

# CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

# EPHESIANS

*the Gospel of Grace*



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## SERIES OVERVIEW

July 14	<b>Ephesians 1:1 - 2:10</b>	<b>Grace upon Grace</b>
July 21	<b>Ephesians 2:11 - 3:13</b>	<b>One in Christ</b>
July 28	<b>Ephesians 3:14 - 4:16</b>	<b>Unity and Maturity</b>
August 4	<b>Ephesians 4:17 - 5:20</b>	<b>Darkness and Light</b>
August 11	<b>Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9</b>	<b>Godly Relationships</b>
August 18	<b>Ephesians 6:10-24</b>	<b>Dressed for Action</b>

# EPHESIANS - an introduction

New Testament scholar and Bishop, Tom Wright, says that this letter is like a bird's eye view of many of the great themes of Christian landscape - God, the world, Jesus, the church, the means of salvation, Christian behaviour, marriage and family, spiritual warfare.

It is likely it was originally intended as a circular letter for several of the early churches in Asia Minor (Turkey). The introduction in the NIV Pew Bible also points out that it may not have been written to the believers in Ephesus. Some of the best early copies of the letter don't include the phrase '*in Ephesus*' in the greeting. While Paul spent two years in Ephesus, this letter appears to address people Paul has never met.

Ephesus itself was a thriving and prosperous port city in the first century, with a strong Jewish community. It was on the only major east/west road system in the area and had experienced peace for nearly a century.

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## Some guidelines for Connect Group ...

- Come to the study prepared; preparation will greatly enrich your time together; it is recommended to take notes during the Sunday sermon, and to write down your thoughts as you prepare
- As part of your preparation, why not listen to the sermon again during the week (*most sermons are recorded and available on [Apple Podcasts](#), and also on the [website](#)*)
- As you prepare, pray that God will speak to you through his word
- Be willing to participate in your group. Your sharing will greatly encourage all the other members as you grow together
- Stick to the topic - this allows everyone to participate on level ground and to go deeper into the Bible
- Be sensitive to others and listen attentively; affirm others, especially those who may feel timid or don't often share
- Your leader won't be lecturing, but helping members to think through the questions. Many questions don't have a 'right' answer, especially those that apply the Bible to our lives
- Be careful not to dominate, as it could inhibit others from sharing
- Expect God to teach you through the passage and through other members, and always pray that it will be a profitable time together

July 14

Ephesians 1:1 - 2:10

## *Grace upon Grace*

### INTRO

*When you are feeling down, how do you try and feel more positive again?*  
*-in secular ways?*  
*-in spiritual ways?*

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.*

### **Read Ephesians 1:1 - 2:10**

There are a number of key theological themes intertwined throughout this passage. This theology prompts Paul to give praise and glory to God.

#### 1. PRAISE

What can we learn about 'praise' from these verses - 1:3, 6, 12, 14. Who are we to praise? Why should we praise?

#### 2. GLORY

What do vv 6, 12, 14, 17 & 18 tell us about glory?

## *Sermon Notes*

3. GRACE

How does 2:1-10 help you to better understand grace?

4. Why is Paul so excited about grace?

5. Do you ever feel like you need to earn God's grace or favour? If so, why do you think it's hard to accept his grace as a free gift?

6. PREDESTINATION

Look at 1:4,5 & 11 and 2:10.

What do these verses teach about predestination?

***Extension Question***

7. How many times does Paul use the phrase "in/with Christ"?  
What has God done for believers "in/with Christ"?



- Using the words of either verse 17 or 18, go around the group praying for each person, putting their name at the start of the verse you are praying
- Thank God for providing salvation by grace and not expecting you to be good enough or do enough
- Ask him to show you what good works you can do this week to demonstrate your salvation

## *Sermon Notes*

July 21

Ephesians 2:11 - 3:13

## *One in Christ*

### INTRO

*Share about a time in your life when you were at odds with someone, but things changed and you were reconciled?*

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

**Ephesians 3:12**

*In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

### **Read Ephesians 2:11-22**

1. v.12. What are the five ways Paul describes people who were not part of Israel?  
What similarities do you see to our situation before we were Christians?
2. vv.14-16 What has Christ accomplished for these two groups?  
How does Paul make the point that it is the cross that unites?



## *Sermon Notes*

3. Think about the terms 'foreigner' and 'citizen'.

What new perspectives do these words give you about gospel truth?

4. How should our interactions with Christians be different because we are members of God's family?

### ***Read Ephesians 3:1-13***

5. What three privileges do Gentiles now have along with Jews? vv.5-6

7. What was Paul's task in God's plan, and how does he describe it? (vv.8-9)

8. What wonderful method did God choose to use for his plan to come about? (v.10)

How does it make you feel to be part of that?

### ***Extension Question***

9. Paul uses the Greek root word for house five times - 'household', 'built', 'building', 'dwelling'. What does it mean to you to belong to God's household with Jesus as the cornerstone?



- Thank God for being part of his family
- Ask him to use you to make others feel welcome
- Thank God for the incredible riches he has given us in Christ

## *Sermon Notes*

July 28

Ephesians 3:14 - 4:16

## *Unity and Maturity*

### INTRO

*Share a time when you did something beyond your wildest dreams! Perhaps something you thought you could never do.*

### **Read Ephesians 3:14-21**

1. What stands out to you particularly from 3:14-21? Why is this?
2. Paul speaks of the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love. What do these dimensions suggest about the nature of Christ's love?
3. What do you think it means to be filled with all the fullness of God? How might this look in your life? (Ephesians 3:19)

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

### **Ephesians 4:16**

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

## *Sermon Notes*

## **Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

4. According to chapters 1-3 what is our calling?  
What are the characteristics of a life which is worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1-3)
  
5. Paul describes various roles such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.  
What is the significance of these roles, and how do they contribute to the church's growth?
  
6. What spiritual gifts do you think you might have? How could you use them to build up the church?

7. According to Ephesians 4, what does spiritual maturity look like? How can we develop into spiritually mature disciples of Christ?

### **Extension Question**

8. Paul explains that Christ 'ascended on high' and gave gifts to his people. How does Christ's ascension relate to the giving of spiritual gifts, and what does this reveal about his authority and his ongoing work in the church?



- Slowly pray through Ephesians 3:14-21 as a group
- Pray for the wider church that it would find both unity and strength to not be *'tossed back and forth by the waves'*
- Pray for everyone in their group to know the gift(s) that God has given them and wisdom as to where to use them

## *Sermon Notes*

August 4

Ephesians 4:17 - 5:20

## *Darkness and Light*

### INTRO

*If you had the capacity to change the world, what would you do first?*

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

**Ephesians 4:32**

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

**Read Ephesians 4:17 - 5:2**

1. vv.17-19 How does Paul describe the mind and the heart? What was the behaviour that resulted?
2. What examples are there in our culture today?
3. What are our lives to be like in contrast? vv.20-24



## *Sermon Notes*

4. vv.25-32b What does Paul say we are to 'put off' and what are we to 'put on'?

What are the reasons Paul gives?

### ***Read Ephesians 5:1-20***

5. It seems that Paul's world wasn't much different from ours!  
What does Paul say about immorality?  
Where does this challenge you the most?

6. Where do you see 'works of darkness' and what should our attitude be toward it?

7. What is one practical way you can work towards living out Paul's guidelines?

8. How has Christian music/hymns/spiritual songs been important for you?

### ***Extension Question***

9. v.19 With what we know about Paul's former life as a Pharisee, what role would psalms, hymns and spiritual songs have played in his life?



- Pray for each other in your group, asking God to fill your hearts and minds with gospel truth so that each person can live in a way that is pleasing to God
- As you praise God for his love for you, ask that he will show you areas of your thinking and/or behaviour that needs changing

## *Sermon Notes*

August 11

Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9

## Godly Relationships

### INTRO

*How do you react to the idea of being told to submit?*

**Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9**

1. In what way does v.21 set the tone for the entire passage?
2. How does your 'reverence' for Christ, influence your willingness to submit to 'one another' (5:21)?
3. The word 'love' in 5:25 & 28 is used to translate the Greek word *agapaō*, meaning "totally unselfish, sacrificial love."  
How are husbands to show love for their wives (5:25-30)?

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

**Ephesians 6:7-8**

*Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.*

## *Sermon Notes*

4. Why do you think Paul addresses both children and parents/fathers in 6:1-4, and not just children?

6. How should Christians view 'power' in light of these passages? Can you think of any other modern day examples that might be similar to Paul's examples here?

5. How does Paul's teachings on marriage, parenting and slavery challenge the social norms of today?

### ***Extension Question***

7. What do you think is meant by the metaphor of Christ being the head of the church? There are different interpretations of this metaphor - some commentators ascertain that head means 'authority' or 'leader', others say it means 'source of life'. Which do you think makes most sense here?



- Pray for humility and a willingness to submit to both Christ and one another
- Pray for those areas in society and the world where there is an imbalance of power that leads to oppression
- Pray for those in government who have power, particularly those who are Christian, that they might lead with humility and selflessness

## *Sermon Notes*

August 18

Ephesians 6:10-24

## *Dressed for Action*

### INTRO

*Life is sometimes described as a journey and sometimes described as a battle. Which metaphor do you most easily relate to?*

### **Read Ephesians 6:10-24**

1. Review Chapter 1 of Ephesians. Which spiritual blessing best helps you to 'be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power'? v10
  
2. Where do you recognise 'the powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms', at work in the world today?

MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE  
**MEMORY VERSE**  
MEMORY VERSE  
MEMORY VERSE

### **Ephesians 6:13**

*Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*



## *Sermon Notes*

3. How does each piece of armour represent well the spiritual reality it represents? Is there one you find difficult to make a connection?
4. Which item of armour do you find most helpful for 'standing your ground'? v.13
5. vv.18-20 Make a list of the essential things we should always be praying for?
6. Why is the final greeting in vv. 23-24 significant after talking about the armour of God?
7. What is the most important thing you have learned from the letter to the Ephesians over the last six weeks?



- Pray that you would be alert to spiritual realities v.18
- Pray for all the Lord's people v.18
- Pray that you might have the words to speak fearlessly and make known the mystery of the gospel vv.19,20
- Ask God to clothe you with the spiritual armour so that you might 'stand your ground'

## *Sermon Notes*



*Living to Love and  
Proclaim Jesus*

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