we met. Naming how stuck you really were isn't shame - it's the honest starting point that makes the rescue meaningful.
- See Also:** Colossians 2:13 uses the identical phrase: 'you, being dead in your sins... hath he quickened'. Romans 6:23 names the wages of sin as death.
- 2:2 **(KJV)** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*
(B:E Project) You used to live the way the world around you lives, following the direction of a destructive spiritual force at work in people who ignore God.
- Context:** Paul explains what 'spiritual death' looked like in practice - conforming to prevailing cultural patterns and a hostile spiritual influence.
- Meaning:** 'The course of this world' points to unquestioned cultural drift - going along with whatever's normal without examining it. The 'prince of the power of the air' names a real, active opposing force, not just bad luck or bad choices in isolation. Paul's point: none of us set our own direction as much as we think; we're shaped by unseen currents.
- Lesson:** Notice what's shaping your choices before you assume they're entirely your own. Question the current you're swimming in - not everything 'everyone does' is actually good for you.
- See Also:** John 12:31 and 14:30 both refer to Satan as 'the prince of this world'. 2 Corinthians 4:4 calls the same figure 'the god of this world' who blinds minds.
- 2:3 **(KJV)** *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*
(B:E Project) In fact, all of us were once like that - living to satisfy our own cravings and impulses, doing whatever our bodies and minds wanted - heading for trouble by our very nature, just like everyone else.

- Context:** Paul widens the description from 'you' (Gentile readers) to 'we all' (including himself and fellow Jews), levelling the ground before he describes the rescue that follows.
- Meaning:** This is a deliberately universal statement - no group gets to feel morally superior here. 'Children of wrath' is strong language, meaning headed toward serious consequences by default, not because of one bad decision but because of an underlying orientation everyone shares.
- Lesson:** I'm not interested in ranking people by how bad their particular struggles look from the outside. Every person starts from the same need - so put down the comparison game and the self-righteousness alike.
- See Also:** Romans 3:23 makes the same universal claim: 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God'. Romans 5:12 traces this condition back to humanity's shared history.
- 2:4 **(KJV)** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
(B:E Project) But God, who is overflowing with mercy, because of the enormous love he has for us...
- Context:** This is the great pivot of the letter - after the bleak diagnosis of verses 1-3, 'But God' turns everything around.
- Meaning:** Grammatically, this begins a sentence that won't finish its main verb until verse 5 - Paul is building suspense, letting the reader sit in the weight of God's character (mercy, love) before revealing what he actually did about it. The motivation given isn't obligation or duty, but love.
- Lesson:** Whatever bleak diagnosis fits your life right now, there's always a 'but' waiting - I'm not finished with the story at your worst moment. Mercy, not punishment, is my default response to human failure.
- See Also:** Romans 5:8 states the same logic: 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'. Titus 3:5 - 'not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us'.
- 2:5 **(KJV)** *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
(B:E Project) Even while we were spiritually dead because of our wrongdoing, he made us alive together with Christ - it's by grace you've been saved.
- Context:** This finally completes the sentence begun in verse 4, delivering the resolution: death reversed, undeservedly.
- Meaning:** The parenthetical note - 'by grace ye are saved' - is Paul's way of flagging the key idea before fully unpacking it in verses 8-9. Being 'made alive together with Christ'

- means the resurrection Paul described in chapter 1 isn't just something that happened to Jesus; it's something believers are joined to and share in.
- Lesson:** Rescue doesn't wait for you to clean yourself up first - it happens precisely while you're still stuck. That's what real grace looks like: unearned help arriving in the middle of the mess, not after it's tidied.
- See Also:** Colossians 2:13 makes the identical statement: 'hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses'. Romans 6:4-5 develops the theme of being united with Christ's resurrection.
- 2:6 *(KJV) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*
(B:E Project) He raised us up together with Christ and seated us together with him in the heavenly realm.
- Context:** Paul extends the resurrection theme even further - not just made alive, but already positioned in a place of honour and authority alongside Christ.
- Meaning:** This is a bold claim about present reality, not just future hope: believers are described as already 'seated' - a position of rest and authority, not striving - even while still living ordinary lives on earth. It's a statement about secure status, established now.
- Lesson:** You don't have to keep fighting to earn a secure place - it's already been given, described as done, not pending. Rest in that, rather than treating your standing as something perpetually up for renewal.
- See Also:** Colossians 3:1 draws the practical conclusion from the same idea: 'seek those things which are above... where Christ sitteth'.
- 2:7 *(KJV) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*
(B:E Project) He did all this so that in the ages to come he could display just how extraordinarily rich his grace is, shown through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
- Context:** Paul explains the ultimate purpose behind the rescue described in verses 4-6: not just to fix the Ephesians' problem, but to demonstrate something to the whole of history.
- Meaning:** This adds a striking dimension: individual rescue is part of a much bigger display - as if this generosity is meant to be studied and admired for ages afterward, evidence of character rather than a one-off favour.
- Lesson:** Your story of being rescued isn't just for you - it becomes part of a larger, ongoing demonstration of what real kindness looks like, an example others can look to long after your own struggles are behind you.
- See Also:** Titus 3:4-7 covers the same ground of God's kindness and mercy producing salvation, unrelated to good works done.

- 2:8 *(KJV) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*
(B:E Project) Because it's by grace that you've been saved, through faith - and even that isn't from you; it's a gift from God.
- Context:** This is the letter's most famous line, summing up in a single sentence the theology Paul has been building since chapter 1: rescue as gift, not achievement.
- Meaning:** This is worth sitting with slowly: 'saved' here means rescued from that spiritual deadness described earlier. 'Grace' is the unearned kindness driving it; 'faith' is simply trust - receiving the gift, not producing it. Even the ability to trust is framed as part of the gift, not something you conjure up by sheer willpower.
- Lesson:** Stop trying to earn what's already been offered freely. The exhausting cycle of proving your worth through performance can end today - what's asked of you is trust, not a flawless track record.
- See Also:** Romans 3:24 - 'justified freely by his grace'. Titus 3:5 - 'not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us'.
- 2:9 *(KJV) Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
(B:E Project) It's not the result of anything you've done - so nobody gets to boast about earning it.
- Context:** This completes the thought of verse 8, closing off any possible loophole for people to claim credit for their own rescue.
- Meaning:** Paul deliberately shuts down boasting because human beings naturally want credit - even religious credit. Removing 'works' as the basis removes the ability to rank yourself above anyone else based on your performance or record.
- Lesson:** There's no league table here, no ranking of who's 'earned' more favour than someone else. That should free you from both arrogance about your own achievements and despair about your own failures - neither one is the basis of your worth.
- See Also:** Romans 4:4-5 makes a parallel argument about faith being credited apart from works. 1 Corinthians 1:29 states the purpose plainly: 'that no flesh should glory in his presence'.
- 2:10 *(KJV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
(B:E Project) We are what he has made us - created in Christ Jesus to do good things, which he had already planned out in advance for us to do.
- Context:** Immediately after ruling out works as the basis for salvation, Paul clarifies their proper place: not the cause of the rescue, but its intended result.
- Meaning:** This resolves a potential misunderstanding: grace doesn't make good actions irrelevant - it reorders them. Good works come after and because of the new life, not

- before it to earn it. 'Workmanship' suggests something crafted with intention and care, like an artist's finished piece.
- Lesson:** Good actions aren't a hoop to jump through to win my approval - they're what naturally flows out once you've stopped performing and started living from a secure identity. Let your good works be an overflow of freedom, not a scramble for acceptance.
- See Also:** Titus 2:14 speaks of Christ purifying a people 'zealous of good works'. James 2:17-18 argues that genuine faith naturally produces action, without contradicting Paul's point about the basis of salvation.
- 2:11** *(KJV) Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*
(B:E Project) So remember: you who weren't born Jewish - called 'uncircumcised' by those who were, based on a physical mark made by human hands...
- Context:** Paul begins a new section, turning from personal spiritual rescue to the specific historical and social divide between Jews and Gentiles.
- Meaning:** Circumcision was the sign of belonging to God's covenant people under the Old Testament law. Paul deliberately calls it something 'made by hands' - a human ritual, not the deepest reality - to set up his point that this old dividing line no longer determines who belongs to God's family.
- Lesson:** Don't let labels and categories that others use to define you become the whole truth about who you are. There's a deeper identity available that isn't decided by birth, background, or the boxes other people put you in.
- See Also:** Romans 2:28-29 makes the same point: true circumcision is 'of the heart, in the spirit'. Galatians 3:28 famously erases these old distinctions: 'neither Jew nor Greek. .. for ye are all one in Christ Jesus'.
- 2:12** *(KJV) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*
(B:E Project) Remember that at that time you were separated from Christ, excluded from the community of Israel, foreigners to the promises God had made, without hope, and without God, in the world.
- Context:** Paul lists, in stark and deliberately painful terms, exactly what the Gentile readers' situation had been before Christ - a rhetorical set-up for the dramatic reversal in verse 13.
- Meaning:** This is a five-fold description of total exclusion: no Messiah, no community, no promises, no hope, no God. It's Paul's way of making the coming change land with full weight - you don't appreciate rescue from a hole you don't realise you were in.

- Lesson:** I know what it feels like to be an outsider looking in, excluded from every promise that mattered. I'm telling you plainly: that exclusion is not the end of your story, whoever you are and wherever you've felt shut out.
- See Also:** Romans 9:4-5 lists the privileges of Israel that Gentiles previously lacked - covenants, promises, adoption. This verse essentially names the flip side of that list.
- 2:13** *(KJV) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*
(B:E Project) But now, because you belong to Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought close, through Christ's sacrificial death.
- Context:** This is the pivot point of the whole section, echoing the 'but God' turn of verse 4 - now applied specifically to the Jew-Gentile divide.
- Meaning:** 'Far off' and 'near' were standard Jewish terms for Gentiles and Jews respectively. Paul's claim is startling: the very people once considered outsiders have been brought fully inside, and the mechanism is the same one that rescued everyone - Christ's death, not a change in ancestry or ritual observance.
- Lesson:** Distance from what feels sacred or good in your life isn't permanent. Whatever has kept you feeling like an outsider can be closed, not by you working harder to get closer, but by something already done on your behalf.
- See Also:** Isaiah 57:19 is the Old Testament source of this 'far off... near' language: 'Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near'. Colossians 1:21-22 uses similar language of reconciliation for those once 'alienated'.
- 2:14** *(KJV) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*
(B:E Project) Because he himself is our peace - he's the one who made the two groups into one, breaking down the wall that used to divide them.
- Context:** Paul now explains the mechanism by which Jews and Gentiles are united - not just doctrinally, but through Christ's own person and action, likely alluding to the literal wall in the Jerusalem temple separating Gentiles from the inner courts.
- Meaning:** This isn't just a call for tolerance between two groups; Christ is described as personally embodying the peace, actively dismantling the barrier rather than simply asking people to be nicer to each other. It's structural change, not just a change of attitude.
- Lesson:** Real peace between people who are different from each other isn't achieved by pretending the differences don't exist - it comes from tearing down the actual wall separating you, not just painting over it. I specialise in demolition of dividing walls.
- See Also:** Isaiah 9:6 calls the promised Messiah 'the Prince of Peace'. Colossians 1:20 describes Christ 'making peace through the blood of his cross' between all things.

2:15 *(KJV) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*
(B:E Project) He did away with the hostility caused by the law, with all its specific rules and regulations, so that he could create one new humanity out of the two groups, making peace.

Context: Paul explains further what breaking down the wall meant practically - the Jewish ceremonial law, which had functioned as a boundary marker, no longer divides people into insiders and outsiders.

Meaning: This isn't erasing morality or ethics - it's specifically about the ceremonial and ritual regulations that had marked Jewish identity as distinct and separate. The goal is described creatively: not one group absorbing the other, but a genuinely 'new' humanity, something that didn't exist before.

Lesson: I'm not interested in making everyone the same, erasing what makes you distinct - I'm interested in creating something genuinely new out of your differences, a unity that includes rather than erases who you are.

See Also: Colossians 2:14 speaks of Christ 'blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us... nailing it to his cross'. Galatians 3:28 echoes the 'one new' identity theme.

2:16 *(KJV) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*
(B:E Project) And so he could reconcile both groups to God, in one body, through the cross - putting the hostility to death there.

Context: Paul completes the thought: the cross doesn't just unite Jew and Gentile with each other, it reconciles both to God simultaneously, in a single act.

Meaning: Two reconciliations happen at once here - horizontal (between people) and vertical (between people and God) - and Paul locates both in the same event, the cross. Hostility itself, not just its symptoms, is described as having been killed.

Lesson: You can't fully fix a broken relationship with other people while ignoring what's broken in your relationship with what's ultimately good and true - the two are connected, and healing one tends to heal the other.

See Also: Colossians 1:20-22 makes the same double-reconciliation argument - 'to reconcile all things unto himself... you that were sometime alienated... hath he reconciled'.

2:17 *(KJV) And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*
(B:E Project) He came and announced peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near.

Context: Paul now describes Christ's ministry (through his life and the gospel message spreading afterward) as an active proclamation of the peace just described.

Meaning: This echoes Isaiah's prophecy language again, portraying peace not as a passive state but as an announcement actively delivered - good news brought to people, regardless of which side of the old divide they were on.

Lesson: I don't wait for you to come find peace on your own - I come and announce it directly to wherever you are, near or far, familiar or estranged. The message travels to you.

See Also: Isaiah 52:7 celebrates the feet of one who 'publisheth peace'. Acts 10:36 describes 'the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ'.

2:18 *(KJV) For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*
(B:E Project) Because through him, both groups now have access to the Father, by means of the one same Spirit.

Context: This verse closes the argument begun in verse 14, summing up the result: united access to God for both Jews and Gentiles.

Meaning: 'Access' was a term for approaching a king - having the right to come into the royal presence. Paul's picture is of a shared, equal right of approach, granted through Christ and mediated by one Spirit shared by both groups, not two separate routes.

Lesson: You don't need a special connection, a middleman with better credentials than you, or an insider's advantage to approach what's ultimately good. The same open door is available to you as to anyone else.

See Also: Hebrews 4:16 invites believers to 'come boldly unto the throne of grace'. John 14:6 has Jesus describing himself as the way to the Father.

2:19 *(KJV) Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*
(B:E Project) So you're no longer outsiders or strangers - you're fellow citizens with God's people, full members of God's own household.

Context: Paul draws the practical conclusion of the whole argument since verse 11: the change in status is total, moving from exclusion to full belonging.

Meaning: Two images stack here: citizenship (legal, civic belonging) and household (intimate, family belonging). Together they describe complete inclusion - not tolerated guests, but full members with rights and a home.

Lesson: Wherever you've felt like a permanent guest, tolerated but never quite belonging - that's not how I see you. You're family, with a home, not a visa that could be revoked.

- See Also:** Philippians 3:20 speaks of believers' 'citizenship' being in heaven. Galatians 6:10 refers to 'the household of faith'.
- 2:20

(KJV) And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

(B:E Project) You're built on a foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the most important cornerstone holding it all together.

Context: Paul shifts to a building metaphor for the church, which he'll develop through the end of the chapter.

Meaning: A cornerstone in ancient construction set the alignment for an entire building - everything else was measured against it. Describing Christ this way means the whole structure's stability and shape depend on him, not on any individual member's strength.

Lesson: You don't have to be the load-bearing wall holding everything together by yourself. There's a foundation stone stronger than you, already set - build your life on that, not on your own precarious effort to hold everything up.

See Also: Isaiah 28:16 prophesies a 'precious corner stone, a sure foundation'. 1 Peter 2:6-7 and 1 Corinthians 3:11 both apply this cornerstone imagery directly to Christ.
- 2:21

(KJV) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

(B:E Project) In him, the whole building is joined together properly and keeps growing into a holy temple, belonging to the Lord.

Context: Paul continues the building metaphor, now emphasising ongoing growth rather than a static, finished structure.

Meaning: This is a living building, not a monument - it 'groweth', suggesting change and development over time rather than a completed, static achievement. Calling it a 'temple' gives it sacred purpose: a place where God's presence is meant to be found.

Lesson: You're not a finished product, and neither is the community you belong to - growth is expected, even built in. Don't panic at your own unfinished state; it's part of the design, not a failure of it.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 calls believers collectively 'the temple of God'. 1 Peter 2:5 describes them as 'lively stones... built up a spiritual house'.
- 2:22

(KJV) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

(B:E Project) And you also, together with everyone else, are being built into a place where God lives, through the Spirit.

Context: This closes chapter 2, bringing the whole argument - from spiritual death, to grace, to the union of Jew and Gentile - to its final image: a shared dwelling place for God.

- Meaning:** The chapter that began with individuals described as spiritually dead ends with a picture of a living, corporate structure where God himself is said to actually dwell. It's a remarkable arc - from deadness and exclusion to becoming, together, the very place where the divine is present.

Lesson: What's being built isn't just about your individual improvement - it's about becoming, together with others, somewhere I can genuinely be present. Community isn't optional decoration on your faith; it's the point.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 6:19 speaks of the individual body as 'the temple of the Holy Ghost'; here in Ephesians the image is corporate rather than individual - both are true simultaneously.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 3

Chapter 3 reveals Paul's special mission to explain a long-hidden truth: that non-Jewish people (Gentiles) are now fully equal partners with Jewish believers in God's family, sharing in all His promises through Jesus Christ. Paul, though imprisoned, emphasises that this was God's secret plan, shown directly to him, and he feels unworthy yet privileged to share the boundless blessings of Christ with everyone. He prays earnestly for the Ephesians, asking God to strengthen them from within by His Spirit, to let Christ settle deeply in their hearts through faith, and to enable them to truly grasp the immense, indescribable love of Christ, so they might be completely filled with God's complete presence. The chapter concludes with a powerful praise to God, who can do far more than anyone can imagine.

- 3:1

(KJV) For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

(B:E Project) This is why I, Paul, a prisoner because of my devotion to Jesus Christ, for the sake of you non-Jewish readers...

Context: Paul begins a new section reflecting on his personal role in the 'mystery' of Gentile inclusion just described - though he interrupts this sentence and won't complete it until verse 14.

Meaning: Paul frames his imprisonment not as a tragedy that happened to him but as something bound up with his mission specifically to non-Jewish people - suffering with meaning attached to it, not random misfortune.

Lesson: Difficult circumstances don't automatically mean your purpose has been derailed. Even confined, Paul kept his sense of mission intact - your situation, however limited, doesn't have to strip away your sense of why you're here.

See Also: Colossians 1:24 and Philippians 1:7 both describe Paul's imprisonment in similarly purposeful, non-defeated terms.
- 3:2

(KJV) If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward:

- (B:E Project) Assuming you've heard about the special role God gave me - his grace entrusted to me specifically for your benefit.
- Context:** Paul explains his authority to write about this topic - not self-appointed expertise, but a specific commission he understands himself to have received.
- Meaning:** The word for 'dispensation' here means a stewardship or administrative role - like being trusted to manage something on someone else's behalf. Paul frames his ministry not as a personal achievement but as a responsibility handed to him.
- Lesson:** Whatever role or responsibility you carry, hold it as something entrusted to you for others' benefit, not as personal property to be used however you please.
- See Also:** Colossians 1:25 uses nearly identical language: 'a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you'.
- 3:3 (KJV) *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*
(B:E Project) God revealed to me directly the secret plan I'm talking about - as I already briefly wrote about earlier.
- Context:** Paul refers back either to something earlier in this same letter (perhaps chapter 1) or to previous correspondence, grounding his authority in direct revelation.
- Meaning:** Paul claims this wasn't something he worked out through clever reasoning, but something disclosed to him - important because it means the message carries an authority beyond just his personal opinion.
- Lesson:** Some truths aren't things you can reason your way into fully alone - they need to be revealed, opened up to you, often through unexpected means. Stay open to insight arriving from beyond your own effort.
- See Also:** Galatians 1:12 makes a similar claim - Paul received the gospel 'by the revelation of Jesus Christ', not from human teaching.
- 3:4 (KJV) *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*
(B:E Project) So when you read what I've written, you'll be able to understand how well I grasp this mystery about Christ.
- Context:** Paul continues, explaining the purpose of his earlier brief comments (likely referring back to chapter 1).
- Meaning:** Paul wants his understanding to be tested and verified by the readers themselves through their own reading, not simply taken on faith in his authority alone - an invitation to genuine, examined understanding.
- Lesson:** Don't just take someone's word for a truth secondhand - go and read, examine, and test it for yourself. Real understanding invites scrutiny rather than fearing it.

- See Also:** Acts 17:11 praises the Bereans for searching the Scriptures themselves to verify Paul's teaching, rather than accepting it blindly.
- 3:5 (KJV) *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*
(B:E Project) In previous generations this truth wasn't made known to people, but now it's been revealed by the Spirit to his holy messengers and prophets.
- Context:** Paul emphasises the newness of this revelation - something genuinely hidden throughout earlier history, now disclosed in his own time.
- Meaning:** This underlines that the full inclusion of Gentiles wasn't something Old Testament readers could have fully worked out on their own - it's presented as a genuinely new development, a fresh unveiling rather than something merely rediscovered.
- Lesson:** Understanding often unfolds gradually across time, not all at once. Don't be discouraged if certain truths take a while to become clear to you - even history itself moves in stages.
- See Also:** Romans 16:25-26 speaks of 'the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest'. Colossians 1:26 makes the identical point.
- 3:6 (KJV) *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*
(B:E Project) The secret is this: non-Jewish people now share fully in the inheritance, belong to the same body, and share in the same promise in Christ, through the good news.
- Context:** This is the actual content of the 'mystery' Paul has been building up to since verse 3 - a plain statement of full Gentile inclusion.
- Meaning:** Three words stack up here to stress total equality: fellow-heirs, same body, joint-partakers. There's no hierarchy of insiders and outsiders left standing - Paul states it as flatly as possible.
- Lesson:** Full belonging isn't a lesser, second-tier membership - it's complete equality, no asterisks attached. Don't settle for feeling like a partial member of any community that claims to welcome you.
- See Also:** Galatians 3:28-29 makes the same point about Gentiles being 'Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'.
- 3:7 (KJV) *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*
(B:E Project) I was made a servant of this message, through the gift of God's grace given to me by his power actively working in me.

Context: Paul returns to describing his personal role, crediting his effectiveness entirely to God's power rather than his own ability.

Meaning: Paul, a man who by his own account had once persecuted the early church, describes his transformation into a servant of the very message he once opposed as entirely due to grace and power working in him, not any natural talent.

Lesson: Your past disqualifications don't determine your future usefulness. Whatever ability you end up having to help others came from somewhere beyond your own resources - stay humble about it.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 15:10 - 'by the grace of God I am what I am... yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me'.

3:8 *(KJV) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*
(B:E Project) To me - the least significant of all God's people - this privilege was given: to tell the non-Jewish world about the boundless, unfathomable riches found in Christ.

Context: Paul continues describing his own unworthiness for the task he's been given, using deliberately humble self-description.

Meaning: This isn't false modesty for effect - Paul genuinely seems to regard his violent past (he had persecuted Christians) as making him an unlikely choice, which makes the trust placed in him more remarkable, not less.

Lesson: I don't wait for people to become impressive before I use them. Some of the most effective messengers of grace are people painfully aware of how undeserving they are of the privilege - that awareness, not achievement, qualifies you.

See Also: 1 Timothy 1:15-16 has Paul calling himself 'chief' of sinners, yet shown mercy as an example for others. 1 Corinthians 15:9 - 'I am the least of the apostles'.

3:9 *(KJV) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*
(B:E Project) And to make it clear to everyone how this mystery works - the secret hidden in God since the beginning of time, the God who created everything through Jesus Christ.

Context: Paul explains a further purpose of his ministry: universal clarity about this plan, not just Gentile inclusion in itself but public understanding of the whole design.

Meaning: The plan isn't meant to stay a private insight for a select few - Paul's explicit goal is that 'all men' see it clearly. It's also tied back to creation itself, framing Christ's role not just in salvation but in the very origin of everything.

Lesson: What's true and good isn't meant to be hoarded by a privileged few who already understand it. Part of your job, once you've grasped something valuable, is helping make it clear and visible to others.

See Also: Colossians 1:16 states plainly: 'all things were created by him, and for him'. Romans 16:25 speaks of the mystery 'kept secret since the world began'.

3:10 *(KJV) To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*
(B:E Project) The purpose of all this is that the church would now display God's endlessly varied wisdom to every ruler and authority in the spiritual realm.

Context: Paul offers a striking and somewhat unusual claim - the existence of a unified, diverse church isn't just good for its members, it's a demonstration to spiritual powers themselves.

Meaning: This puts remarkable weight on something that might seem small - an ordinary local community of believers - describing it as a kind of cosmic exhibit, evidence displayed even to unseen spiritual authorities of just how varied and creative God's wisdom is.

Lesson: The way you and others learn to live together across real differences matters more than you might think - it's not just self-improvement, it's a demonstration to the wider order of things about what's genuinely possible.

See Also: 1 Peter 1:12 says even angels 'desire to look into' these things. Colossians 1:16 lists the same 'principalities and powers' language.

3:11 *(KJV) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*
(B:E Project) This all happened according to the eternal plan he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Context: Paul reiterates that none of this - the mystery, the church's role, Gentile inclusion - was improvised; it's part of a plan as old as eternity itself.

Meaning: This reinforces a theme running throughout the letter's opening chapters: nothing here is reactive or accidental. What might look, from a human vantage point, like an unexpected new development, is described as the outworking of an ancient, settled purpose.

Lesson: Even the surprises in your own story might not be as random as they feel in the moment. There can be a coherent thread running underneath events that only becomes visible with time and perspective.

See Also: 2 Timothy 1:9 speaks of grace 'given us in Christ Jesus before the world began'.

3:12 *(KJV) In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*
(B:E Project) Through him, we can approach God with boldness and confidence, because we trust in him.

Context: Paul returns to a theme first raised in 2:18 - direct, confident access to God - now as a direct result of the eternal plan just described.

Lesson: Build your life on love as the foundation, not on fear, guilt, or the need to prove yourself. Anything built on those shakier foundations will eventually crack under pressure.

See Also: Colossians 2:7 uses near-identical imagery: 'rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith'.

3:18 *(KJV) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*
(B:E Project) So that you, together with all of God's people, would be able to grasp just how wide, how long, how deep, and how high this all is.

Context: Paul's prayer reaches for language big enough to describe what he's asking them to understand, deliberately using four spatial dimensions to suggest something immeasurable.

Meaning: The object of these four dimensions isn't stated until the next verse - it's love itself. By stacking up spatial language without immediately naming what's being measured, Paul builds a sense of something too vast to fully define, only to be explored together, communally ('with all saints'), not alone.

Lesson: Some things are too big to fully understand on your own - you need other people's perspectives and experiences to even begin grasping the full scope. Seek understanding in community, not isolation.

See Also: Job 11:7-9 uses similar language of dimensions too vast to fathom, describing the nature of God himself.

3:19 *(KJV) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*
(B:E Project) And to know Christ's love, even though it goes beyond what you can fully understand - so that you'd be completely filled with the fullness of God himself.

Context: This completes the prayer's central request, naming love as the immeasurable thing from verse 18 and stating the ultimate goal: complete fullness.

Meaning: There's a striking paradox here - Paul prays for people to 'know' something that 'passeth knowledge', suggesting a kind of understanding that goes beyond intellectual grasp into lived experience. The end goal - being 'filled with all the fulness of God' - is about as expansive a claim as Scripture makes about human potential.

Lesson: Some truths you won't fully figure out with your head - you'll only really know them by experiencing them, by letting love actually reach you rather than just studying it from a distance. Let yourself be filled, not just informed.

See Also: Romans 8:38-39 argues nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ - a companion passage on the same immeasurable love. Colossians 2:9-10 speaks of the 'fulness of the Godhead' and believers being 'complete in him'.

3:20 *(KJV) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*
(B:E Project) Now, to the one who is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or even imagine, by the power that's already at work within us...

Context: Paul closes chapters 1-3 with a soaring doxology (a burst of praise), summarising everything before shifting to practical instruction in chapter 4.

Meaning: This is one of the most expansive statements in the letter about what's possible - not just meeting requests, but exceeding both what's asked and what's even conceivable, and crucially, based on power already present and working, not power yet to arrive.

Lesson: Don't limit your hopes to only what seems realistic or reasonable to ask for. There's more possible than you can currently imagine, and the resource for it isn't distant - it's already at work in you right now.

See Also: Romans 8:37 - 'more than conquerors'. Jude 1:24-25 closes with a similar doxology about God's ability to keep believers.

3:21 *(KJV) Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*
(B:E Project) To him be glory in the church, through Christ Jesus, throughout every generation, forever and ever. Amen.

Context: This final verse closes the letter's opening theological section (chapters 1-3) with a formal doxology, before Paul turns to practical living in chapter 4.

Meaning: Notably, glory is located specifically 'in the church' - not in an abstract, disconnected way, but tied to an actual, ordinary community of people. The phrase 'world without end' (literally, to all generations of the age of the ages) stretches this praise beyond any single lifetime.

Lesson: The praise and glory that matters most isn't found in isolated grandeur, but lived out through actual communities of ordinary people, generation after generation. Your part, however small, plays into something that outlasts you.

See Also: Romans 11:36 and Galatians 1:5 both close sections of Paul's letters with very similar doxology formulas: 'to whom be glory for ever. Amen'.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 4

Chapter 4 of Ephesians shifts from deep theological teachings to practical advice for how Christians should live their daily lives. It starts by urging believers to live in a way that matches the special calling God has given them, emphasising qualities like humility, gentleness, patience, and love, all with the goal of keeping the spiritual unity that God provides. Paul explains that this unity

is based on the simple truth of "one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father." He then describes how Christ has given different spiritual abilities and roles, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to equip every believer. The purpose of these gifts is to help the church grow strong, mature, and unified in its understanding of Christ. This way, believers won't be easily swayed by false teachings but will grow in truth and love, with Christ as their leader. The chapter concludes with a strong call to stop living the old, corrupt way—like lying, uncontrolled anger, stealing, and using hurtful words—that characterised their lives before knowing Christ. Instead, believers are to "put on a new self" by renewing their thoughts and attitudes, speaking honestly, working hard, building others up with their words, and showing kindness, compassion, and forgiveness to one another, just as God has forgiven them through Christ.

4:1 *(KJV)* I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
(B:E Project) Paul, writing from prison for following Jesus, urges the readers to live in a way that matches the incredible calling they've received.

Context: This verse opens the second half of the letter — the "therefore" pivots from three chapters describing believers' new identity to instructions on how to live it out.

Meaning: The word translated "vocation" or "calling" isn't a job — it's the sense of purpose and worth Paul has just spent three chapters establishing (chosen, loved, made alive, united). Now he says: since you've been given this deep sense of identity and belonging, let your daily life actually reflect it. It's a call to integrity — living up to who you really are, not who circumstance or bad habits say you are.

Lesson: I'm not asking you to earn your place — you already have it. I'm asking you to walk like someone who knows it. When you know you're loved and secure, you don't need to fight, grab, or prove yourself; you can simply live well.

See Also: Philippians 1:27 (a nearly identical charge to live worthy of the gospel); Colossians 1:10 ("walk worthy of the Lord").

4:2 *(KJV) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*
(B:E Project) Be completely humble and gentle, patient, making allowance for each other because you love each other.

Context: Continues the opening charge of 4:1, listing the practical qualities that make unity possible in a diverse community.

Meaning: These four qualities — humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance — are the opposite of the status-seeking and grudge-holding that fracture most communities. Paul is naming the actual skills required to live alongside people who annoy or differ from you, not abstract ideals.

Lesson: Real strength isn't dominance — it's the patience to put up with people's rough edges without walking away or growing bitter. Love isn't a feeling you wait for; it's the choice to keep extending grace to someone even on their worst day.

See Also: Colossians 3:12-13 (near-identical list of virtues); Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Spirit).

4:3 *(KJV)* Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
(B:E Project) Make every effort to preserve the oneness the Spirit has already created between you, held together by peace.

Context: Caps the opening exhortation — unity isn't something believers create from scratch but something already given that must be actively guarded.

Meaning: Notice the balance: unity is a gift already present, yet it still requires effort to keep. Peace isn't the absence of conflict but the glue that holds a diverse group together despite friction.

Lesson: You don't have to manufacture togetherness with people — where real connection exists, your job is simply to protect it, not sabotage it with pride or grudges. Guard your relationships the way you'd guard something valuable, because they are.

See Also: John 17:21 (Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one"); Psalm 133:1 ("how good.. to dwell together in unity").

4:4 *(KJV)* There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
(B:E Project) There's one body of believers and one Spirit, just as you were all called to one and the same hope.

Context: Begins a rapid-fire list of seven "ones" grounding the appeal for unity in shared reality rather than mere sentiment.

Meaning: Paul isn't pleading for unity as a nice idea — he's pointing to what's already objectively true: underneath all the differences (background, status) there's one shared reality binding everyone together.

Lesson: Whatever divides you from someone else on the surface is smaller than what actually connects you underneath. Look for the shared humanity and shared hope before you look for the differences.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (one body, many members, one Spirit); Romans 12:5.

4:5 *(KJV) One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*
(B:E Project) One Lord, one faith, one baptism — the same for everyone.

Context: Continues the sevenfold list of unifying realities from verse 4.

- Lesson:** I haven't disappeared to some far-off place after going through what I went through — I'm present everywhere, including wherever you are right now. Nothing in your life is outside my reach or my understanding.

See Also: Ephesians 1:22-23 (Christ "filleth all in all"); Matthew 28:20 ("lo, I am with you alway").
- 4:11** *(KJV) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

(B:E Project) And he gave some people the role of apostle, some prophet, some evangelist, and some pastor and teacher.

Context: Names the specific gifted roles Christ distributed to the church, following on from the "gifts unto men" of verse 8.

Meaning: These are functional roles within the early community — founding messengers, those who spoke timely truth, those who spread the message, and those who shepherd and teach. The church was meant to run on distributed responsibility, not a single leader doing everything.

Lesson: I don't run things through one person at the top — I spread the work out, trusting different people with different strengths. If you have a gift for teaching, encouraging, or leading, it was given so you'd use it for others, not so you'd sit on it.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 (a similar list of roles); Romans 12:6-8.
- 4:12** *(KJV) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

(B:E Project) Their purpose is to equip God's people for the work of serving others, so that the whole community is built up.

Context: States the purpose of the gifted roles listed in verse 11 — they exist to train others, not to do all the work themselves.

Meaning: This corrects the assumption that leaders do the "spiritual work" while everyone else watches. Paul's model is the opposite: leaders exist to equip and train ordinary people to do the work themselves, so the whole community grows stronger together.

Lesson: Anyone in a position to teach or lead is meant to be building others up, not building a following around themselves. If you're growing, you're meant to pass that growth on — that's how a whole community gets stronger, not just one person.

See Also: 2 Timothy 2:2 ("commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"); 1 Peter 4:10.
- 4:13** *(KJV) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

- (B:E Project)** Until we all reach real unity in what we believe and in knowing Christ, growing into full maturity, measured by nothing less than the fullness of Christ himself.
- Context:** Gives the long-term goal of the equipping ministry described in 4:11-12 — genuine, mature unity, not just organisational cooperation.

Meaning: The standard set here is high — not just getting along, but growing toward full maturity, with Christ's own character as the measuring stick. It's a growth process, aimed at the whole community together, not just individuals.

Lesson: I'm not asking you to be perfect today — I'm asking you to keep growing, together, toward something better than where you are now. Maturity isn't a solo project; it happens best alongside other people who are also growing.

See Also: Colossians 1:28 ("present every man perfect in Christ Jesus"); Philippians 3:12-14.
- 4:14** *(KJV) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

(B:E Project) So that we're no longer like children, tossed around and blown off course by every new teaching, by the trickery of scheming people who deliberately try to deceive.

Context: Explains why maturity (4:13) matters — it's the antidote to being manipulated by clever but dishonest influences.

Meaning: The image is of a small boat without ballast, thrown about by every wave and gust. Immaturity, Paul says, leaves you vulnerable to people skilled at manipulation. Growing up spiritually is partly about developing discernment.

Lesson: I want you settled enough in who you are and what's true that you're not swept along by whoever shouts loudest or sounds cleverest. Real growth gives you roots, so you can weigh what people tell you instead of just being carried by it.

See Also: Hebrews 13:9 ("be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines"); 2 Timothy 3:13.
- 4:15** *(KJV) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

(B:E Project) Instead, speaking the truth with love, we grow up in every way into Christ, who is the head.

Context: Gives the positive alternative to being tossed about by deception (4:14) — the method of healthy growth: honesty combined with love.

Meaning: This famous phrase names a genuine tension most people struggle with — being honest often feels unkind, and being kind often tempts us to dodge the truth. Paul

insists both are necessary together; truth without love is cruelty, love without truth is deception.

Lesson: Don't sacrifice honesty to keep the peace, and don't use honesty as a weapon. The people who help you grow most are the ones who tell you the truth because they love you, not despite it.

See Also: Zechariah 8:16 ("speak every man the truth to his neighbour"); Proverbs 27:6 ("faithful are the wounds of a friend").

4:16 *(KJV) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*
(B:E Project) From Christ, the whole body is joined and held together by every supporting connection, and as each part does its own work properly, the whole body grows and builds itself up in love.

Context: Closes the section on church unity and gifts with a body metaphor, describing how individual contributions combine to build up the whole.

Meaning: Paul pictures the community like a human body, where growth doesn't come from one organ doing everything but from every joint and part functioning as it should. Health and growth are collective — dependent on everyone quietly doing their part.

Lesson: You don't have to carry the whole thing yourself, and the group doesn't work if you check out either. Do your part well, in love, and trust that everyone else doing theirs is how the whole thing actually grows.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 (the body with many members); Colossians 2:19.

4:17 *(KJV) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*
(B:E Project) So I'm telling you this, and I insist on it: don't go on living the way the rest of society lives, with empty, futile thinking.

Context: Opens a new section (4:17-32) shifting from unity within the community to personal ethics — how believers should no longer live like the culture around them.

Meaning: "Vanity of mind" describes thinking that's ultimately empty — chasing things that don't satisfy, running on autopilot without real direction. Paul isn't condemning outsiders as inferior people; he's diagnosing a pattern of purposeless living.

Lesson: I'm not asking you to look down on anyone — I'm asking you not to drift through life running on empty, chasing things that were never going to fill you up. You were made for more than autopilot living.

See Also: Romans 1:21 ("became vain in their imaginations"); Colossians 3:7 ("in the which ye also walked some time").

4:18 *(KJV) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*
(B:E Project) Their thinking has gone dark, cut off from the life God offers, because of the ignorance and stubborn closed-heartedness within them.

Context: Continues describing the "futile" way of life named in 4:17, tracing its root to a hardened, closed-off inner life.

Meaning: Paul locates the problem not in a lack of information but in a "blindness of heart" — a stubborn unwillingness to see. It's describing spiritual and emotional disconnection, the kind that leaves a person feeling cut off from meaning even while going through the motions.

Lesson: A closed heart is what actually keeps people stuck, more than not knowing better. I'm not looking for people who have all the answers — I'm looking for people willing to stay open.

See Also: Romans 1:21 (similar description of darkened hearts); Mark 3:5 ("hardness of their hearts").

4:19 *(KJV) Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*
(B:E Project) Having lost all sense of shame, they've thrown themselves into unrestrained indulgence, greedily grabbing at every kind of excess.

Context: Completes the description of the "old" way of life (4:17-19) as background before Paul contrasts it with what the readers actually learned about Christ (4:20-24).

Meaning: "Past feeling" describes numbness — a conscience that's stopped registering harm because it's been ignored so long, leading to compulsive, greedy overindulgence. It's less a moral accusation and more a description of the exhausting, empty cycle excess creates.

Lesson: When you keep ignoring what your conscience tells you, it eventually goes quiet — and that silence isn't peace, it's numbness. I want to wake that feeling back up in you, not shame you for having lost it.

See Also: 1 Timothy 4:2 ("conscience seared with a hot iron"); Romans 1:24.

4:20 *(KJV) But ye have not so learned Christ;*
(B:E Project) But that's not what you learned when you came to know Christ.

Context: A sharp pivot — after describing the old, empty way of life (4:17-19), Paul reminds readers this isn't what they were actually taught.

Meaning: Short and pointed: whatever they'd picked up from surrounding culture, what they actually learned about Christ was different — pointing toward something better than drifting, numbness, and excess. It's a call back to what they already know is true.

Lesson: You already know there's a better way to live than the empty version — hold onto that, don't let the noise around you talk you out of what you've already learned.
See Also: Colossians 2:6-7 ("as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him").

4:21 *(KJV) If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:*
(B:E Project) Assuming you really heard him and were taught by him — since the truth is found in Jesus.

Context: Continues the thought of 4:20, grounding right living in genuinely having listened to and learned from Jesus.
Meaning: Paul assumes his readers have had real exposure to Jesus' teaching and character, and grounds "truth" concretely in a person rather than an abstract idea. Truth, for Paul, isn't just correct information — it's embodied in how Jesus actually lived.
Lesson: I'm not just a set of ideas to agree with — pay attention to how I actually lived and treated people, because that's where the truth becomes real and livable, not just theoretical.
See Also: John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth, and the life").

4:22 *(KJV) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*
(B:E Project) You were taught to take off your old way of life — the old self, which is being destroyed by deceptive desires.

Context: Introduces the "put off / put on" imagery (4:22-24) at the heart of Paul's practical ethics — like changing clothes, not just adjusting behaviour.
Meaning: The image is of taking off worn, dirty clothing. The "old man" is the identity shaped by old habits, and Paul calls those desires "deceitful" because they promise satisfaction they never actually deliver. It's a call to consciously discard an old identity.
Lesson: The old habits and cravings that used to run your life were lying to you about what would make you happy. You're allowed to take that old self off like a worn-out coat — it's not who you have to keep being.
See Also: Colossians 3:9 ("ye have put off the old man with his deeds"); Romans 6:6.

4:23 *(KJV) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*
(B:E Project) And instead be made new in the way you think, at the deepest level.

Context: The middle step between putting off the old self (4:22) and putting on the new (4:24) — an inner renewal of thinking, not just outward behaviour change.

Meaning: Real change, Paul says, starts in how you think, not just what you do. Behaviour modification without changed thinking tends to be temporary; Paul is describing something deeper — a genuine shift in perspective.
Lesson: Real change doesn't start with forcing yourself to act differently — it starts with letting your mind actually be renewed, seeing things differently. Behaviour follows a changed mind, not the other way round.
See Also: Romans 12:2 ("be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"); Titus 3:5.

4:24 *(KJV) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*
(B:E Project) And to put on the new self, created to be like God — genuinely good and set apart for what's right.

Context: Completes the put-off/put-on imagery begun in 4:22, giving the positive replacement for the old self.
Meaning: Just as you take off old clothes, you deliberately put on new ones. This "new man" isn't self-improvement by willpower but a fresh identity, patterned after God's own character of goodness and integrity.
Lesson: You're not just told to stop being bad — you're given a whole new identity to grow into, one built on real goodness, not performance. Put it on daily, the way you'd get dressed.
See Also: Colossians 3:10 ("put on the new man... renewed in knowledge"); 2 Corinthians 5:17.

4:25 *(KJV) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*
(B:E Project) So get rid of lying — tell each other the truth, because we all belong to one another.

Context: Begins a run of very concrete, practical instructions (4:25-32) that flesh out what "putting on the new man" looks like day to day.
Meaning: The reasoning given for honesty isn't "because lying is against the rules" but "because we belong to each other" — like organs in one body, lying to a fellow member damages the whole community's trust and function.
Lesson: When you lie to someone, you're not just bending a rule — you're damaging a real connection between two people who belong to each other. Truthfulness is simply how you treat someone you actually care about.
See Also: Zechariah 8:16; Colossians 3:9 ("lie not one to another").

4:26 *(KJV) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

- (B:E Project)** It's fine to feel angry — just don't let it lead you into wrongdoing. And don't stay angry all day; deal with it before nightfall.

Context: Addresses anger directly, treating it as a natural emotion that needs managing rather than suppressing or venting without limit.

Meaning: This is strikingly realistic — Paul doesn't say "never be angry," acknowledging it as a legitimate response, but draws a firm line around letting it fester or control your actions. Resolving it before sundown is practical wisdom against nursing a grudge overnight.

Lesson: You're allowed to feel angry — I'm not asking you to fake being fine. What matters is what you do with it: don't let it curdle into something that controls you or poisons a relationship overnight. Deal with it while it's fresh.

See Also: Psalm 4:4 ("stand in awe, and sin not... be still"); James 1:19-20.
- 4:27** *(KJV) Neither give place to the devil.*
(B:E Project) And don't give the devil an opening.

Context: A short, sharp follow-up to the warning about unresolved anger in 4:26, naming the deeper risk of letting it fester.

Meaning: Paul treats unresolved anger as a literal doorway for destructive influence — a small compromise that can open into much bigger damage. It's a warning that small unaddressed grudges have a way of growing.

Lesson: The small resentments you let slide are exactly where bigger trouble gets its foothold. Deal with things early, while they're still small — don't leave the door open.

See Also: James 4:7 ("resist the devil, and he will flee from you"); 1 Peter 5:8.
- 4:28** *(KJV) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*
(B:E Project) Anyone who's been stealing should stop — instead, work honestly with their own hands, so they'll have something to share with people in need.

Context: Applies the put-off/put-on pattern to a specific concrete vice — theft — replacing it with honest work and generosity.

Meaning: The goal isn't merely "stop stealing" but redirecting the same energy toward productive work that ends in generosity. Paul consistently replaces a vice not with mere restraint but with a positive, other-focused habit.

Lesson: I don't just want you to stop taking from others — I want to see that same drive redirected into honest effort, so you end up with something to give rather than something to take. That's a much bigger change than just quitting a bad habit.

See Also: 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (working with one's own hands); Acts 20:35 ("more blessed to give than to receive").

- 4:29** *(KJV) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*
(B:E Project) Don't let harmful talk come out of your mouth — only words that build people up as needed, so what you say actually does good for whoever hears it.

Context: Continues the practical list (4:25-32), turning from actions to speech — the words believers use in everyday conversation.

Meaning: Paul sets a high bar for speech: not just "avoid swearing" but a positive standard — does this word actually help the person hearing it? It reframes speech as a tool that can either tear down or genuinely benefit someone.

Lesson: Before you speak, ask a simple question: will this actually help the person hearing it? Words are one of the easiest ways to either wound someone or genuinely lift them — choose the second, every time you can.

See Also: Proverbs 15:1 ("a soft answer turneth away wrath"); Colossians 4:6 ("let your speech be always with grace").
- 4:30** *(KJV) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*
(B:E Project) And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit, who has marked you as secure until the day you're finally set free.

Context: A relational warning in the middle of the practical instructions, treating harmful words and behaviour as something that grieves, not just breaks a rule.

Meaning: The language is deeply personal — "grieve" implies a relationship, not just a rulebook, as though God is genuinely affected by how believers treat each other. Yet the "seal" stays intact — grieving the Spirit doesn't cancel the security already given.

Lesson: When you hurt someone or use words carelessly, understand it actually grieves me — this isn't about breaking abstract rules, it's about a relationship. But grieving me doesn't mean losing me; you're still held, still secure.

See Also: Ephesians 1:13-14 (the same sealing image); Isaiah 63:10.
- 4:31** *(KJV) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*
(B:E Project) Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, shouting, insults — every form of ill will.

Context: A list summing up the destructive attitudes and behaviours the "old man" produces, immediately preceding the positive alternative in 4:32.

Meaning: The list moves from an internal attitude (bitterness) outward to explosive emotion, to public conflict, to underlying intent (malice) — a full picture of how resentment escalates from the inside out if left unchecked.

Lesson: Bitterness doesn't stay quietly inside you — left alone, it grows into outbursts, insults, and ill will toward others. Better to deal with it at the root, before it works its way outward.

See Also: Colossians 3:8 ("anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication"); James 3:14-16.

4:32 *(KJV) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*
(B:E Project) Instead, be kind to each other, warm-hearted, forgiving one another the same way God forgave you because of Christ.

Context: Closes chapter 4's practical section with the positive alternative to the vice list of 4:31, and grounds it in the readers' own experience of being forgiven.

Meaning: This is the chapter's punchline: the standard and the motivation for forgiving others is the forgiveness already received. Paul doesn't ask for forgiveness as a moral duty in a vacuum — it flows naturally from having been forgiven yourself.

Lesson: You can afford to forgive because you've already been forgiven so much — it's not about what the other person deserves, it's about passing on what you were freely given. Kindness isn't weakness; it's the most secure response there is.

See Also: Matthew 6:14-15 ("if ye forgive men... your heavenly Father will also forgive you"); Colossians 3:13.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 5

Ephesians chapter 5 calls believers to live lives that mirror God's love and purity, encouraging them to avoid behaviours associated with darkness, such as immorality, greed, and crude speech. It emphasises that those who practise such sins will not inherit God's kingdom. The chapter urges followers of Christ to live as "children of light," wisely discerning God's will, making the most of their time, and being continually filled with the Holy Spirit instead of being controlled by alcohol. This Spirit-filled life is expressed through worship, thanksgiving, and mutual respect among believers. The second half of the chapter provides specific guidance for family relationships, particularly between husbands and wives, outlining how a husband should love his wife with the sacrificial love of Christ for the church, and how a wife should respect and cooperate with her husband.

5:1 *(KJV) Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*
(B:E Project) So imitate God, the way beloved children imitate their parents.

Context: Opens chapter 5 by drawing the natural conclusion from 4:32 — since God has forgiven you, imitate his character, starting from a place of being loved, not obligation.

Meaning: The word for "followers" means imitators — and the model is a child copying a parent they love and trust, not a subordinate obeying a distant authority. It reframes moral effort as flowing from security and affection rather than fear.

Lesson: You don't imitate someone to earn their love — you imitate someone because you already have it, and it rubs off on you naturally. Copy what you've seen of real love and kindness; that's the whole aim.

See Also: Matthew 5:44-48 ("that ye may be the children of your Father"); 1 John 4:19.

5:2 *(KJV) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*
(B:E Project) And live a life shaped by love, the way Christ loved us — giving himself up for us as a gift that pleased God completely.

Context: Defines what "imitating God" (5:1) actually looks like in practice — a self-giving love modelled on Christ's own sacrifice.

Meaning: Paul roots the whole ethical section that follows in one image: love defined not as a warm feeling but as self-giving, following Christ's example. Everything else in the chapter (light, wisdom, marriage) flows from this definition of love.

Lesson: Love, at its truest, isn't about what you can get — it's about what you're willing to give. I gave everything, not because you deserved it, but because that's what real love actually does.

See Also: John 15:13 ("greater love hath no man than this"); Galatians 2:20.

5:3 *(KJV) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*
(B:E Project) But sexual immorality, moral impurity of any kind, and greed shouldn't even be talked about casually among you — that's not fitting for people set apart for good.

Context: Contrasts the self-giving love just described (5:2) with self-serving appetites — sexual exploitation and greed — that undermine it.

Meaning: Sexual immorality and greed are grouped together deliberately: both are about taking rather than giving, using people or things for personal gratification rather than genuine love. Paul's concern is consistency — you can't claim to live a life of love while indulging habits that exploit others.

Lesson: The opposite of love isn't hate — it's using people or things for your own gratification instead of genuinely giving to them. Watch for that pattern in yourself more than any single act.

See Also: Colossians 3:5 ("fornication, uncleanness... covetousness, which is idolatry"); 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7.

Context: A parenthetical explanation of what "light" (5:8) actually produces in a life — naming its visible fruit.

Meaning: This defines light concretely, in terms of character outcomes — goodness, integrity, and honesty — rather than abstract mysticism. You can recognise light by what it grows, the same way you'd recognise a healthy tree by its fruit.

Lesson: You can tell what's genuinely good in your life by what it actually produces over time — goodness, integrity, honesty. If a habit or influence doesn't grow those things in you, it's worth questioning.

See Also: Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Spirit); Matthew 7:16-20 ("by their fruits ye shall know them").

5:10 *(KJV) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*
(B:E Project) Test everything to work out what's genuinely pleasing to God.

Context: A brief instruction connected to living as "children of light" (5:8) — the ongoing discernment that light-filled living requires.

Meaning: This calls for active, ongoing discernment — not passively following rules but actively testing choices against what genuinely matters, rather than assuming everything is fine by default.

Lesson: Don't just go along with whatever's easiest or most common — actually pause and weigh whether something is genuinely good, not just acceptable by the crowd's standard.

See Also: Romans 12:2 ("prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"); 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

5:11 *(KJV) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*
(B:E Project) Don't take part in the pointless things done in darkness — instead, expose them for what they are.

Context: Applies the light/darkness contrast (5:8) practically — not just personal avoidance but active honesty about harmful patterns.

Meaning: Paul calls the works of darkness "unfruitful" — they produce nothing lasting or good. And the instruction goes beyond mere avoidance to "reprove" — to name and expose, implying honest confrontation rather than silent tolerance.

Lesson: Silence in the face of something genuinely harmful isn't kindness — sometimes love means naming what's wrong clearly, not just staying quiet to keep things comfortable.

See Also: Galatians 6:1 ("restore such an one"); Matthew 18:15.

5:12 *(KJV) For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*

(B:E Project) It's shameful even to describe what people do in secret.

Context: Gives the reasoning behind avoiding participation (5:11) — some behaviours are so degrading they don't bear detailed description.

Meaning: Paul avoids graphic detail deliberately, pointing to the shameful nature of secretive wrongdoing without dwelling on specifics. Some things don't need to be dwelt on in detail to be understood as harmful.

Lesson: You don't need to catalogue every wrong thing in detail to know it's wrong — some things are better simply avoided than examined closely, even out of curiosity.

See Also: Romans 1:24-27 (Paul similarly declining to dwell excessively on described sins); Psalm 101:3.

5:13 *(KJV) But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*
(B:E Project) But whatever gets exposed to the light becomes visible for what it really is — because light is what makes things visible.

Context: Explains how "light" functions as exposure and clarity, following the call to expose darkness in 5:11.

Meaning: This is almost a definition: light's very nature is to reveal what's really there, stripping away hiding places. Applied to a person's life, honesty and openness naturally expose what's harmful, simply by being present.

Lesson: Bringing something honestly into the open is often enough to defuse its power over you — secrets and shame lose their grip the moment they're brought into the light. That's not punishment; that's freedom.

See Also: John 3:20-21 ("he that doeth truth cometh to the light"); 1 John 1:7.

5:14 *(KJV) Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*
(B:E Project) That's why it's said: Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Context: Closes the light/darkness section (5:8-14) with what appears to be an early Christian hymn or saying, calling for a decisive spiritual awakening.

Meaning: The image compares spiritual dullness to sleep, even death — and calls for an active response, promising that light follows the waking. It's an invitation, not a threat: step toward the light and it meets you.

Lesson: If you feel like you've been sleepwalking through life, this is your wake-up call — and you don't have to have it all figured out first. Just start moving toward the light, and it will meet you there.

See Also: Isaiah 60:1 ("Arise, shine; for thy light is come"); Romans 13:11-12.

- 5:15

(KJV) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
(B:E Project) So be careful how you live — not carelessly, but wisely.

Context: Shifts from the light/darkness theme to practical wisdom for daily conduct, opening a short section on living wisely (5:15-20).

Meaning: "Circumspectly" means looking carefully around, being attentive rather than sleepwalking through decisions. Paul contrasts fools, who drift carelessly, with the wise, who pay attention and choose deliberately.

Lesson: Pay attention to your own life — don't just drift along on autopilot and call it fate. Small deliberate choices, made with real attention, add up to a wise life over time.

See Also: Proverbs 4:26 ("ponder the path of thy feet"); Colossians 4:5 ("walk in wisdom toward them that are without").
- 5:16

(KJV) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
(B:E Project) Make the most of every opportunity, because the times are difficult.

Context: Continues the call to wisdom (5:15), giving a specific reason — the difficulty of the times makes wise use of time urgent.

Meaning: "Redeeming the time" pictures buying back something valuable that's slipping away — a call to use time deliberately rather than letting it be wasted, especially given real difficulties in the world around them.

Lesson: You don't get your time back once it's gone — use it well, especially because the world isn't always going to make that easy. Don't wait for ideal conditions to start living purposefully.

See Also: Colossians 4:5 ("redeeming the time"); Psalm 90:12 ("teach us to number our days").
- 5:17

(KJV) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
(B:E Project) So don't be thoughtless — instead, understand what God actually wants.

Context: Sums up the call to wisdom from 5:15-16 with a direct instruction to actively seek understanding rather than default to thoughtlessness.

Meaning: This continues the wisdom theme, framing spiritual maturity as understanding — an active pursuit of clarity about what genuinely matters — rather than passive drifting or guessing.

Lesson: Don't settle for not knowing what you're doing or why — actually seek to understand what matters most, and let that understanding shape your choices, rather than just reacting to whatever comes.

See Also: Romans 12:2 ("that ye may prove... that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"); Proverbs 3:5-6.

- 5:18

(KJV) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
(B:E Project) Don't get drunk on wine — that leads to reckless living — instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Context: Gives a specific contrast as the section on wisdom continues, comparing one form of excess (drunkenness) with the healthy "filling" believers are invited to instead.

Meaning: Paul contrasts two ways of being "filled" or influenced — one leading to loss of control and ruin, the other to a controlled, empowered life shaped by God's presence. It's a comparison of what actually fills and controls you.

Lesson: Whatever you use to numb or escape reality ultimately controls you, not the other way round — I'd rather fill you with something that gives you more life, not less. Ask what's actually filling you up.

See Also: Proverbs 20:1 ("wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging"); Galatians 5:22-23 (contrast with the fruit of the Spirit).
- 5:19

(KJV) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
(B:E Project) Encourage each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs — singing and making music in your hearts.

Context: Describes one practical expression of being "filled with the Spirit" (5:18) — communal singing and music as mutual encouragement.

Meaning: Music here is both communal (speaking to one another) and personal (in your heart) — a genuine expression of joy and encouragement, not mere ritual. It reflects a community that processes life together through shared expression.

Lesson: Don't underestimate music and shared joy as a way of genuinely lifting each other up — encouragement doesn't always need words; sometimes it just needs shared presence and song.

See Also: Colossians 3:16 ("teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns"); Psalm 100:1-2.
- 5:20

(KJV) Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
(B:E Project) Always giving thanks for everything, to God the Father, through Jesus Christ.

Context: Continues describing life "filled with the Spirit" (5:18) — ongoing gratitude as a defining habit, rounding off before the household instructions begin.

Meaning: "Always" and "all things" is a striking claim — not selective gratitude for good moments only, but a consistent posture of thankfulness even amid difficulty. It's presented as a discipline, not dependent on circumstances being easy.

- Lesson:** Gratitude isn't about pretending everything is fine — it's a discipline you practise even in hard seasons, and it changes how you experience your life far more than changing your circumstances ever could.

See Also: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 ("in every thing give thanks"); Colossians 3:17.
- 5:21

(KJV) Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
(B:E Project) Defer to one another out of reverence for God.

Context: The hinge verse connecting the "filled with the Spirit" section to the household code that follows (5:22-6:9) — mutual submission is the governing principle for all the specific relationships that come next.

Meaning: Before Paul addresses wives, husbands, children, and servants individually, he states the overarching principle applying to everyone — mutual deference, not one-directional domination. Every specific instruction that follows should be read in light of this mutual framework.

Lesson: Real strength includes the willingness to defer to someone else sometimes, not always insisting on your own way. This isn't about who's "in charge" — it's about everyone treating each other with genuine respect, out of reverence for something bigger than themselves.

See Also: Philippians 2:3-4 ("let each esteem other better than themselves"); 1 Peter 5:5.
- 5:22

(KJV) Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
(B:E Project) Wives, defer to your own husbands the way you would to the Lord.

Context: The first specific application of the mutual submission principle of 5:21, addressed to wives within the ancient household structure Paul is speaking into.

Meaning: Read alongside 5:21 (submission is mutual) and 5:25 (husbands are told to love with total self-sacrifice), this isn't a licence for domination — it's one half of a reciprocal relationship where both partners give themselves fully to the other. The comparison "as unto the Lord" sets a high, honouring tone, not a demeaning one.

Lesson: I ask for people to treat each other with real honour and trust in their closest relationships — this only works when it goes both ways, which is exactly what I ask of husbands next, even more demandingly.

See Also: Colossians 3:18 (near-identical instruction); 1 Peter 3:1.
- 5:23

(KJV) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
(B:E Project) Because the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church — and Christ is the one who saves and cares for that body.

- Context:** Gives the reasoning behind 5:22 by comparing the husband-wife relationship to the Christ-church relationship, setting up the extended comparison through verse 33.

Meaning: The word "head" here is defined by what follows: Christ as "saviour of the body," meaning self-sacrificing care and provision, not domineering control. The model set up is entirely about the husband's responsibility to love and protect, not a licence to command.

Lesson: If you're in the "head" position in any relationship, my model is Christ's — someone who serves, saves, and gives everything for the one in his care, not someone who demands service for himself. Authority, in my terms, means responsibility to give, not power to take.

See Also: Colossians 1:18 ("he is the head of the body, the church"); Mark 10:42-45 (Jesus redefining greatness as service).
- 5:24

(KJV) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
(B:E Project) So just as the church submits to Christ, wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Context: Continues the Christ-church comparison from 5:23, drawing the practical conclusion for wives before Paul turns to the far more demanding instruction for husbands in 5:25-33.

Meaning: The comparison only makes sense given the character of Christ just described — a saviour who gives himself up entirely. This isn't submission to an arbitrary or self-serving authority, but trust extended within a relationship modelled on total self-giving love.

Lesson: Trust and deference make sense when they're given to someone who has shown they'll use it to care for you, not exploit you — and that's exactly the standard I'm about to hold husbands to, without exception.

See Also: Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5.
- 5:25

(KJV) Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
(B:E Project) Husbands, love your wives the way Christ loved the church — giving himself up completely for it.

Context: The central instruction to husbands, matching and in some ways exceeding the demand placed on wives — total, self-sacrificial love as the standard.

Meaning: This is the highest possible standard Paul could set — not merely "be nice" but "give yourself up entirely," mirroring Christ's death for the church. Any reading of the household code that ignores this verse's radical demand on husbands misses Paul's actual point.

- Lesson:** If you want to lead in any relationship, my standard is total self-giving, not authority for its own sake — love that would give up everything for the other person's good. That's a far higher bar than simply being obeyed.

See Also: John 15:13; Colossians 3:19 ("husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them").
- 5:26

(KJV) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
(B:E Project) To make the church holy, cleansing it through the washing of water by the word.

Context: Continues describing Christ's self-giving love for the church (5:25) — its purpose was to purify and set the church apart.

Meaning: This describes the purpose behind Christ's sacrifice — not domination but purification and renewal, likely alluding to baptism and the transformative power of God's message. It's love aimed entirely at the good and wholeness of the one loved.

Lesson: Real love aims to help the other person become their best, truest self — not to control them, but to help them become clean, whole, and free.

See Also: John 15:3 ("now ye are clean through the word"); Titus 3:5.
- 5:27

(KJV) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
(B:E Project) So he could present the church to himself in splendour, without a single flaw or blemish — completely whole.

Context: Completes the description of the purpose of Christ's sacrificial love (5:25-27), picturing a flawless, cherished outcome.

Meaning: The image is of a bride prepared and presented in full splendour — the goal of this self-giving love is the flourishing and honour of the one loved, not their diminishment. It's a vision of love working toward someone's wholeness.

Lesson: I don't love you despite your flaws while quietly resenting them — I'm actively working to help you become whole, and I see you as worth presenting with real honour, not shame.

See Also: Revelation 19:7-8 (the bride "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white"); Song of Solomon 4:7.
- 5:28

(KJV) So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
(B:E Project) In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies — loving your wife is loving yourself.

- Context:** Draws a further conclusion from the Christ-church analogy, now via the "one flesh" idea, applying it directly to husbands' practical care for their wives.

Meaning: Paul appeals to something universally understood — nobody neglects or mistreats their own body — and uses it as the natural standard for how a husband should treat his wife, given their union. It assumes deep identification and care, not ownership.

Lesson: When you truly love someone close to you, their wellbeing becomes bound up with your own — you don't have to choose between caring for yourself and caring for them, because real love sees those as connected.

See Also: Ephesians 5:33; Genesis 2:24 ("they shall be one flesh").
- 5:29

(KJV) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
(B:E Project) After all, no one ever hated their own body — they feed and take care of it, just as the Lord does for the church.

Context: Continues the reasoning of 5:28, reinforcing the analogy between self-care, marital love, and Christ's care for the church.

Meaning: The natural instinct to nourish and care for one's own body becomes the model: attentive, ongoing care, not neglect or harshness. Christ's care for the church is offered as the highest example of this same instinct.

Lesson: Caring well for someone you love isn't indulgent or optional — it's as natural and necessary as feeding and looking after your own body. Don't treat tenderness toward the people you love as a weakness.

See Also: Ephesians 5:25-27; John 6:35 (Christ as the bread that sustains).
- 5:30

(KJV) For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
(B:E Project) Because we are members of his body — flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones.

Context: Extends the Christ-church "body" analogy into intimate, family-like language echoing Genesis, deepening the marriage comparison.

Meaning: This language directly echoes Adam's words about Eve in Genesis 2:23 ("bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"), applying that intimate closeness to the relationship between Christ and his people. It underlines a bond of genuine belonging, not mere association.

Lesson: You're not on the outside looking in — you're intimately, deeply bound to me, like family, like your own flesh and bone. That's the kind of closeness I offer, and the kind I want reflected in your closest human relationships too.

See Also: Genesis 2:23 (the verse being echoed); 1 Corinthians 6:15 ("your bodies are the members of Christ").

5:31 *(KJV) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

(B:E Project) This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two become one.

Context: Paul directly quotes Genesis 2:24, the founding statement on marriage, to ground the whole discussion in the original creation pattern before revealing its deeper meaning in verse 32.

Meaning: Paul roots his teaching on marriage in the oldest biblical statement about it, treating marriage as a profound, God-designed union — not a mere social contract, but a genuine joining of two lives into one.

Lesson: Marriage, at its best, isn't a transaction or an arrangement of convenience — it's meant to be a real merging of two lives, chosen freely and lived out with total commitment.

See Also: Genesis 2:24 (the verse quoted); Matthew 19:4-6 (Jesus quoting the same verse on marriage).

5:32 *(KJV) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

(B:E Project) This is a profound truth — and I'm applying it here to Christ and the church.

Context: Paul steps back from the marriage instructions to reveal that the whole passage has really been illustrating something deeper — the relationship between Christ and the church.

Meaning: The "mystery" (a truth once hidden, now revealed — a running theme since chapter 3) is that human marriage, at its best, is a living picture of an even greater love — Christ's total commitment to his people. Marriage isn't just being explained; it's being elevated by comparison to something profound.

Lesson: The love and commitment I ask of you in your closest relationships mirrors something even bigger — the way I've committed myself to you. When you experience real, sacrificial love from another person, you're getting a glimpse of something I offer even more fully.

See Also: Ephesians 3:3-6 (the "mystery" theme); Revelation 21:2 (the church presented as a bride).

5:33 *(KJV) Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

(B:E Project) Still, each one of you individually should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

Context: Closes the marriage section (5:22-33) with a final personal summary — restating both halves of the mutual relationship, echoing 5:21's opening call to mutual submission.

Meaning: Paul returns to plain, personal terms after the theological depth of verses 25-32: love (for husbands) and respect (for wives) as the concrete, everyday summary of everything said. Both are active, ongoing choices, expected of everyone, not exceptional or optional.

Lesson: Strip away all the imagery, and it comes down to this — love the person next to you as you'd want to be loved, and give real respect in return. That simple exchange, practised daily, is what actually holds a relationship together.

See Also: Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:22 and 5:25 (submission and love drawn together).

CHAPTER 6

Chapter Summary: Ephesians 6

Ephesians Chapter 6 begins by providing practical guidance for various relationships within a household and society. It instructs children to obey their parents and parents (especially fathers) on how to raise their children. It then moves to advice for workers and employers, stressing the importance of sincere effort and fair treatment, viewing all work as serving God. The chapter then shifts focus to the spiritual realm, urging believers to draw strength from the Lord and to equip themselves with the "armour of God." This spiritual gear – representing truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and God's word – is essential for standing firm against unseen evil forces. The chapter concludes with an emphasis on persistent prayer for all believers and for Paul himself, so he can continue to boldly share the Gospel, even from prison. It also mentions Tychicus, who is being sent to provide an update and encouragement.

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

(B:E Project) Children, do what your parents tell you, because you belong to a family that follows the Lord - this is simply the right thing to do.

Context: Paul is continuing the household code he began in chapter 5, working through the practical relationships inside a first-century home: husbands and wives, then children and parents, then workers and employers.

Meaning: The instruction is short and unremarkable by ancient standards, but the phrase 'in the Lord' reframes it: obedience isn't blind submission to power, it's part of living inside a bigger story of love and order. For a young person, it's less about control and more about learning trust before you're old enough to understand every reason behind a rule.

Lesson: I ask children to listen to their parents not because I want small people to have no voice, but because learning to trust wiser hands early in life builds the same trust you'll need later with me. Obedience rooted in love, not fear, is training for a free life, not a caged one.

See Also: Colossians 3:20 says almost exactly the same thing ('Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord'), showing how closely these

two letters share material; Exodus 20:12 is the Ten Commandments source Paul quotes next.

6:2 (KJV) Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;
(B:E Project) Respect your father and mother - this is the first of the Ten Commandments that comes with a promise attached to it.

Context: Paul grounds his household instruction in the Old Testament law, quoting directly from the Ten Commandments to show this isn't a new Christian invention but ancient, tested wisdom.

Meaning: Paul is pointing out something clever: among the ten core commandments, this is the first one that comes with an incentive built in. That detail matters to him - it shows honouring your parents isn't just a duty, it's presented as genuinely good for you, not just good for them.

Lesson: I want you to notice that honouring your parents isn't a rule handed down to make your life smaller - it comes with a promise attached, because looking after the people who raised you tends to steady and lengthen your own life. Respect isn't submission to control; it's gratitude in action.

See Also: Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 are the original commandments being quoted; Matthew 15:4 shows Jesus himself defending this same commandment against religious leaders who were finding loopholes around it.

6:3 (KJV) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
(B:E Project) Do this so that things will go well for you, and you'll live a long life on earth.

Context: This verse completes the quotation from the Ten Commandments begun in verse 2, giving the promise attached to honouring one's parents.

Meaning: This isn't a magic guarantee that obedient children live to be a hundred - it's an observation about how life tends to work. Communities and families where respect flows between generations are generally more stable, more supported, and safer places to grow old in. Ancient wisdom noticing a real pattern about human flourishing.

Lesson: I'm not offering you a bargain where good behaviour buys you extra years - I'm pointing out that a life built on respect and connection to those who came before you tends to be a steadier, longer, more supported life than one lived in isolation or contempt. Honouring others is its own reward long before it's anything else.

See Also: Deuteronomy 5:16 is the direct source of this promise; Proverbs 3:1-2 makes a similar link between following wise instruction and a long, peaceful life.

6:4 (KJV) And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

(B:E Project) And fathers, don't provoke your children to anger and resentment - instead, raise them with the Lord's discipline and instruction.

Context: Having addressed children, Paul turns to fathers, balancing the earlier instruction with a matching responsibility - a pattern he's followed throughout the household code (wives/husbands, children/fathers, servants/masters).

Meaning: This is a striking check on parental power in a world where fathers had near-total legal authority over their households. Paul insists discipline must never curdle into the kind of harshness that breeds bitterness - it should be constructive teaching, not domination. Authority, again, comes with real accountability attached.

Lesson: To anyone raising a child, I say: don't rule by frustration or crush a young spirit with harshness dressed up as discipline. Teach with patience, correct with love, and build them up rather than grinding them down - a child raised in resentment learns fear, not wisdom.

See Also: Colossians 3:21 repeats this almost word for word ('provoke not your children. .. lest they be discouraged'); Proverbs 22:6 on training up a child in the way they should go carries the same constructive spirit.

6:5 (KJV) Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
(B:E Project) Workers, obey your earthly employers with real respect and seriousness, doing it wholeheartedly, as if you were serving Christ himself.

Context: Paul moves to the final pairing in the household code - servants and masters, which in the Roman world usually meant enslaved workers and their owners, a harsh and unequal relationship Paul addresses realistically rather than ignoring.

Meaning: Paul isn't endorsing slavery as good or right - he's speaking to real people trapped in a brutal system and telling them how to hold onto dignity and integrity within it, doing honest work as an expression of character rather than resentment. The phrase 'as unto Christ' elevates even forced labour into something with meaning and worth, refusing to let unjust circumstances define a person's inner life.

Lesson: Even when you're stuck in circumstances you didn't choose and can't easily escape, I want you to know your integrity is still entirely your own. Do honest work with a whole heart not because the system deserves it, but because your character belongs to you, not to whoever has power over your labour today.

See Also: Colossians 3:22 covers the same ground almost word for word; 1 Peter 2:18 gives similar counsel to servants under harsh masters, urging conscience toward God above circumstance.

6:6 (KJV) Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

(B:E Project) Don't just work hard when someone's watching, trying to impress people - work as someone serving Christ, doing God's will from the heart.

Context: Paul continues instructing servants, contrasting surface-level, performative obedience with the deeper, wholehearted integrity he's calling for.

Meaning: This verse names something universally recognisable: the difference between doing a good job because you're being watched and doing a good job because it's genuinely who you are. Paul is asking for consistency - the same effort and honesty whether or not anyone's checking, because your character shouldn't be a performance.

Lesson: I care far less about what you do when eyes are on you than what you do when no one's watching. Real integrity is the same person in the empty room as in the crowded one - build your character from the inside, not for an audience.

See Also: Colossians 3:22 makes the identical point about not working with 'eyeservice, as menpleasers'; Matthew 6:1-4 warns against doing good works to be seen by others rather than from genuine conviction.

6:7 **(KJV)** *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

(B:E Project) Serve with genuine goodwill, as though you were working for the Lord, not merely for other people.

Context: Paul continues developing the mindset he wants workers to adopt, building toward the promise in the next verse.

Meaning: This reframes the psychology of hard, thankless work. If your sense of worth depends entirely on your human boss noticing and rewarding you, unfair treatment will constantly wound you. Paul offers a way to find dignity in the work itself and in something bigger than the immediate, often unjust, chain of command.

Lesson: When the people above you don't see your effort or don't reward it fairly, don't let that rob your work of meaning. Do good with a full heart because it's who you are becoming, not just for whoever happens to be grading you today - your true audience is bigger than any single person.

See Also: Colossians 3:23-24 expands this same idea, urging work done 'heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men'; 1 Corinthians 10:31 gives the broader principle of doing everything for a higher purpose.

6:8 **(KJV)** *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

(B:E Project) Remember that whatever good anyone does, they'll be rewarded for it by the Lord - it doesn't matter whether they were enslaved or free.

Context: Paul closes his instruction to servants with a promise that cuts across the social hierarchy of his day, insisting that ultimate fairness applies equally to everyone regardless of status.

Meaning: This was a radical levelling statement in a world built on rigid class and status. Paul says the deepest accounting of a person's life has nothing to do with their social rank - enslaved or free, everyone's genuine goodness is seen and matters equally. It plants a seed of equality that would eventually help undo the very system Paul is speaking within.

Lesson: I see every good thing you do, regardless of your job title, your background, or how much power you hold in this life. Status means nothing to me - character and kindness are what I'm actually keeping account of, and that's true for absolutely everyone equally.

See Also: Colossians 3:25 pairs this with a warning that wrongdoing will also be repaid, regardless of status; Galatians 3:28 declares there is 'neither bond nor free' in Christ, the same equalising principle stated even more directly.

6:9 **(KJV)** *And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

(B:E Project) And employers, treat your workers the same way - drop the threats, and remember that you also have a Master in heaven who doesn't play favourites.

Context: Paul completes the pairing by addressing masters directly, applying the identical standard of accountability he gave to servants - a reversal of the usual one-directional power dynamic in ancient household codes.

Meaning: This is the sharpest edge of the whole passage: masters are told to treat their workers by the same standard they expect from them, and are reminded they too answer to someone above them who shows no favouritism based on rank. In a culture where masters held nearly total power, this was a genuine check - authority doesn't exempt you from moral accountability, it increases it.

Lesson: If you hold power over others - as an employer, a leader, anyone with authority - know that I hold you to exactly the same standard I hold everyone else to, and I show no special favour to rank or wealth. Use whatever power you have to lift people up, never to threaten or crush them, because you answer to me just as they do.

See Also: Colossians 4:1 gives the parallel instruction almost word for word ('masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal'); Job 31:13-15 makes the same argument centuries earlier, that master and servant share one Maker.

6:10 **(KJV)** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

(B:E Project) Finally, my brothers and sisters, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power.

Context: Paul turns from the household code to the letter's dramatic closing section - the famous 'armour of God' passage - shifting from domestic relationships to the larger spiritual struggle believers are caught up in.

Meaning: 'Finally' signals Paul is bringing everything together for one last, vivid image. Before describing the fight ahead, he makes clear the source of strength isn't self-generated willpower - it's something drawn from a power far greater than the individual. This sets the tone: what follows isn't about gritting your teeth harder, it's about tapping into a deeper reserve.

Lesson: When you feel worn down by life's pressures, don't reach only for your own willpower - it runs out. Reach instead for something larger than yourself; real strength isn't manufactured alone in a room, it's drawn from connection to a power that doesn't tire the way you do.

See Also: Philippians 4:13 echoes the same reliance on a strength beyond oneself ('I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me'); Isaiah 40:29-31 promises renewed strength to the weary who wait on the Lord.

6:11 *(KJV) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*
(B:E Project) Put on the full armour God provides, so you'll be able to stand firm against the devil's cunning tricks and strategies.

Context: This opens the letter's famous closing image, where Paul pictures the Christian life as equipping for a real struggle, using the imagery of a Roman soldier's full kit - something he'd have seen daily, likely chained to a guard as he wrote from house arrest.

Meaning: Paul isn't describing physical violence - he's naming the subtler, harder-to-spot pressures that wear people down: manipulation, deceit, despair, cynicism, self-doubt. 'Wiles' means schemes and traps rather than a frontal assault. The image of armour tells you these pressures are real and worth preparing for deliberately, not something to face unequipped and hope for the best.

Lesson: The hardest battles in your life often aren't loud confrontations - they're the quiet, clever pressures that try to wear away your integrity, your hope, or your sense of who you are. I'm not asking you to be naive about that; prepare deliberately, the way anyone prepares for something they take seriously.

See Also: 2 Corinthians 10:4 speaks of weapons that are 'not carnal' but powerful for pulling down strongholds; 1 Peter 5:8 warns to be watchful because 'your adversary the devil... walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'

6:12 *(KJV) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*
(B:E Project) Because our real struggle isn't against other people made of flesh and blood - it's against unseen powers and authorities, the forces that rule this present darkness, evil spiritual powers operating in high places.

Context: Paul clarifies what the 'wiles of the devil' actually means, redirecting attention away from human enemies toward the deeper spiritual and systemic forces behind harmful patterns in the world.

Meaning: This is one of the most freeing verses in the whole letter for a modern reader: it says your real fight usually isn't with the difficult person in front of you. It's with something bigger and less visible - toxic systems, corrupting ideas, cruelty, greed, despair - that use people as instruments without those people necessarily even realising it. It reframes conflict, replacing blame toward individuals with clarity about the deeper forces at work.

Lesson: The next time someone hurts you, try to see past them to what's actually driving the harm - fear, pride, a broken system, an old wound passed down through generations. This doesn't excuse cruelty, but it frees you from carrying hatred toward people and lets you fight the real enemy: the darkness itself, not the person caught inside it.

See Also: Colossians 1:16 and 2:15 both discuss 'principalities and powers,' language unique to these two closely related letters; Luke 22:53 has Jesus himself referring to 'the power of darkness' at his arrest.

6:13 *(KJV) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*
(B:E Project) So take up God's full armour, so that when a really difficult day comes you'll be able to hold your ground, and having done everything you can, still be standing.

Context: Paul restates his call to arm up, now naming the goal directly: not victory in the sense of eliminating struggle, but endurance - remaining standing when hard times inevitably arrive.

Meaning: The phrase 'the evil day' acknowledges plainly that difficult, even devastating days will come - this isn't a promise of a trouble-free life. The goal Paul sets is modest and achievable: not to avoid the storm, but to still be standing once it passes. That's a realistic, sturdy kind of hope rather than a naive one.

Lesson: I never promised you a life without hard days - some will genuinely knock you down. What I promise is that if you've prepared honestly, with truth and love and steady conviction, you will still be standing when it's over. Endurance itself is a form of victory.

See Also: James 1:2-4 frames trials as producing patience and maturity, a similar reframing of struggle; Luke 21:19 has Jesus saying 'in your patience possess ye your souls' amid predictions of hardship.

6:14 *(KJV) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*
(B:E Project) So stand your ground - with truth like a belt fastened firmly around you, and righteousness like a breastplate protecting your chest.

Context: Paul begins listing each piece of the Roman soldier's armour in turn, starting with the belt that held everything else together and the breastplate that protected the vital organs.

Meaning: The belt was foundational - it cinched the soldier's tunic and held his other equipment in place, so 'truth' here is the honesty and integrity that everything else depends on; without it, nothing else stays secure. The breastplate protected the heart and lungs, so living rightly - integrity in action - guards the most vulnerable, vital parts of who you are.

Lesson: Build your life on truth first - honesty with yourself and others is what holds everything else together. And protect your heart with right living, because a life of integrity guards you from the inside in a way no external defence ever could.

See Also: Isaiah 11:5 pictures the coming Messiah with 'righteousness the girdle of his loins,' the same imagery Paul draws on; Isaiah 59:17 describes God himself putting on 'righteousness as a breastplate.'

6:15 *(KJV) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*
(B:E Project) And wear shoes that come from being ready to share the good news that brings peace.

Context: Paul continues down the armour list, moving to footwear - essential for a Roman soldier's stability and mobility on any terrain.

Meaning: A soldier's boots gave him solid footing to advance or hold ground on rough terrain. Paul turns this into readiness - a settled inner peace and confidence in good news that keeps you steady and able to move forward, whatever ground life puts under your feet, rather than being thrown off balance by uncertainty.

Lesson: Let peace be the ground you stand on - not the absence of trouble, but a steadiness inside you that comes from knowing what really matters. When you're anchored like that, you can walk confidently into hard situations instead of being knocked off your feet by them.

See Also: Isaiah 52:7 celebrates 'the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace,' the source of Paul's image; Romans 10:15 quotes this same Isaiah passage directly.

6:16 *(KJV) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*
(B:E Project) On top of all this, take up faith like a shield - with it you'll be able to put out every one of the enemy's flaming arrows.

Context: Paul highlights faith as an especially crucial piece of the armour, using the image of a large Roman shield designed to stop incoming projectiles, including arrows tipped with flammable pitch.

Meaning: 'Fiery darts' were arrows lit on fire before being shot - a vivid image for the sudden, burning attacks of doubt, temptation, despair, or accusation that can strike out of nowhere. A well-held shield of trust and confidence doesn't just deflect these; it extinguishes them before they can catch and spread.

Lesson: When a sudden wave of doubt, shame, or fear hits you out of nowhere, don't let it catch and spread through your whole mind. Hold on to trust - in yourself, in what's good, in me - like a shield raised in time, and that burning thought will go out before it does real damage.

See Also: 1 John 5:4 says 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'; 1 Peter 1:7 speaks of faith tested by fire and proving more precious than gold.

6:17 *(KJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*
(B:E Project) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit - which is the word of God.

Context: Paul completes the list of armour with the two remaining pieces: head protection and the one offensive weapon in an otherwise defensive kit.

Meaning: The helmet guarded the mind, the part of a person most vulnerable to confusion and despair - a secure sense of who you are and where you stand protects your thinking under pressure. The sword is the only weapon Paul names that's for striking rather than defending: a well-understood, well-used truth is active, not passive, capable of cutting through confusion and falsehood.

Lesson: Guard your mind first - a settled sense of who you are is what keeps despair and confusion from taking over when things get loud and frightening. And don't just defend yourself; use truth actively, like a blade, to cut through the lies and noise the world throws at you.

See Also: 1 Thessalonians 5:8 uses the same 'helmet' image for the hope of salvation; Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as 'sharper than any twoedged sword.'

6:18 *(KJV) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*
(B:E Project) Pray at all times, with every kind of prayer and request, guided by the Spirit. Stay alert, and keep at it persistently, praying for all of God's people.

Context: Paul closes the armour metaphor by shifting from equipment to atmosphere - prayer isn't another piece of armour but the ongoing posture that sustains everything else, and it turns outward to include the whole community.

Meaning: After listing individual pieces of gear, Paul steps back to describe the constant practice that holds it all together: staying connected, alert, and consistent, and doing it not just for yourself but for everyone around you. It's a reminder that this struggle was never meant to be fought entirely alone.

Lesson: Stay in ongoing conversation with me - not just formal, occasional requests, but a constant, honest connection, alert to what's happening around you. And don't only pray for your own battles; hold the people in your life in mind too, because you're stronger together than any of you are alone.

See Also: 1 Thessalonians 5:17 gives the simple parallel instruction to 'pray without ceasing'; Romans 12:12 links patience in tribulation with continuing steadfastly in prayer.

6:19 *(KJV) And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,*
(B:E Project) And pray for me too - that I'll be given the right words, and the boldness to speak openly about the mystery of the good news.

Context: Paul turns from general instruction to a personal, vulnerable request for prayer for himself, writing as a prisoner who still wants courage to keep speaking.

Meaning: Even the writer of this letter - someone under house arrest for his beliefs - admits he needs help finding the right words and the courage to keep speaking. It's a candid moment that humanises Paul: confidence and boldness aren't things you simply have or don't have, they're things you keep needing and asking for, even as a seasoned leader.

Lesson: Even people who seem strong and sure of themselves need support to keep speaking up for what matters. Don't be afraid to ask for help finding your words or your courage - needing that isn't weakness, it's honesty, and it's something worth asking of the people around you too.

See Also: Colossians 4:3 has an almost identical request for prayer 'that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ'; Acts 4:29 shows the early disciples praying specifically for boldness to speak.

6:20 *(KJV) For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*
(B:E Project) I'm an ambassador for this message even now, in chains - so pray that I'll speak about it boldly, the way I ought to.

Context: Paul explains his present situation directly - he's writing this letter from imprisonment, and describes his unusual role as a chained representative of his message.

Meaning: The image is striking: an ambassador should represent their message with dignity and freedom of movement, yet Paul is doing this work in literal chains. He doesn't hide the tension or pretend it isn't hard - he simply asks for the boldness to keep representing what he believes in, regardless of his circumstances.

Lesson: Your circumstances don't have to silence what you stand for. Even chained, limited, or restricted, you can still represent what matters to you with dignity - and it's alright to admit that doing so takes real courage you have to keep asking for.

See Also: Philippians 1:12-14 shows Paul making the same point elsewhere, that his imprisonment actually advanced his message rather than silencing it; 2 Corinthians 5:20 calls believers 'ambassadors for Christ' more broadly.

6:21 *(KJV) But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:*
(B:E Project) But so you'll also know how I'm doing and what's happening with me, Tychicus - a dear brother and a faithful helper in the Lord's work - will tell you everything.

Context: The letter moves into its closing personal notes, naming the courier who would carry and likely explain the letter to its recipients.

Meaning: This is a small, human detail at the end of soaring theology: Paul cares whether his readers know he's alright, and trusts a real named friend to carry that news personally rather than leaving it to a cold letter alone. It shows the warmth of genuine relationships behind even this grand, doctrine-heavy letter.

Lesson: Don't underestimate the value of simply letting people know how you're doing, and don't underestimate the gift of a trustworthy friend who carries news and comfort between people who care about each other. Relationships, not just ideas, are what hold a community together.

See Also: Colossians 4:7-8 uses almost identical wording about the same messenger, Tychicus, strong evidence the two letters were written and carried around the same time; 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12 also mention Tychicus as one of Paul's trusted travelling companions.

6:22 *(KJV) Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*
(B:E Project) I've sent him to you for exactly this reason - so you'll know how things are with us, and so he can encourage and comfort your hearts.

Context: Paul finishes explaining Tychicus's mission as his messenger, closing out the practical, personal section of the letter before the final blessing.

Meaning: Paul's purpose in sending news isn't just information - it's comfort. He recognises that hearing how a loved one is genuinely doing, especially one suffering hardship, settles anxious hearts. Communication here is an act of care, not just a report.

Lesson: When you reach out to someone who's worried about you, remember the goal isn't just to update them - it's to ease their heart. A little honest news, delivered with warmth, can do more good for someone you love than you might expect.

See Also: Colossians 4:8 repeats this purpose almost word for word - sending Tychicus 'that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts'; Philippians 2:19 shows Paul doing something similar, sending Timothy so he too could be comforted by news.

6:23 *(KJV) Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(B:E Project) May peace be with the community of believers, and love joined with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Context: As Paul closes the letter, he offers a benediction to the wider community of readers - fitting for a circular letter meant to travel among several churches rather than address one specific congregation's problems.

Meaning: Unlike some of Paul's other letters, Ephesians has no long list of personal names or specific local disputes - it reads as a broad blessing meant for many communities. Peace, love, and faith together summarise the letter's whole message: a secure, reconciled identity (peace) expressed through relationship (love) and trust (faith).

Lesson: What I want most for you, in the end, is simple: real peace inside yourself, love that connects you to others, and faith that holds it all together. If you take nothing else from everything written here, take that - it's the heart of the whole letter.

See Also: Galatians 6:16 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16 offer similar closing blessings of peace; Romans 15:33 calls God directly 'the God of peace' in a comparable closing benediction.

6:24 *(KJV) Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

(B:E Project) May grace be with everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that doesn't fade or pretend. Amen.

Context: This is the letter's final line, a blessing extended broadly to everyone who holds this love sincerely, closing a letter likely meant to circulate among several churches rather than one alone.

Meaning: The word translated 'sincerity' means something like incorruptible or undying - Paul's closing wish is for grace to rest on love that's genuine and lasting, not performative or temporary. It's a fitting final note for a letter that began with an overflowing description of God's own grace, freely given, undeserved, and directed back outward as a call to genuine love.

Lesson: I close this letter the way I want to close every day with you: wishing you grace, freely and without condition, for as long as your love for what's good and true stays real and undecaying. That's the whole aim of everything I've said - love that lasts, held up by grace that never runs out.

See Also: 2 Timothy 4:22 closes with a similarly brief grace-blessing; 1 Corinthians 16:22 pairs love for the Lord with a solemn final word in a similar way, closing that letter on the same note of devoted love.

