

IN HIM

BEHAVIOR REVEALS BELIEFS

A 36-Day Devotional
By Jon Haley and Hallmark Church

4201 W. Risinger Rd. Ft. Worth, TX 76123
www.hallmarkchurch.com

Ephesians – A 36-Day Devotional
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Fort Worth, Texas

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Instructions

- Take time each day before you read to pray and ask God to reveal Himself through His Word, by His Spirit.
- Take time to read, meditate, reflect, and apply the passage.
- Take time to read the entire chapter in which the key verse is a part and strive to get the context of the verse.
- Take time to try and memorize the key verse.
- Take time to journal and apply.
- Respond in prayer to what God reveals to you.

I have provided a format to help you process and apply the daily readings. Remember, you will get out of this in proportion to what you put into it. In the book *Growing Up* by Robby Gallaty, one of the appendices is a sample from the H.E.A.R. journal. Follow this pattern as you read your Bible each morning.

Sample H.E.A.R. Entry

Read: Philippians 4:10-13

H (Highlight)

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13*

E (Explain)

Paul was telling the church at Philippi that he had discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation in Paul's life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.

A (Apply)

I will experience many ups and downs in my life. My contentment is not found in the circumstances. Instead, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength to be content in every life circumstance.

R (Respond)

Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I face.

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Day 1

Ephesians 1:1-6

By Matt Whitsell

For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.¹

Read Ephesians 1

Have you ever been left out? Have you ever been the last one chosen? As a child, I was one of the smaller kids in elementary and middle school. Whenever we lined up to pick teams for a ball game, I often found myself as the final choice.

As you can assume, being selected last was already disheartening. To make matters worse, the position I was usually assigned was right field—widely considered the most uneventful spot on the ball field. Why? Because as every playground legend player knows, you put your weakest players in the place where they will cause the least harm to your team.

Being last is discouraging. Our culture recognizes this emotion. The National Football League, a collection of the greatest athletes in the world, will sympathetically refer to the last pick of the NFL draft as “Mr. Irrelevant.” Nobody desires to be chosen last.

While in a Roman prison, the Apostle Paul is moved to write a letter to the churches in Ephesus highlighting God’s

¹ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:4

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grace, his glorious grace, towards sinners in Christ. The acronym G.R.A.C.E., God's Riches At Christ's Expense, is a great way to understand Grace.

Did you notice the amount of riches Paul tells us God intended for us to have? Ephesians 1:3 says *every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.*² Wow! Every blessing in heaven, which will be more significant than every blessing on earth, has been given to me!

When did God decide to give me these blessings?

*He chose us in him, before the foundation of the world.*³ Consider the timing of that statement. God decided to bless you before Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning...* You were God's first pick. He was not waiting to see what else may or may not happen over time. Nor did He even wait to see if you wanted to pick him. He chose you first.

Paul's initial message to the churches in Ephesus, relevant to us today, is that with everything in us today, we should praise God. You have never been Mr./Ms. Irrelevant to God. From the start, God chose you to give you his very best, his only son, Jesus Christ. God is a gloriously gracious God.

² Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:3

³ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:4

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H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

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Day 2

Ephesians 1:7

By Jerry Howery

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.⁴

Read Ephesians 1

In verse 7, we find Christ has redeemed us. “Redemption carries the idea of someone paying a price or ransom to deliver us from bondage or a situation from which we have no power to deliver ourselves.”⁵ In Bible days, slaves could be redeemed by someone paying a price for their freedom. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve made a choice that infected humanity with sin. *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.⁶ and we are by nature children of disobedience,⁷* We are all by nature, sinners in need of redemption. The question is, “How can we be redeemed?” *Through His blood.⁸* Why

⁴ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 1:7

⁵ [The Teacher’s Outline + Study Bible](#) (Chattanooga, TN Leadership Ministries Worldwide 1994) Ephesians

⁶ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Rom.5:12

⁷ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Eph. 2:2

⁸ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Eph. 1:7

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blood? *For the wages of sin is death,⁹ without the shedding of blood there is no remission.¹⁰*

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, chose to die to pay the penalty for our sin so we could be redeemed from sin's curse and experience *the forgiveness of sins¹¹* The word "forgiveness" means "to release or to send away."¹² Look at what God does with our sins (transgressions). *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.¹³* God the Father sent His only begotten Son Jesus, who willingly came to pay the penalty for the sin that we owed. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.¹⁴* God did this because of His great love for us and *according to the riches of His grace.¹⁵*

Paul mentions grace 12 times in Ephesians. I remember, as a young man, being told that "Grace means God's riches at Christ's expense." When I was redeemed by

⁹ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Rom. 6:23

¹⁰ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Hebrews 9:22

¹¹ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) Eph. 1:7

¹² The Teacher's Outline + Study Bible (Chattanooga, TN Leadership Ministries Worldwide 1994)

¹³ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Psa. 103:12

¹⁴ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), John 3:16

¹⁵ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 1:7

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Christ in 1963 (wow, that was a long time ago), that's what was given to me, all the riches of God, but it cost me nothing.

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H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

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Day 3

Ephesians 1:8-10

By Nathan Parikh

⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.¹⁶

Read Ephesians 1

"What is God's will?" is a frequently asked question by people everywhere. There was an average of 50,000 searches around "God's will" on Google every month in 2023.

Whether you're reflecting on your life or watching the news, asking, "God, what's the plan here?" is a relatable feeling. Even though God's will for every moment of your life is not explicitly detailed in the Bible, God has given us gracious insight into His master plan. Paul writes that God has *made known to us the mystery of His will.*¹⁷

God is not trying to hide His master plan from you. When you know His plan, everything else in your life is put into

¹⁶ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:8-10

¹⁷ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:9

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proper perspective, changing how you think about your life and God's will for you today.

God's master plan is this: bring everything under the authority of Christ. When the seasons of history are complete, their meaning will culminate in Jesus. Jesus is God's master plan. Everything is leading up to Him.

This is not just true on the grand scale of history. It's true for you as well. God's plan for you is linked to His plan for the world.

What is the meaning of your life? What does the sum of your life choices point to? If Jesus does not have ultimate authority over your life, you're missing out on the meaning, purpose, and plan you are designed for.

Maybe the reason why God has blocked some of your plans is not because He's unloving, unkind, or angry with you. Maybe, just maybe, God has a plan that's infinitely better for you. A life that is summed up in Christ.

Whose plan will you follow?

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 4

Ephesians 1:11-14

By Nathan Parikh

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

¹³ In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.¹⁸

Read Ephesians 1

Shortly before we were engaged, my wife and I went to a jewelry store to look at rings. We were both excited as she looked for "the one" that had just the right color, design, and fit. At the same time, I was trying to figure out how to pay for and protect this huge investment.

Thankfully, the store offered a lifetime guarantee. This was important to me, not just financially but also symbolically. With all that our rings represented; it gave me peace of mind to know we had safeguards in place.

¹⁸ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:11-14

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In Ephesians 1:11-14, Paul writes of an even greater guarantee that all followers of Jesus possess. A promise no other religion offers. It's the promise of salvation that can never be taken away. A forever guarantee. We call it eternal security.

This guarantee is eternal because the Giver is eternal. Paul writes *...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee*¹⁹. Most Christians struggle with doubts about their salvation at some point in their life. If you're anything like me, most of those doubts have probably come on the heels of a spiritual failure of some kind.

I'm so thankful for God's assurance of salvation. It doesn't hinge on your performance, track record, or the size of your faith. It's God Himself, the Holy Spirit, who seals and guarantees you. This seal is unbreakable, even by you.

When you are tempted to doubt your salvation, remember you have an eternal guarantee.

¹⁹ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:13

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 5

Ephesians 1:15-23

By Nathan Parikh

¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.²⁰

Read Ephesians 1

Paul ends the first chapter of Ephesians with a beautiful prayer in verses 17-23. These seven verses, though short, are full of rich language and deep theology. Paul concludes his prayer with the powerful reminder that Jesus reigns over all and will continue to do so forever.

²⁰ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 1:1-23

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The phrase "*under His feet*" in verse 22 is used often throughout the Bible. It evokes the image of a victorious king who has defeated all his enemies and rules in authority and peace. This picture underscores the truth that there is nothing and no one that can ever challenge the eternal authority of Jesus over the universe.

It does not matter what this morning's news headlines say: nothing is outside God's control. You may be fearful, caught off guard, or unsure about what lies ahead due to the circumstances that surround your life and our world, but Christ is still King. Jesus is not pacing the floors of heaven, wondering what will happen next, and worried about the future. There is not a single nation, government, ruler, or event that is not under His absolute rule.

Whatever situation you're facing today that evokes fear, uncertainty, or doubt in your heart, bring it to the King and lay it at His feet. There is no burden He cannot handle. You may not know what the future holds, but you know who holds the future.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 6

Ephesians 2:1-3

By Jerry Howery

¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.²¹

Read Ephesians 2

As I read these verses, I think back years ago to my life without Christ. I grew up with no real authority over me. My parents divorced when I was 11, and the next summer, I went to live on the farm with my grandparents. They took on an angry, rebellious, I'll-do-it-my-way kid. At 16, they bought my first car, and I didn't know it was a race car. I worked hard, but in the evenings and on weekends, I did what I wanted. I didn't answer to anyone except myself and occasionally law enforcement – if they could catch me. Doing what came naturally, at only 16, I found a liquor store that would sell to me and started drinking and selling it to others. I raced cars, fought over girls and other things. I lied,

²¹ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 2:1-3

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gambled, and took things that weren't mine. Without knowing it, I was living out verses 2 and 3. I was dead, separated from God, and walking *according to the course of this world*,²² and under the influence of, *the prince of the power of the air*,²³ (Satan).

In May of 1960, I got married and we were expecting our first child in November of 1961. It was during that time I met Pastor McElroy, who spent the next 18 months telling me about a person named Jesus. It took that long for me to trust him and realize he cared about me, and maybe there was something about this Jesus he kept mentioning. One Saturday, as I worked underneath my car, dressed in a suit, he lay on the driveway and said, "Jerry, the Lord told me you're running out of time; you need to be saved." That day, I accepted Jesus as my Savior and my life changed forever as I experienced the reality of verse 1: *And you he made alive*.²⁴

²² The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 2:2

²³ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 2:2

²⁴ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 2:1

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 7

Ephesians 2:4-10

By Joy Haley

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!²⁵

Read Ephesians 2

I never fully understood the depths of love until I had our first child, Blake. I did not think I could love anyone as much until we had our second child, Blaire. I realized how vast and deep love is. A parent's love for their child is a small comparison of how much God loves us. God loved us so much that he sent His son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

“But God...because of His great love: With but and because, Paul explained God’s reason behind reconciling man to Himself, and these reasons are found totally in God. The reasons are His rich mercy and His great love, which He focuses on us. Every reason for God’s mercy and love is found in Him. We give Him no reason to love us, yet in the greatness of His love, He loves us with that great love anyway.”²⁶

Let us look at how rich God’s mercy is. To do that we must define it. Mercy is not getting what we deserve.

²⁵ *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) Ephesians 2:4-5

²⁶ Blue Letter Online Bible David Guzik Commentary

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Because of sin, we deserve death. *Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Because of God's mercy, He withholds judgment for us and gives us an opportunity to receive grace. Mercy always precedes grace.

Grace is getting something we do not deserve. Matt Whitsell told us on Day 1 that **God's Riches At Christ's Expense** is a great acronym for Grace. Christ took our punishment on the cross. God's grace saves us through faith. Faith is the vehicle that gets us to God's extraordinary grace. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ?

Today, I am reminded of when I received Christ's love by placing my faith in Jesus. I was six years old and will never forget that moment. Today, take some time to appreciate God's love by remembering when you placed your faith in Jesus.

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H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

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Day 8

Ephesians 2:11-13

By Jon Haley

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you 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. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.²⁷

Read Ephesians 2

The first word of verse 11 states, *THEREFORE*. Remember, when you see the word, “therefore”, you are supposed to stop reading and see what the, “therefore”, is there for.

Paul had just made the case for salvation by grace through faith. God has gifted the believer with salvation. We do not have to earn it. We receive it by placing our faith in Jesus. In these few verses, Paul emphasizes the blessing of being saved by grace.

“Those who were separated from the covenant have been united, those who were alienated have been reconciled, and those who were far off have been brought near.”²⁸

²⁷ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 2:11–13.

²⁸ David S. Dockery, “The Pauline Letters,” in *Holman Concise Bible Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 577.

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I believe Paul intends for each follower of Jesus to remember the significance of salvation by using these vivid comparisons. The words he chooses to use conjure deep emotions. They depict someone being on the outside and separated. The feelings of being alone, unwanted, and not a part of something leave the reader heavy and unsettled. The climax of this desperation completes verse 12, *having no HOPE (emphases mine) and without God in the world.*²⁹ “One of the deepest yearnings of the human soul is to belong.”³⁰

Quickly, Paul jolts the reader back into the beautiful reality of being a follower of Jesus. ^{13.} *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*³¹

The feelings and emotions dramatically shift. The shift from being alone and without hope changes through JESUS. The blood of Jesus brings all who place their faith in Him into a relationship with God. No longer are we aliens and strangers with no hope, but we have been brought near BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

As a follower of Jesus, the reality of our new position with the Lord through Jesus gives hope and provides purpose. Take time today to remember God's goodness through His son's death.

²⁹ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 2:12.

³⁰ Richard J. Erickson, “Ephesians,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 1024.

³¹ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 2:13.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 9

Ephesians 2:14-18

By Steffan Campos

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.³²

Read Ephesians 2

Thinking back to 2020, when COVID first hit, almost everyone in the world had a time of forced separation. While several people missed the social interactions, many still had fear-filled hesitations about being together once quarantine regulations were lifted because life as we once knew it had changed, and our “new normal” was unfamiliar to us all.

These feelings would be similar for the people Paul is writing to in Ephesians. Before Jesus, people were separated by gender and race in their day-to-day lives as well as within their place of worship. God instructed dividing walls and curtains to be placed in the Jewish temple to designate the holy places from the common areas. The most sacred room, the Holy of Holies, was only accessible to one chosen Levitical priest who had to follow specific cleansing rituals to offer sacrifices for all the sins of the Jewish people.³³ The

³² *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Eph 2:14

³³ *Exodus 29 & 30; Leviticus 16 to see the requirements and offering rituals for priests*

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possibility that one day Gentiles (anyone who is not a Jew) could come before the Lord in prayer was not even a thought at that time.

But when Jesus came to the earth, He changed everything they once knew. Jesus offered his perfect life on the cross to be the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. Matthew 27:51 says that *the curtain separating the Holy of Holies tore in two from top to bottom as soon as Jesus breathed his last breath*. What an incredible image to show that now there are no more “barriers” between God and mankind or between fellow believers, as Jesus unified us all.

If you make Jesus Lord of your life, you no longer must perform rituals to talk with God; you can come directly to Him through prayer and reading your Bible. You also have the responsibility and freedom to welcome others into your home, life, and church, no matter how different we may seem, as we are all given equal access to the God of this Universe through Jesus.

***To read more about how you can give your life to Jesus,
please go to page 108.***

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 10

Ephesians 2:19-22

By Jeremy McLemore

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.³⁴

Read Ephesians 2

Everyone loves to belong to something. As a student, you hope to be made a part of your sports team or that friend group. As a young adult, you look to find your place in life: college or work. As an adult, you look for that person that makes you feel like “home”. Regardless of where we are in life, we all want to belong.

All throughout the Bible, the Gentiles were always separate from the Jews. However, as we all know, Jesus made a way. In verse 19 it says: *you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household...*³⁵ Officially making and

³⁴ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 2:19–22.

³⁵ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 2:19

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inviting the Gentiles to be a part of the Jews, creating a Holy temple for the Lord in spirit.

You've heard the phrase "God's adopted children" in some way or fashion. This passage makes me think of adoption and how I've been adopted twice. My heavenly Father and my earthly parents. In His heavenly wisdom, he put me somewhere I belong, a place to call "home," where I was raised with Jesus as the cornerstone of our house.

We all need a reminder that if we are saved, we all have a place to come home. Through Jesus' death, he has made a way to be a part of His household that never changes. It is a place to rest when you're tired, an open seat at dinnertime, and a calm, comforting voice when you make mistakes. He takes you just as you are, and He chooses you time and time again.

Jesus loves you. Tell someone else He loves them too.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 11

Ephesians 3:1-7

By Matt Whitsell

The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.³⁶

Read Ephesians 3

For the most part, the Old Testament is about the nation of Israel and their relationship with their God, YHWH. Jewish authors writing about Jewish events and history. There are not many references to Gentiles, those who are outside of the Nation of Israel, having a relationship with Israel's God. However, a few examples of Gentiles used by God are:

- Caleb: A Kenizzite who was a hero alongside Joshua. (Numbers 32:12)
- Rahab: A Canaanite who was included in the line of Jesus. (Joshua 2, Matthew 1:5)
- Ruth: A Moabite who was included in the line of Jesus. (Ruth, Matthew 1:5)
- Naaman: An Aramean commander healed from leprosy. (2 Kings 5)

While God, YHWH, used a few Gentiles in the Old Testament for His glory, what was his ultimate plan for

³⁶ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 3:6

IN HIM

them? Paul refers to this as “*the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.*”³⁷

“Paul often speaks of the ‘mystery’ of redemption. The ‘mystery’ is that God is calling out the Gentiles and making them heirs with Israel, molding them into one body in Jesus Christ. In this way, God is building the kingdom. This was seen as a mystery because neither the Jews nor, before Christ, Gentiles realized what God had in store for the entirety of humanity. Now the mystery is revealed. All people can come to Christ. That is the result of God’s great redemptive work in Christ. We should urge all to receive Him as Lord and Savior.”³⁸

The gospel, the good news of Christ’s redemptive work on the cross, is so powerful that it is available to all the nations of the world! And now, like Paul, our goal is to reveal this wonderful mystery and make it known to all nations.

As the psalmist says: *I will bring honor to your name in every generation. Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.*³⁹

How can you make God known today?
How can you bring God glory today?

³⁷ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Col. 1:26

³⁸ [CSB Disciples Study Bible](#) (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Pg. 1834

³⁹ [New Living Translation](#) (Carol Stream, Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Ps 45:17

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 12

Ephesians 3:8-13

By Jon Haley

⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁴⁰

Read Ephesians 3

Have you ever had something so exciting to tell but had to try and wait to tell it? I remember when my wife and I first found out we were going to have a child. We planned to wait a few weeks and tell our parents at Thanksgiving. I may need to reveal to you there was no such thing as a gender reveal or birth announcement video 27 years ago. We did not have Facebook, Instagram, TikTok. The iPhone would not be invented for another 11 years. We waited one day, and then we called and told them. The excitement of our message would not and could not be contained.

That was Paul's situation. Paul had been given the privilege of revealing the Good News of the gospel, the mystery. It was the message that the God of Israel now extends His grace to and welcomes the Gentiles into His full favor through Jesus Christ. However, Paul was not asked to contain it but to export it to the Gentile world.

⁴⁰ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 3:8.

IN HIM

“He was commissioned *to preach to the Gentiles*. ‘Preach’ here is *euangelizō*, to ‘announce good news’, for he was well aware that his gospel was a message of great good news for the Gentiles. It consisted of *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, the riches which he possesses in himself and which he bestows on those who come to him.”⁴¹

This mission to share the mystery was not only given to Paul but to you and me as well. ¹⁰ *to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church.*⁴² The church here signifies and infers all followers of Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are a part of His church, the body of Christ. He has revealed the mystery to us and given us the ministry of sharing the mystery.

Paul never forgot how blessed he was to receive grace, and this reality compelled him to share Jesus no matter the consequences. How about you? Do you faithfully share the good news of Jesus to those whom God places in your path?

⁴¹ John R. W. Stott, [*God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 119–120.

⁴² [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 3:10a.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 13

Ephesians 3:14-16

By Jon Haley

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,⁴³

Read Ephesians 3

This morning, I had the opportunity to pray with a few men at church. For the past three years, I have enjoyed the discipline of going to church every Saturday morning from 7 AM to 9 AM to pray. In the past few months, several men have shown up a few minutes after seven, and we pray together. As an extra blessing, my dad is one of those men.

“One of the best ways to discover a Christian’s chief anxieties and ambitions is to study the content of his prayers and the intensity with which he prays them. We all pray about what concerns us and are evidently not concerned about matters we do not include in our prayers. Prayer expresses desire.”⁴⁴

⁴³ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 3:14–16.

⁴⁴ John R. W. Stott, [God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 131.

IN HIM

Paul prays that Gentile and Jewish believers will be strengthened and unified through the Spirit of God to accomplish God's will and plan. Let's review the last two days' devotions, which will give us an understanding of the basis of his prayer.

- Day 11 – The “mystery” is revealed. God’s grace and salvation are available to everyone.
- Day 12 – The Purpose of the “mystery”. God’s plan is to use the Church to spread the message of His grace.

¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ⁴⁵ Today, we have the same mystery, message, and mission; maybe we should pray the same prayer. Take time today to pray for God to give you and your faith family the strength to fulfill the mission.

⁴⁵ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 3:14.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

Day 14

Ephesians 3:17-19

By Garrett Scott

¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is: ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.⁴⁶

Read Ephesians 3

Amid suffering, Paul pauses to pray for the church in Ephesus, seeking spiritual strength and insight. This prayer extends to the original recipients of his letter and to you! Paul acknowledges the indwelling of Christ in the Ephesians, yet he desires them to recognize the empowering presence within.

This power is needed to be able to comprehend all the facets of God's love. Honestly, I need this, too. When I pause and think of all the ways God loves me, I can never recount them all. He saved my soul and set me free from my sins. I'll never fathom the love He had to put his only Son on the cross in my place. He has sustained me beyond what I could have

⁴⁶ New Living Translation (Carol Stream IL, Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Eph 3:17-19

IN HIM

imagined while moving to a new state and to a new place and serving in ministry in a new capacity.

The list of God's blessings and expressions of love goes beyond what I can say at this moment, but it provides a glimpse of how grand His love is. As you reflect on these words, take a few minutes to ponder the great depth of God's love in your life. Pray for God to deepen your roots in His love, and may you experience the love of Christ.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 15

Ephesians 3:20-21

By Allison Holcomb

Read Ephesians 3

Have you ever thought that your problem or need wasn't big enough to pray about? Maybe you have thought that your prayer request might seem silly to others and maybe even to God. Or maybe you thought it was too big of an "ask" for God. You aren't alone!

I am thankful for this promise we find in our passage today. In 2022, my Pastor, Jon Haley, gave us the word "MORE" for our word of the year, and we prayed daily at 3:20 that God would do more in our church, our families, and our lives. Personally, I saw so many different areas where God did so much more than I could have imagined. I know He has done this for years, but I am guilty of never taking the time to focus and thank Him for all that He does and will do.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.⁴⁷ We are told that there is no request that is too small or too bold for God. God can and will do so much more than we can even begin to imagine, and what we ask of Him isn't all He intends to do in us. We can't accomplish God's will for our lives with our own human strength. I am so thankful He has promised us a helper, the Holy Spirit, who is the power that works in us. Finally, the word "do" is an action word.

⁴⁷ The Christian Standard Bible, (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 3:20.

IN HIM

God's work isn't finished in us, He isn't done with what He has planned. He is constantly doing.

²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.⁴⁸

God deserves to be praised for what He has done for us! Do we remember to thank Him when our prayers are answered or when we accomplish something that only God can do? We need to remember that God did the work, so He deserves all our glory and praise.

⁴⁸The Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 3:21.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 16

Ephesians 4:1-6

By Joy Haley

Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received,⁴⁹

Read Ephesians 4

What does it mean to walk worthy of our calling? In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul explains to us all that God has done for us. He tells of God's love, mercy, and grace. In Chapter 4, he calls us to walk worthy of the calling we have received. Our lives should testify to gratitude for all God has done for us. "We do not walk worthy so that God will love us but because He does love us. It is motivated out of gratitude not out of a desire to earn merit."-David Guzik.⁵⁰

How do we walk worthy of our calling? The answer is given to us in verses 2 & 3. *With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*⁵¹

1. **Be Humble-** *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone*

⁴⁹ Blue Letter Bible online David Guzik Commentary

⁵⁰ *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville,TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) Ephesians 4:1

⁵¹ *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville,TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) Ephesians 4:2-3

IN HIM

*should look not to his own interests but rather to the interests of others.*⁵²

2. **Be Gentle-** *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*⁵³
3. **Be patient-** *Love is patient, Love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant.*⁵⁴
4. **Bear one another's burdens-** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*⁵⁵
5. **Live in unity with others-** *Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice.*⁵⁶

What happens when we walk worthy of our calling? Our lives will point others to Christ, and He will be glorified. Take time today to examine your life. Are you walking worthy of your calling? Do you live a life of gratitude to God for all He has done for you? “Once a man has truly experienced the mercy of God in his life, he will henceforth aspire only to serve.”-Dietrich Bonhoeffer⁵⁷

⁵² *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) Philippians 2:3-4

⁵³ *New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2015) Philippians 4:5

⁵⁴ *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) I Corinthians 13:4

⁵⁵ *New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2015) Galatians 6:2

⁵⁶ *Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020) Romans 15:5-6

⁵⁷ [Azquotes.com/topics/mercy of God](https://azquotes.com/topics/mercy_of_God)

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

Day 17

Ephesians 4:7-13

By Jeremy McLemore

⁷Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸For it says:

When he ascended on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people.

⁹But what does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. ¹¹And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.⁵⁸

Read Ephesians 4

As we've been reading in Ephesians, the idea of growth and unity is carried all throughout. Growth cannot happen, though, if we don't have people watering the plants, tending, and making sure we have all the tools at our disposal. That's what our pastors, connect group leaders, and ministry leaders do. They are the gardeners and spiritual nutritionists. But, that's not me. I'm not in a leadership role or a teacher. That's ok. You don't have to be in those roles to help things grow.

⁵⁸ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Eph 4:7-13.

IN HIM

It says we *all* make up the body of Christ. And when I think of every part growing together and building strength, it makes me think of weight training.

I personally made it my goal this past October through December last year to make it into the 1,000-lb club. That's where you combine the weight you bench press, squat, and deadlift together to make a thousand pounds. My weakest one was my deadlift, which was only 285 at the time, but to get stronger, I needed to train my grip, forearms, and back. I ended with 365 in December, but I would not have hit that number if all the other muscle groups had not gotten stronger.

Just like every muscle group has a specific function, you have a purpose and strength in the body of Christ. Start small in growing your spiritual discipline. Be kind to that one person who drives you up the wall, talk to one person each Sunday you don't know too well. Eventually, small steps grow into massive strides of growth.

Build healthy life habits that grow you spiritually and encourage others to do the same.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 18

Ephesians 4:14-16

By Jeanne Howery

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ- ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.⁵⁹

Read Ephesians 4

In verse 14, Paul urges us, as believers in the body of Christ, to be spiritually mature. We need to regularly listen to and apply the preaching and teaching of our pastor, teachers, and spiritual leaders. We should also have a daily routine of spending time alone with God, reading His love letter to us (the Bible), praying, and simply sitting and talking to Him. If this isn't a regular practice in our lives, then we can't expect to know false doctrine when we hear or read it.

Paul tells us in verse 15, another evidence of being spiritually mature is speaking the truth in love. I don't know about you, but that does not come easy for me. Yet when we

⁵⁹ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 4:14-16

IN HIM

see someone who has strayed from God, we are told to go to them in love with the truth. The church body should be there to come alongside them and help them walk with God again. That way, they can find restoration through the church (Gal. 6:1). But what if we are feeling disappointed or even angry at this person? Well, it's not our place to be judgmental. It will take kindness, patience, and compassion, but aren't those characteristics of Christ, the Head of the church body, the One we are to model ourselves after? I remind myself He has been kind, patient, and merciful with me repeatedly.

Lastly, in verse 16, Paul says *the body grows with the proper working of each individual part when it is fitted and knit together. The body is built up when the various parts contribute to the whole.*⁶⁰ God has equipped each believer with at least one gift to be used at your church. No one can do your work in the body better than you.

Are you doing what God has equipped you to do at your church? Are you using your gift(s)? If you aren't, it's never too late to start!

⁶⁰ Tony Evans Bible Commentary (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019)

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 19

Ephesians 4:17-24

By Mike Haley

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.⁶¹

Read Ephesians 4

Paul continues to exhort the Church of Ephesus to walk in the Spirit of the new man. The Lord commanded the church to repent and return to its first love for Christ. The resurrected, glorified Christ appears to John on the island of Patmos and directs him to write this message to the church at Ephesus: ⁴ *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.⁶²*

They were living in a city that celebrated the goddess Diana, a goddess of lust and sensual immorality. The city was filled with those who would profit from the selling of drugs and people to a life enslaved to wickedness, lewdness, and darkness.

⁶¹ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 4:20–24.

⁶² [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Re 2:4.

IN HIM

You have turned to Christ, and His lifestyle was the opposite of this. “When we think of Christ, we think about the one who went about doing good, who was humble and holy, loving and lowly, patient and pure, selfless and kind.”⁶³

Paul urges them to “*put off*” the old man and be renewed in the spirit of your mind! It is vital to daily be *transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*⁶⁴

We are to stop all that “stinking thinking!” We are a new creation in Christ. He has made us new. He has adopted us into his family, and we are now a Child of God. We belong to the King of Kings. We are His ambassadors of goodwill. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

I refuse to live like I did before Christ. I am determined to live as a new creation. Christ is dwelling in me and helping me follow His example. I am a follower of Christ, and I have a new life to live. My purpose is to bring glory and honor to my Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord.

How often do you think we need to renew ourselves to this truth? In what ways have you gone back to the old ways before Christ?

⁶³ Exploring Ephesians and Philippians by John Phillips

⁶⁴ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 12:2.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 20

Ephesians 4:25-32

By Violetta Hickman

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.⁶⁵

Read Ephesians 6

Sadly, it's common to come across unkindness in this dark world we live in, but I am drawn to those who are kind and compassionate. They inspire and challenge me to be better.

I remember a time when my family found ourselves in a challenging situation. We were waiting to close on our home and had to move out of the home we were renting. We were kind of homeless, with nowhere to go. Several of our friends opened their homes and hearts, helping us in our time of need. Their actions left a lasting impression on me, reminding me of our power through Jesus to make a difference in someone's life.

Here in Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul is reminding believers that as Jesus' followers, we have a responsibility to be mindful of those around us and find ways to uplift and help them. He also reminds us that through Jesus, God has given us everything we need to walk in a way that honors Him. Just think how we could change the world for the better

⁶⁵ *New International Version*, 2011, Eph. 4:12

IN HIM

by simply praying and asking God to give us a compassionate heart that sees those who are hurting, lonely, or in need.

I'm so thankful for the special friends God has blessed me with, and I know my life would be lacking without them. Our relationships with others are crucial, but our relationship with God is the most important. When we are walking in close fellowship with God, we will see the needs of others around us. His Spirit lives within us and helps us discern those needs.

Who does God want you to show kindness and compassion to today? Perhaps there is someone you need to forgive or someone you need to ask for forgiveness. When you live a life of kindness, compassion, and forgiveness, you show God you're grateful for His incredible kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 21

Ephesians 5:1

By Carlos Campos

*Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children,*⁶⁶

Read Ephesians 5

I remember getting in the car with my dad on the way to school. The morning was always rough, and the rain didn't help. The morning traffic was just adding to the misery. After missing the green light twice because of the traffic, I remember my dad turning to me and saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." He proceeded to jump the curb, drive on the sidewalk, and run the traffic light; we had been "patiently" waiting for.

For those wondering, the sidewalk was clear of pedestrians. My dad made sure of it before jumping the curb. My dad and I laugh about this because this was also the time when he was teaching me how to drive, and he wanted to make sure I was a good and safe driver. Go figure.

In Ephesians 5, "Paul continues what he had started in Ephesians 4, as he spells out practical ways to live a more righteous life."⁶⁷ He already said to put on the new self that

⁶⁶ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 5:1

⁶⁷ *Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 11: Galatians thru Philemon* (Ohio: Barbour Publishing, 2008) 62

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was created to be like God (4:24). Here, he states the same concept in a different way by saying to imitate God.

You can't imitate someone you don't know. Imitating *God as dearly loved children* speaks of an existing and growing relationship. As we know God and grow in our faith in Him, we'll begin to imitate Him. A great example is what you're doing right now: taking the time to read, grow, and figure out what it means to be a follower of Jesus. As you grow in God, the spirit of God will begin to shine through, and others will begin to see that in your life.

Paul writes in Galatians that *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*.⁶⁸ All things that do not come naturally to us, but only through a growing relationship with Jesus. As you start your week, which of these do you need to imitate *as dearly loved children*⁶⁹?

⁶⁸ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Ga 5:22–23.

⁶⁹ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 5:1

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 22

Ephesians 5:2-7

By Carlos Campos

² and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. ³ But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. ⁴ Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. ⁵ For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things. ⁷ Therefore, do not become their partners.⁷⁰

Read Ephesians 5

We tend to live a lot like waffles. Now, I'm not referring to being sweet, buttery, and fluffy, although I've been called fluffy from time to time. What I mean is that we often find ourselves compartmentalizing our lives, much like the separate squares of a waffle. We create distinct sections for our work life, our home life, our social circles, and perhaps even our spiritual life.

Here Paul encourages believers to walk and live appropriately. He made this point in various ways

⁷⁰ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 5:2-7

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throughout the letter and restated it here by saying there's one acceptable standard of living for God's people; having any other standards is not appropriate. Paul urges believers to distance themselves from impurity, greed, and obscene talk, emphasizing that such behaviors are incompatible with the Kingdom of God.

In a dark and fallen world, we're called to be beacons of light. Light exposes darkness, revealing what is often concealed. As followers of Jesus, our lives should reflect the contrast to the prevailing darkness around us. This involves not only avoiding immoral actions but actively pursuing righteousness, goodness, and truth.

“The call to holiness is not a call to isolation but a call to illuminate. We're challenged to bring Christ's light into every corner of our lives and society, exposing sin. It's a call to live with integrity and unity in every area of our lives so that our actions become a testimony to the power of Jesus.”⁷¹

As we reflect on our own “waffle tendencies,” are there areas of your life that you've unintentionally kept separate? And, more importantly, how might bringing your whole, authentic self to each “square” illuminate your testimony to the power of Jesus to others today?

⁷¹ *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians through Philemon* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1981) 69

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 23

Ephesians 5:8-16

By Carlos Campos

¹⁵ Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people but as wise — ¹⁶ making the most of the time, because the days are evil.⁷²

Read Ephesians 5

Wake-up calls are always harsh. In the literal sense, we've all experienced the sudden jolt from the peaceful rest to learn that it's time to get moving. In the spiritual sense, there have been times when we've been confronted with the direction our lives are heading. Wake-up calls are always harsh, yet necessary.

It is far too easy to fall into patterns and habits that don't necessarily lead to sin, yet don't accomplish much, either. The routine of life begins to take our focus away from God's purpose and plan for our lives. The distraction or lack of focus begins to pull us in a different direction, which at first doesn't seem that different but, with time, begins to take us further and further away from the things of God. Paul is sending us a "wake-up call" and encouraging us to make something of our lives by capitalizing on every opportunity and making each day count.

⁷² Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 5:15-16

IN HIM

“When Paul tells the believers to be careful how they *walk* (live), it is more than a warning to avoid missteps and sin. His command also includes being aware of every potential chance to improve the world around them. *The days are evil*, he writes, because sin is prevalent.”⁷³ This was true only in Paul’s day, but even more so in today’s day. We are called to live holy, to walk carefully, to determine what God’s will is, and to do what we can to represent God’s kingdom to those around us.

Our lives all look different, yet we’re all prone to wander. We get distracted or, worse, fall into sin by the world around us. This is Paul’s wake-up call to you! What areas of your life have “wandered away”? Are you truly making the most of the time? Are you allowing your life to testify to others of God’s goodness?

⁷³ *Layman’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 11: Galatians thru Philemon* (Ohio: Barbour Publishing, 2008) 63

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 24

Ephesians 5:17-19

By Jon Haley

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,⁷⁴

Read Ephesians 5

Paul continues the theme of walking in wisdom. Yesterday, Carlos reminded us to make the most of our time and to use our time to testify to the goodness of God. Paul will continue this theme and drill down on the aspect of being filled or controlled by the Spirit of God in our lives.

Wise people will first make good use of their time. “Secondly, wise people discern the will of God. They are sure that, whereas willfulness is folly, wisdom is to be found in God’s will and nowhere else. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”⁷⁵

Paul then drills down on the specific issue of drunkenness. Before we get into the clear teaching of getting drunk, let me share a brief statement on drinking. The Bible does not say it is a sin for a follower of Jesus to drink alcohol.

⁷⁴ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:17–19.

⁷⁵ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 202–203.

IN HIM

I don't have time to unpack this in this short devotional, but I will give you my personal conviction regarding drinking.

Considering the vast number of implications, complications, addictions, the possibility of drunkenness, and biblical principles, **I choose to abstain from drinking any alcohol.** Can you drink and not sin? Yes. Does drinking easily lead to sin? Yes.

“Drunkenness is a sin that never goes alone but carries men into other evils; it is a sin very provoking to God. When afflicted or weary, let us not seek to raise our spirits by strong drink, which is hateful and hurtful, and only ends in making sorrows more felt. But by fervent prayer, let us seek to be filled with the Spirit and to avoid whatever may grieve our gracious Comforter.”⁷⁶

What is clear from our reading today? Don't be unwise but search the will of God for your life. Do not be drunk but be filled with the Holy Spirit. Speak encouraging words and songs to one another. Make a choice today to walk in the Spirit and encourage another believer today through the words you speak.

⁷⁶ Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, [*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Eph 5:15.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 25

Ephesians 5:20-21

By Garrett Scott

²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.⁷⁷

Read Ephesians 5

Have you ever found yourself caught in the rush of life, struggling to pause and express gratitude to God for everything? I know I have, and I especially realize this after reading Ephesians 5:20-21. In earlier verses, Paul says to be filled with the Spirit; thanksgiving flows out of that. To thank God for everything is an easy thing for me to say, but much harder to do. This command, though difficult to fulfill always, can be a way to pause in the midst of our busy lives and express gratitude to God. To pause and acknowledge the gifts he gives. This could be sort of an inventory of what God has done that maybe you haven't thanked him for, such as health, another day of life and breath, the meal you eat, the car you drive, and the list goes on. Paul wrote this while he was in prison for preaching the gospel. How can he be saying these things amid being chained for proclaiming the good news?

As you give thanks for everything, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. We see examples of how

⁷⁷ New Living Translation (Carol Stream IL, Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Eph 5:20-21

IN HIM

to do this in Philippians 2:3, *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*⁷⁸

So, set aside a few minutes throughout your day to pause and thank God for everything. Start this and make it a daily habit because the list is more than you might think. James 1:17 says, *Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father.*⁷⁹

⁷⁸ New Living Translation (Carol Stream IL, Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Philippians 2:3

⁷⁹ New Living Translation (Carol Stream IL, Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), James 1:17

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 26

Ephesians 5:22-24

By Steffan Campos

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.⁸⁰

Read Ephesians 5

Oftentimes, biblical submission is misunderstood, which causes these specific verses to get a bad reputation, especially among women. Biblical submission is NOT being weak, unimportant, or a doormat.

The original Greek word for “submit” is *hupotassó* “to subject oneself; reflexively to obey; to yield to one’s admonition or advice”.⁸¹

In the first definition, we see that submission is a voluntary attitude. We are not forced into submission; we choose it. The second definition calls us to continually be submissive. It may be easier to submit when the marriage is going well, but based on this translation, we must make it more of a behavioral pattern, like a reflex. The third definition helps us see that what we are submitting to is the leadership and advice of our husband.

If the verse just said, “Submit yourselves... to the Lord” and left out the “wives submitting to husband” piece, the

⁸⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 5:22.

⁸¹ Strong’s Concordance - #5293

IN HIM

definitions of submission that we just unpacked would come much easier. Wives, if we are truly honest with ourselves, the temptation to become defensive is not because of women being called to submit; it's because of who we are called to submit to, which is a sinful and imperfect husband. But this was not by mistake; God had a plan.

From the beginning, God designed man and woman in His image and for man to take on the role of leader. God also designed for Jesus to be sent to the Earth, live a perfect life, and one day die on the cross for our sins. Jesus, by every definition, submitted to God's authority. When wives submit to their husbands, it is not because they are worthy but because God is worthy. We are following Christ's example.

Let it be said since we are first called to submit to God. We are not to follow our husbands into sin. There is a difference between choosing not to yield to your husband's authority because he is sinning versus you just not agreeing on the matter. So be encouraged: if sin is not the issue at hand and you are choosing to yield to God as Lord of your life, He gifts the Holy Spirit to live in us, who will help us submit to our husbands.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 27

Ephesians 5:25-29

By Mike Haley

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,* ⁸²

Read Ephesians 5

The Lord has pictured marriage as a human relationship that mirrors the love that Christ has for His church. Jesus is pictured in scripture as the bridegroom and the church is pictured as the bride of Christ.

With that in mind, ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,* ⁸³ This passage on marriage begins with the idea that we are to submit to one another in the fear of God. ⁸⁴

Mutual love and respect are essential for the marriage relationship to thrive. Love is described in I Corinthians 13. ⁴ *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all*

⁸² [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:22,25.

⁸³ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:25.

⁸⁴ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:21.

IN HIM

things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸⁵ Love never fails.⁸⁵

I have had the joy of officiating many weddings through the years. A greater joy has been to see many continue to be faithful to one another and to the vows they pledged to one another before God. My greatest joy has been to have a loving and faithful wife who stood by me and faithfully served with me in the Lord's work. She no doubt deserves the greatest crown for her patience and perseverance.

None of us can love like Jesus. He was the sinless Son of God. We must strive to follow His example, and when we fail, seek His forgiveness and the forgiveness of our spouse. We all fail, and we all need to forgive and be forgiven.³² *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.⁸⁶*

- Are you forgiving?
- Do you need to seek forgiveness?
- Are you striving to be a better spouse and to love your spouse as Christ loves the church?

⁸⁵ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 1 Co 13:4–8.

⁸⁶ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 4:32.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 28

Ephesians 5:30-33

By Mike Haley

³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.⁸⁷

Read Ephesians 5

When we place our faith in Christ and commit to being a follower of Christ, we enter a close and intimate relationship with Him. We are adopted into His family, and therefore, we are called “children of God.” This says we are members of His body. He is in us, and we are in Him. This is an amazingly close relationship. This relationship is compared to the marriage relationship.

³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.⁸⁸

God first spoke this in Genesis 2:24 after He took a rib from the side of Adam, fashioned a woman, and presented her to him. He took a bone from Adam’s side, under his arm, and near his heart. Eve was to be near and dear to Adam and to be by his side and under his arm for him to protect and care for her. It was designed by God to be the most important of all human relationships.

⁸⁷ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:30.

⁸⁸ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:31.

IN HIM

Jesus referred to this important truth: ⁴ *And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”*⁸⁹

God designed the love and loyalty of husband and wife to show the love of Christ for His Church. We are to model the love that Christ has for us in our marriage.

We all need God’s help every day to display that kind of love. ¹² *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*⁹⁰

The relationship in marriage is the closest and most intimate human relationship of all. It is to picture an intimate and close relationship between Christ and His bride. Sacrificial, selfless love is the most important element in both these relationships.

- How has Christ demonstrated His love to you?
- How do you show the love of Christ in your marriage?

⁸⁹ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Mt 19:4–6.

⁹⁰ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jn 15:12–13.

IN HIM

- Has the Lord been gracious and forgiving to you?
- Have you been forgiving and gracious to your spouse?

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 29

Ephesians 6:1-4

By Jon Haley

¹ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

² *“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.⁹¹*

Read Ephesians 6

“Nothing is more important in your life than being one of God’s tools to form a human soul.”⁹² Mom and Dad, your job as a parent never ends. As a parent, God has entrusted you with the responsibility to nurture a human soul in the love of Christ. Remember, your goal is not to raise a Godly child but to be a Godly parent.

“If a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife’s devotion, only one in fifty will become a regular worshiper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds to three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers. If Dad takes faith in God seriously then the message to their children is that God should be taken seriously.”⁹³

⁹¹ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 6:1–4.

⁹² Paul David Trip. *Parenting*. 2016 Crossway Publishing, Wheaton, Illinois. Pg. 21

⁹³ Jon Haley. *Fight For Your Family*. 2020 Fort Worth, TX. Pg. 59

IN HIM

Fathers, don't exasperate your children by coming down hard on them. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.⁹⁴ I love the wording of this translation. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.

Dad, your goal is to lead them to Jesus. Direct them in the WAY of Christ. For you to lead them in the way of the Master, you must walk in the way of the Master. Allow your kids to see Christ in the way you serve, love, lead, and live.

Are you loving and leading your kids like Jesus?

⁹⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Eph 6:4.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 30

Ephesians 6:5-9

By Jon Haley

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;⁹⁵

Read Ephesians 6

Paul continues with the theme of submission. As followers of Jesus, if we are going to walk in love (5:1-7), light (5:7-14), and wisdom (5:15-21), we must live our lives submitted to the Spirit of God.

As we live in submission to God, He will give us the ability to live in submission to others. We are to live in submission as spouses (5:22-33), children (6:1-3), parents (6:4), and in the workplace.

How does this apply to me and you today? Great question. Praise the Lord, we do not deal with slavery in our culture. The application for us would fall into the employee and employer relationship. *Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God.⁹⁶ Masters, it's the same with you. No abuse, please, and no threats. You*

⁹⁵ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 6:5.

⁹⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Eph 6:6-7.

IN HIM

*and your servants are both under the same Master in heaven. He makes no distinction between you and them.*⁹⁷

As an employee, I should work hard as if I were working for the Lord. As an employer, I should give care and concern to the employee as the Lord gives care and concern to me. As an employee, do you go to work each day with the mindset of working to the best of your ability, as if you are working for the Lord, no matter how undeserving your boss is? As an employer, do you treat your employees with the same grace you expect and hope to get from the Lord?

The reason for such service is **that the Lord will reward** them. He is the One who can accurately and impartially judge their performance and motivation (cf. 1 Peter 1:17).⁹⁸

For additional reading on what the Bible says about slavery, read page 111.

⁹⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Eph 6:9.

⁹⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, "[Ephesians](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 642.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 31

Ephesians 6:10-13

By Allison Holcomb

Read Ephesians 6

In 1992, when I was in middle school, I attended a church camp, and the theme was “The Armor of God.” Ephesians 6:11 became my life verse. I always share this passage when anyone asks me to give them a Scripture for encouragement. I have struggled with anxiety for many years, and when I feel an attack coming on, I quote this passage. Hearing this truth that Paul shares immediately calms me down.

¹⁰ *Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.*⁹⁹ Whatever I am facing, whether it is a big or small decision, fear, anxiety, etc., I do not have to face it, feeling that I can’t handle it. I have been promised that the Lord will strengthen me. He will fight those battles for me because I am his child! I am so thankful for this promise because I could not fight alone.

¹¹ *Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.*¹⁰⁰ We all have struggles and battles in life. They can be job-related, family issues, financial troubles, worry, depression, anxiety, school, and so much more. When we dwell on it and make our struggles our focus, we are letting evil win. The enemy gains control of our thoughts!

⁹⁹ ¹ The Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 6:10.

¹⁰⁰ ² The Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 6:11.

IN HIM

God has given us a powerful tool to help fight against these battles, the Armor of God. Over the next few days, you are going to be reading about what these pieces of armor are and how we can use each piece to resist evil.

¹³ For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.¹⁰¹ We need to be ready and prepared to fight, because we will face battles. How do you handle it when you are feeling attacked? What is your first reaction? I visualize putting on the armor and fighting the enemy with His Word and the strength He has given us.

¹⁰¹ ³ The Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 6:13.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 32

Ephesians 6:14-15

By Violetta Hickman

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.¹⁰²

Read Ephesians 6

While I haven't personally played any contact sports myself, watching my sons play gave me a greater appreciation for protective gear. Seeing them equipped with helmets, pads, and other gear gave me relief, knowing they were protected from potential harm.

I am grateful for the imagery the Apostle Paul uses in Ephesians 6. It reminds us that although an enemy seeks to destroy us, God is greater and has provided us with spiritual armor for our protection.

The belt of truth keeps us grounded and protects us from falling for lies and deceptions. Jesus said *God's Word is truth*¹⁰³. When we live out God's truth, we can navigate life with clarity and wisdom.

¹⁰² *New International Version*, 2011, Eph. 6:14-15

¹⁰³ *New International Version*, 2011, John 17:7

IN HIM

The breastplate of righteousness is like a shield for our hearts. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are covered in His righteousness. Because of His righteousness, we can stand confident, without guilt or shame.

The shoes of the gospel of peace give us stability and balance. When we know God's promises, we can have peace in chaos and walk with certainty as we share the Gospel with others.

As I look at the armor, I see Jesus. He is the truth. He is our righteousness. He is our peace. Only through Jesus can we stand firm against the devil and all his schemes.

Are you feeling down and defeated? I have fantastic news. Jesus has already won the victory for us! *But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*¹⁰⁴

Today, let's put on the full armor of God so that we can face the battles of life with His strength and victory.

¹⁰⁴ *New International Version*, 2011, I Corinthians 15:57

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 33

Ephesians 6:16-17

By Steffan Campos

¹⁶ In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit— which is the word of God.¹⁰⁵

Read Ephesians 6

“In times of warfare, one common attack strategy was shooting fiery arrows towards your enemy in order to distract them. If the enemy had to leave the safety of the formation to focus on extinguishing the fires, they would be more susceptible to secondary attacks.”¹⁰⁶ Shields were a crucial defense mechanism to protect against these attacks. “A soldier could use it individually; he could link shields with his fellow soldiers and form a ‘wall’ of safety. Some shields were made of wood and dipped in water to extinguish the flaming arrows altogether.”¹⁰⁷

The Bible says our faith in Jesus is like a shield of protection against the enemy, so we need to strengthen and put it into practice daily. One way to make sure we are reinforcing our faith is by having people with the same faith in God do life alongside us. This helps us fight off spiritual

¹⁰⁵ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Eph 6:16–17.

¹⁰⁶ Youversion bible- Priscilla Shirer “Armor of God”

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.gotquestions.org/shield-of-faith.html>

IN HIM

attacks from the evil one while maintaining our defense so as not to let the destruction Satan intends for our life to take place.

The helmet of salvation is another vital piece of protection in spiritual warfare. In fact, all the other pieces of armor rest on this because knowing Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior is the ultimate safeguard. It protects you from now until eternity, as nothing can separate us from Him once you have accepted His salvation.

Once our defensive position is secured, then out of God's grace and goodness, He also gives us an indestructible offensive weapon: the Bible. When we make time to read, study, and memorize His Word, we can fight back. When Jesus experienced spiritual warfare, He showed us exactly how to fight off the enemy using Truth.

Jesus knows firsthand that we will face battles in our lives, but by daily putting on God's armor, we can follow His example and be able to stand up through it. Pray and ask God to help you put His full armor on today.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 34

Ephesians 6:18-20

By Jeanne Howery

¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints – ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.¹⁰⁸

Read Ephesians 6

Paul was urging the church at Ephesus to pray for all believers in Christ continually and to also pray for him, Christ's representative, to have the right words to communicate the gospel boldly with those he would be in contact with in prison. Paul was not only locked up but also in chains because of previously sharing the gospel with others.

I don't like to admit this, but my priority in asking them to pray for me would be to be set free so I could be a better witness. After that, I would ask for prayers to be bold in sharing how much Jesus loved all of them, no matter how great their sins were. He willingly gave His life for them, conquering death and sin, so when they die, they will spend

¹⁰⁸ The New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph. 6:18-20

IN HIM

eternity in heaven with Him. All they had to do was put their whole trust in the One who came to save them.

This is eye-opening for me! Paul's first concern was for others, not himself. This showed me if Paul could be used to win souls to Christ wherever he was (prison), whatever the circumstances (chained), then I am capable of doing the same thing. Whether I happen to be at work or school, hospitalized, or having my hair done by the same person every time, it doesn't matter where I am or how I feel; I just need to be available and willing to share the gospel.

Today, we can choose to be obedient and be a witness for Christ, or we can choose to look at our circumstances and use them as an excuse not to. Which will it be? The choice is ours to make.

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 35

Ephesians 6:21-24

By Matt Whitsell

I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.¹⁰⁹

Read Ephesians 6

Have you ever wondered about the life stories of the “supporting cast?” I am referring to Tychicus, who was mentioned in verse 21. I first wonder... how do you say this guy's name? Tick-ick-us? Or is it Tie-chee-kus? Whatever the correct pronunciation, I am confident millennials will make this a popular baby name soon.

Who was Tychicus? What was he doing with Paul? Tychicus is only mentioned a handful of times in Scripture: Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21-22, Colossians 4:7-8, Titus 3:12, and 2 Timothy 4:12. He was a believer from Asia Minor. He likely was a Pastor of many churches and could have been the “brother” referenced in 1 Corinthians 8:18.

Whoever he was, Paul entrusted him to carry his letter to Ephesus (The book of Ephesians) as well as the letter to Colossae (the book of Colossians) ...at the same time! Can you imagine traveling some 1,200 miles, with the original copies of the Ephesians and Colossians with you?

¹⁰⁹ Christian Standard Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), Eph. 6:22

IN HIM

Tychicus navigated rudimentary roads and trails through dangerous territories on foot and by boat just to deliver these letters. Does he know how valuable these letters will be to the church for thousands of years to come?

Was he anxious? Scared? Troubled? Was he looking over his shoulder to see if he was being followed? Possibly, but honestly, Paul probably chose Tychicus because he knew he could trust him to deliver the message, and no matter how difficult the journey was he would encourage their hearts.

You and I are just like Tychicus. We are messengers taking the message of God's glorious grace into the world. There will be obstacles and hurdles we must overcome. The journey will not be easy, but we are not alone, and the message is worth it. Today, will you go out and encourage someone's heart with the good news of the gospel?

H.E.A.R. Journal

H (Highlight)

E (Explain)

A (Apply)

R (Respond)

IN HIM

Day 36
HOPE IN JESUS
Romans 15:13

By Jon Haley

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰

I believe this last verse is fitting of the last devotion. Paul prays a short powerful prayer over the followers of Jesus who are in Rome. I pray this prayer over you as well. I pray the God of hope will fill you with joy and peace. I pray you would abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Several times Paul’s words sound as if he were ending this epistle (vv. 13, 33; 16:20, 25–27). This verse (15:13) is in effect a benedictory prayer. The description of God as the God of hope relates to hope mentioned in the preceding verses and to the promises of God recorded in the Scripture which give hope (v. 4). Paul desired God to fill his readers with all joy and peace (cf. 14:17).

- **Joy** relates to the delight of anticipation in seeing one’s hopes fulfilled.

¹¹⁰ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 15:13.

IN HIM

- **Peace** results from the assurance that God will fulfill those hopes (cf. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). These are experienced as believers trust in Him (cf. Heb. 11:1).
- As a result, believers overflow with **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 15:19). The achievement of all God's purposes for the spiritual welfare of His children comes from the power given by the Spirit of God. What a fitting closing reminder to the apostle's discussion of Christian living."¹¹¹

The two key words I do not want you to overlook or miss are in the middle of the verse. Read the verse again. ¹³ *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **in believing**, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*¹¹² Hope, Joy, and Peace are only found in placing your faith in JESUS.

You must first place your faith in Jesus for salvation. Secondly, we must daily place our faith in Him through surrender. The only way to have hope, joy, and peace is first through salvation and then surrendering to Him daily.

If you have never placed your faith in Jesus for salvation, please do that now. You can TRUST in Jesus for forgiveness of sins by taking the following three steps:

¹¹¹ John A. Witmer, "[Romans](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 496.

¹¹² [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 15:13.

IN HIM

1. Admit you are a sinner.

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,¹¹³

2. Believe Jesus died for you.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.¹¹⁴

3. Confess Jesus is Lord.

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹⁵

To walk in His hope, joy, and peace you must daily surrender your plans for His. Daily surrender your life to live and walk in obedience to what God has called you to do. Daily ***Trust in the Lord*** and the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you.

¹¹³ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 3:23.

¹¹⁴ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jn 3:16.

¹¹⁵ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ro 10:9–10.

Slavery in the Bible?

Paul mentions bondservants in Ephesians 6, and this usually begs the question, “What does the Bible say about slavery?” Here is a great answer to the question from the website www.gotquestions.org

There is a tendency to look at slavery as something of the past. But, it is estimated there are today over 27 million people in the world who are subject to slavery: forced labor, sex trade, inheritable property, etc. As those who have been redeemed from the slavery of sin, followers of Jesus Christ should be the foremost champions of ending human slavery in the world today. The questions arise, though: “Why does the Bible not speak out strongly against slavery?” “Why does the Bible seem to support the practice of human slavery?”

Slavery in the Old Testament Law

Slave ownership was a common practice long before the Mosaic Law was given. So, the law neither instituted slavery nor ended it; rather, the law regulated it. It gave instructions on how slaves should be treated but did not outlaw slavery altogether.

Hebrews with Hebrew slaves.

The law allowed for Hebrew men and women to sell themselves into slavery to another Hebrew. They could only serve for six years, however. In the seventh year, they were to be set free (Exodus 21:2). This arrangement amounted to what we might call indentured servanthood. And the slaves were to be treated well: *Do not make them work as slaves.*

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They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you (Leviticus 25:39–40). The law also specified that, when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you (Deuteronomy 15:13–14). The freed slave had the option of staying with his master and becoming a “servant for life” (Exodus 21:5–6).

Hebrews with Gentile slaves.

When the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan, they were to drive out or destroy all the former inhabitants. However, that order was not fully obeyed, and many Gentiles remained in the land. God allowed the Hebrews to take slaves from among that population: *Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly (Leviticus 25:44–46).* So, the law did allow for slavery.

Several laws regulating slavery appear in Exodus 21. These laws gave some basic rights to slaves and curtailed the actions of masters in a historically unprecedented way. In the ancient world outside of Israel, slaves had no rights. But God’s Law extended to slaves the right to keep a wife (verse 3), the right not to be sold to foreigners (verse 8), the right to be adopted into a family by marriage (verse 9), and the right

to food and clothing (verse 10). The law also limited masters in their use of corporal punishment (verses 20, 26–27).

Gentiles with Hebrew slaves.

Under the Mosaic Law, and if economic circumstances demanded it, a Hebrew had the option of selling himself as a slave to a Gentile living in Israel (Leviticus 25:47). The law also provided for the slave's redemption at any time (verses 48–52). And the treatment of the Hebrew slave was to be considerate: slaves were *to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly (verse 53). If no redemption came, the slaves were still released, with their families, on the Year of Jubilee (verse 54).*

New Testament Instruction on Slavery

Even in the New Testament era, the Bible did not demand that every slave owner immediately emancipate his slaves. Rather, the apostles gave instructions to slaves and their owners on godly behavior within that social system. Masters were admonished on the proper treatment of their slaves. For example, in Ephesians 6:9 masters are told, *Treat your slaves in the same way [with goodwill]. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.* Elsewhere, the command is, *Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1).*

Jesus and the apostles did not outright condemn slavery. They didn't need to. The effect of the gospel is lives are

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changed, one by one, and those changed lives, in turn, bring transformation to entire families, clans, and cultures. Christianity was never designed to be a political movement, but over time, it naturally affected political policy. Alexander MacLaren wrote that the gospel “meddles directly with no political or social arrangements, but lays down principles which will profoundly affect these, and leaves them to soak into the general mind” (*The Expositor’s Bible*, vol. VI, Eerdmans, 1940, p. 301). In nations where Christianity spread and took firm hold, slavery was ended through the efforts of born-again individuals.

The seeds of the emancipation of slaves are in the Bible, which teaches that all men are created by God and made in His image (Genesis 1:27), which condemns those who kidnap and sell a person (Exodus 21:16; cf. 1 Timothy 1:8–10), and which shows that a slave can truly be *a brother in the Lord* (Philemon 1:16).

Some criticize the Bible because it did not demand an immediate overthrow of every ingrained, centuries-old sinful custom of the day. But, as Warren Wiersbe pointed out, “The Lord chooses to change people and society gradually, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the truth of the Word of God” (*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, David C. Cook, 2007, p. 245).¹¹⁶

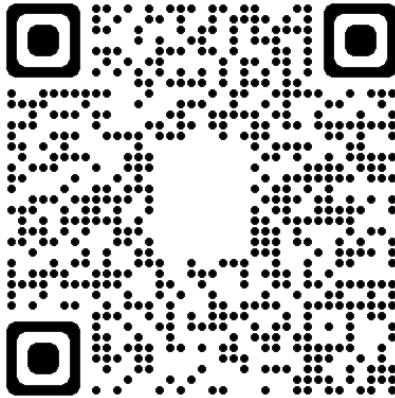
¹¹⁶ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html>

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KEEP IT GOING

I pray this journey has created a spiritual discipline and habit for you. I hope you took the time to fill out a H.E.A.R. journal each day. I also pray you will continue to journal daily as you allow your identity IN HIM to impact your behavior.

Robby Gallaty and his team at Replicate Ministries have developed a daily reading plan. I encourage you to start reading each day and completing a daily H.E.A.R. journal.

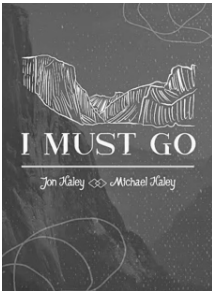


Also, From Jon Haley:



Jon does a great job of blending practical application along with biblical truths of leading and guiding your family. It's the only book I have read all the way through in one sitting. Almost ran my highlighter dry. If you're looking for some biblical insight on leading your family this is it.

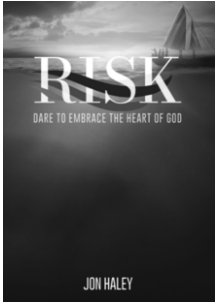
~ Anonymous Amazon Review



This real-life account of Jon and Michael Haley hiking the John Muir trail will challenge you and inspire you. Rooted in Biblical truth, the book takes you on their hike and integrates their journey with mountains found in the Word of God. Whether you are interested in hiking or not, this book will cause you to evaluate your commitment to following God's commands and remind you the God of the mountaintop remains God in the valley. Excellent read!!!

~ Anonymous Amazon Review

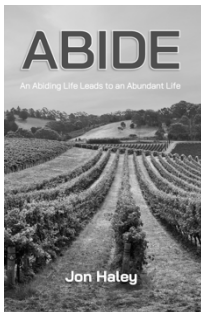
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Jonah seemingly was a lot like me. He knew what God wanted but chose to go in the opposite direction. Jon will take the reader on a deep dive into the story of Jonah. Jonah knew the heart of God but did not embrace the heart of God. The book will challenge, inspire, and encourage you to live a life fully embracing the heart of God.



Trust is a 31-day devotional challenging the reader to Trust God completely. The reader will explore 31 different passages found throughout the Bible describing events and characters who trusted God. The key verse of this book is Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*



The Abiding Life Leads to the Abundant Life. Jon will take the reader to discover the depths of Jesus' words found in John 15 regarding Abiding in Christ. The first half of the book deals with the why, and the second deals with the how. Jesus challenges us to Abide in Him, and this book will give you the inspiration and the information to follow the teachings of Christ.

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**Scan the QR Code to go directly
to Jon's Author page.**



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