

4:1-16

Although Paul is writing this letter to the church, most of the applications that are made from the previous doctrinal portion are directed to the Ephesian Christians as individuals. However, this section is directed to the church as a group and deals with their relationships with each other and therefore their attitudes and activities together.

Paul has spent the last portion of the book explaining the tremendous benefit they have derived from God that had been hidden for ages past. This mystery has now been revealed; the mystery that the Jews and Gentiles alike can have salvation through the blood of Jesus. God's love, His kindness and His grace have been extended to all people. All who believe in Him can be heirs of salvation and members of the body of Christ.

As Paul begins this chapter, he debases himself by again referring to himself as a prisoner of the Lord. While he began the letter by identifying himself as an apostle, this is the second reference to his being a prisoner for his devotion to the gospel and to Christ. While some are proud of their suffering and self-sacrifice, that is not the case with Paul. He humbly recognized his position as an apostle but also as a servant and now as a prisoner for the Lord.

He encourages the readers to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which they have been called. While he uses this same idea in other passages, he says in Philippians 3:16 that they were to live up to what they had already attained. It is not enough to make a claim to Christianity if our lives do not conform. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not just a beautiful story nor is it just a theological declaration. It is intended to be life changing and practical as it is put into practice in our daily lives. We are to follow in the steps of Jesus. Paul urges the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows the example of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). John describes this walk as "walking in the light" as God is light and in the light (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

He then encourages us to practice humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love toward one another. This attitude is that of Christ as explained by Paul to the Philippians. Jesus emptied himself of all the glory of heaven and his position of deity to become a man and live on this earth. As though this were not enough, He became a servant who ultimately died for sins he had not committed. In humility he suffered death for us, even death on a cross, the punishment reserved for insubordinate slaves.

Next Paul admonishes his readers to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He does not tell them to create a unity among brethren. He does not tell them to negotiate a basis for unity. He tells them to preserve the unity that already exists. This is the unity that is created

by God when anyone (from any race, nationality, ethnic group, social status, educational level, professional standing; and the list could go on...) comes to Jesus Christ in faith. When one is raised up to be seated with Christ in the heavenlies, that person is united with God and with Christ. When another is added to the body of Christ by God, that person is also in fellowship with God. But to the point here, these two believers, because each is in unity with God, are now in unity with one another. Since God has joined us together in this union with Him, with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit and with each other, we are to be diligent to preserve the harmony. Jesus said concerning marriage (but the principle applies here) "what God has joined together, let man not separate." James in his book (James 3:14-16) warns that the attitudes that disrupt this unity are not from above but are from this world and are devilish in nature. Unity among God's people is inherent while discord, strife and division are from the devil.

While we must stand for truth, and that at times will cause a disruption in unity, we must make sure that our attitude toward one another and especially toward ourselves is that of Christ. More often than not, when there is a break in the unity of brothers and sisters in the Lord, it is because one or the other (or both) have an ungodly spirit and do not treat each other with love. To be sure, one or both will hide behind some doctrinal issue to have their own way but that is usually secondary to the real problem.

This oneness is based on the oneness of God. We are told there is one God and Father of all but we are also told there is one Lord and there is one Spirit. Yet, we understand the three are one. Jesus, in John 17, said that He and the Father were one and in one another. We are made one with God when we demonstrate the one saving faith as we submit to the one Lord in the one baptism. Paul describes this baptism in Romans 6 as being buried with Christ and then being raised up to walk in newness of life. It is then that we can live with the one hope of our calling. This one hope is not just wishful thinking but is the promise of eternal life, made by God and sealed with the giving of the Holy Spirit to live in us.

When we have done this we are all in the one body of Christ and therefore we are now members of one another. It is no wonder that we are to be diligent (make every effort) to preserve this unity. In the book of Proverbs we are told that there are seven things that are an abomination to the Lord. One of these is the person who stirs up strife among his brothers (Prov. 6:16-19). Throughout the book, the wise man condemns the person who would cause discord and disrupt the unity that God desires.

To each grace is given. Paul had already said that we were created in Christ Jesus for good works. He now is telling us that God provides the

means of accomplishment for those good works by his gracious gifts. One point to be noted is that the more we use the gifts, the more gifts we are given. When we fail to use them they will be taken from us. Also, since these gifts are given to us by God's grace, we certainly have no basis for boasting about what we have accomplished as though it were done with our own strength, wisdom or abilities. We are simply servants of Christ who are empowered by His Holy Spirit to do His will on this earth. It is thus that we walk in a manner worthy of our calling.

In verse eight Paul quotes from Psalms 68:18 and applies it to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf. This quotation and application have caused much unrest among many students of God's word. The verse was originally written to depict the time the ark of God had been brought up to Jerusalem and to celebrate the victories of Israel that God had given them. It does not seem to fit what Paul is saying in his application but we must trust that he wrote by inspiration and it therefore is appropriate. The point is that Christ was buried in the earth physically. He descended into the realms of the dead. He arose from the dead and was freed from the grave. It was after this resurrection that He ascended far above the heavens (the sky) and became the fulfillment of all things. His work of salvation was done and God's mystery had been revealed to us in the gospel.

Just as he talks about the grace that has been given to each of us as Christians, he goes further and tells us that there are different positions to be filled. He gave some as apostles. Not everyone was an apostle but only the chosen few. He gave some as prophets. A prophet is not just one who foretells the future, although at times they did that. A prophet, in the Bible sense, is one who speaks for or on behalf of God. It is one who tells what God has given them to tell, to the people to whom they are sent. An evangelist is one who preaches, teaches and shares the gospel of salvation with others. The pastors and teachers probably refer to the same position.

The term "pastor" is not used in the New Testament of one who is primarily a preacher or one who runs a church. The term is used of one who is a bishop, a shepherd, a presbyter or an elder. Paul tells Timothy that the elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor (paid extra) and especially those who work hard at teaching and preaching (1 Tim. 5:17). In the qualifications given for these men they are to have an understanding of the scriptures and be both able and willing to teach.

The point of all this is that each has a place in the work of God in His church. That work is the equipping of the saints for the work of service, so the body of Christ will be built up. It is in this process and work that we all attain to the unity of the faith and in spiritually maturing we grow in the

knowledge of the Son of God. Thus equipped by God with the help of these appointed by Him we grow into the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. We are as tall (spiritually) as is Christ.

The result of this maturity is that we will no longer be tossed around in spiritual confusion caused by the crafty and deceitful scheming of those who are interested in their own ideas being propagated or their own agenda being carried out rather than the word of God. This is a vital reason why each of us needs to study the word of God. The best antidote for error is a working knowledge of truth. But the truth must be spoken with a heart and an attitude of love. It is never appropriate to present truth in an ugly manner.

Paul is not suggesting that every person which whom we disagree is a false teacher. However, he specifically says that there are those who are crafty and scheming. These are dishonest in their motives and in their activities. He tells Timothy that these kinds of people are perverted and have a morbid interest in controversial questions (1 Tim. 6:3-5). He also says we should avoid them and not allow them into our fellowship (Rom. 16:17).

As he continues the figure of a body, with Christ as head, he says that we are to grow up into Him. We are referred to as babies in Christ when we begin the walk with Him but we are not to remain in that infant stage. We are to become mature with time.

For too many, it is the work of the elders, the preacher and the class teachers to cause the growth of the body of Christ. While each of these has their place, Paul says that each joint supplies that which fits and holds the body together and each part, working together, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. The body of Christ (the church) will never be all that God intended it to be unless it is properly joined to the Head (Christ) and until each part of that body is functioning as God intended it to do. Just as our physical body is not all it should be until every member of it is working properly so it is with the spiritual body of Christ. We have each been given a gift by God's grace and we must use it.

Questions **4:1-16**

1. What does Paul mean when he says he was a prisoner of the Lord?
2. How does he tell them to walk?
3. If our salvation is not by works (2:9), how can we be worthy of the calling we have from God?

4. Paul gives 5 things related to our attitude. Name them and explain what each means and how we can apply it in our lives today.

5. What is the importance of love in a Christian's life?

6. We are to be diligent to do what?

7. What is the basis of unity that we are to preserve?

8. What is the bond of peace?

9. What is the one body?

10. What is the one hope?

11. Is the one faith subjective or objective? (Is he talking about our believing or what we believe?)

12. What is the one baptism?

13. Who is the one Spirit?

14. Who is the one Lord?

15. Who is the one God?

16. If each of these is deity and each is one how can all three be one?

17. Who gives us our gifts (our abilities along with opportunities) and what is the basis for what kind of gift each of us is given?

18. In what sense did Jesus descend into the lower part of the earth?

19. To where did He ascend?

20. God gave various positions in the church. Name those that are listed here.

21. Do we still have apostles today? Prove your answer from scripture.
22. What are prophets?
23. Do we still have prophets today in the church?
24. What are evangelists?
25. What is the position and the work of the pastors and teachers?
26. What purpose do all of these serve in the church?
27. Can we have the “unity of the faith” (verse 13) when we disagree on any doctrinal issue or application of a doctrinal issue?
28. At what point are we “mature” Christians?
29. What advantage of maturity does Paul give?
30. We are to speak the truth in _____.
31. We are to grow up into _____.
32. How is the body fitted and held together?
33. What causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself?
34. This growth and building of the body is to be in _____.

4:17 – 5:20

If Paul were preaching this letter as a sermon, there would be some who would say that in this section he had quit preaching and gone to meddling. He began this chapter by telling the Ephesians to walk in a manner worthy of their calling. In this section he tells them (and us) to walk no longer as the pagan Gentiles walk. Those who were still in idolatry, lived in the futility of their minds. This was because of their ignorance.

There is nothing wrong with being ignorant. The fact is that all of us are ignorant about some things and to some degree. Ignorance is simply a lack of knowledge. When we begin the Christian walk, we are ignorant of a lot of things. As we grow up into Christ we gain knowledge until we become mature in Him. The problem with those that Paul is talking about here is that they were ignorant because they refused to learn. Their hearts were hardened and they were callous to God's calling. They had given themselves over to the practice of every kind of impurity, guided only by their lusts and sensuality.

When we reject God and serve self or wisdom or money or anything other than God we find ourselves darkened in understanding and we thus exclude ourselves from the fellowship of God. Someone has said that we never are better than the god we serve. It is no wonder that the world then was and the world now is filled with wickedness. With every kind of immorality extolled as acceptable and every reference to God or morality ridiculed and greed considered as a virtue, mankind will only go farther and farther away from the life in God. It is because of this kind of life that Paul says that God gave up on them (or gave them up to greater wickedness) (Romans 1:18-32).

The Ephesians had not learned Christ from this attitude and this manner of life. The life in Christ is based on faith but faith is based on hearing and believing the word of God (Romans 10:8-15). They had heard the good news of Jesus and were ready to serve him as Lord. Paul says that truth is in Jesus. Jesus said of Himself that he was the way, the truth and the life. He is the embodiment of truth and the revelation of truth to mankind. He is the Word of God made flesh.

It is in Jesus that the transformation is made from the old person to the new. It is by the renewing of the Holy Spirit that we are changed into a new creation (Titus 3:5-6). This new person must put off the old. Just as we would never consider putting on fresh clean clothes without first taking off the old dirty ones, so it is spiritually. We get rid of those things that are corrupting us according to the lusts of deceit.

Satan is the great deceiver. He will feed us the lie that is calculated to convince us that we don't really have to serve God in that one particular point. We can follow our own desires, according to his lie. One of the great deceptions is that we can't really stop doing things that are wrong. This is not to say we will ever reach the point of perfection in this life but we can learn to control our behavior, despise sin and love righteousness. This is the fruit of the Spirit that is discussed in Galatians. We either choose to live and

be controlled by the desires of the flesh or we choose to allow the Spirit to live in us and control us (Galatians 5:16-24).

But again, this is a two fold issue. We are to put off the old person of sin and put on the new person in Christ. It is not enough to give up a few bad habits or quit some particular sin and think that completes our spiritual growth. We must put on the new person which is in the likeness of God. We are recreated in holiness and righteousness. Peter says we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). All of these principles are valuable but only if we put them into practice. The following verses tell us how to do this.

Since we are one in Christ we are one with each other. This makes it inconsistent for us to speak falsehood to each other. As we learn to be like God we become more honest with ourselves and thus with others around us. Jesus tells us not to swear because as God's chosen, our word should suffice. It is never right to lie or to intentionally deceive others. The scriptures warn us repeatedly about this.

It is not wrong to get angry. God is said to be angry many times. It is what we do with the anger that makes the difference. We can allow it to overtake our senses and then do or say things that are wrong. This is why he says we are to be angry but don't sin in our anger. He then admonishes us to not let the sun go down on our anger. We can allow it to stay in our hearts until we build a grudge against others. This grows into animosity which leads us to act in a way that is unbecoming to a child of God. He deals with the opposite of this later when he tells us to be forgiving. When we fail to do as he has said, we give the devil an opportunity to lead us away from God.

As with telling lies, stealing is always wrong. It may be done in many ways but when we take that which belongs to another, we have stolen from them. If we allow the old person of greed (vs.19) to continue to live in us, we are prone to taking unfair advantage of others. This is an example of how getting rid of the old person helps to make us more like God.

It is not enough for us to give up stealing. We are to work so we can not only supply our own needs but so we will have to share with those who are in need of our help. We must never forget the judgment scene in Matthew 25 and the standard of judgment given. It was not how many times we attended church services or how involved we were in them. It was not how much we have learned truth from God's word. While these are important, if we fail to be like God in our love and compassion we have failed the test of true righteousness. When we help others we are doing it for Christ. When we fail to be benevolent we are withholding from God.

In verse 29 Paul says (literally) that we are not to allow any rotten words to come from our mouths. Rotten words are those that hurt others, tear

down their spirit or cause them to act in the wrong way. Instead of rotten words we are to speak those things that give grace to the hearer. We are to say those things that build others up and encourage them. For a good example of this read Acts 4:36-37 and Acts 11:22-24 concerning Barnabas, who was called the Son of Encouragement. What a name to be called! Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances (Proverbs 25:11).

When we fail to live up to this new standard we grieve the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. This is because He is putting into our hearts to be like God and we are not allowing Him to do His work in us. He has already told us in chapter one that the Holy Spirit is given to us as a seal or pledge (promise, similar to a down payment) of the promises God has given to us. We need to notice that it does not anger Him, it grieves Him.

He now mentions the outward traits that are a demonstration of bad attitudes. We are not to allow bitterness to spring up in us because it causes trouble in our relationships with others. It also causes us to be miserable with ourselves. One who is bitter dwells on all the things that are wrong or seem unfair. Uncontrolled anger, wrath and bitterness lead us to brawling and slandering others. All of this is the opposite of the peaceful spirit that we are to demonstrate as God's children.

In the place of these things we are to be kind to one another. Kindness is not optional for one who claims to be a follower of Christ. Too many have failed in this respect under the guise of standing for truth. Remember we are to speak the truth in love.

This kindness of attitude leads us to be tender-hearted. True tenderness leads us to be forgiving. We are reminded in Matthew 6:14-15 that our forgiveness is dependent on our forgiving others. If we are not careful we will be deceived into thinking that we are justified in holding a grudge and not forgiving when we are done wrong. We must remember the forgiving spirit of Jesus on the cross and Stephen as he was dying from the stones being thrown at him.

All that has been said is to lead us to the point that we are to be imitators of God. As beloved children of God we are to be like Him and walk in love. Our example of love is Jesus who gave Himself to die on the cross for our sin. God is love and He demonstrated it by giving His special (unique) Son to die for sinful man. John tells us that love is perfected in us by our being obedient to God and by loving one another.

Paul next deals with immorality. He tells us that it is never fitting for the saint (one who has been set apart for service to God) to practice any kind of immorality, impurity or greed. But he goes a step beyond this and tells us

that we are to get rid of filthiness and coarse jesting. To put this in modern terms, it means the child of God is not to tell dirty, suggestive or sexually explicit jokes. We forfeit the rights to our inheritance when we allow these to become a part of us.

For the third time in this section, he deals with greed or covetousness. He equates these to being an idolater. When we allow material things and our love for them to control us, we are making an idol out of things. This is because we put them ahead of our allegiance to God and our service to Him. There are those who will rationalize this and deceive others but they fail to recognize that these bring the wrath of God upon us. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

John tells us (1 John 1:7) that we are to walk in the light as He (God) is in the light. Paul says we have been removed from darkness and now are light in the Lord; so we walk as children of light. We are to ever be learning what pleases the Lord and putting it into practice in our lives. Rather than walking in darkness with those who do so, we are to expose them by letting our light shine.

We must therefore be careful to walk (live) wisely. We must incorporate the wisdom from above to do this (James 1:17). We do this by allowing the Holy Spirit to control us; our thoughts and our actions. It is with this wisdom that we take advantage of every opportunity that God gives us to do what is right. We live in a wicked world but we are not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven (the heavenly realms). Again we are reminded that rather than being foolish we are to understand the will of the Lord. This is not just a mental understanding but putting it into practice.

In chapter three we saw Paul pray that the Ephesians would be filled to all the fullness of God (vs. 19). Here he says we are not to get drunk on wine but be filled with the Holy Spirit. As we become more like God and seek His will for our lives, there is a snowball effect. The more we learn and live His will, the more we want to be like Him. Then we submit to the bidding of the Holy Spirit and His control of all we are.

The natural manifestation of being filled with the Spirit is praising God in song and giving thanks to Him in all things. This is done in the name of Jesus Christ, our savior. This singing springs from our Spirit filled hearts where the melody is always beautiful to God. It also serves as teaching and an encouragement to those around us (Colossians 3:16).

Questions **4:17 – 5:20**

1. Name 5 things the Gentiles did as they walked in the futility of their minds.
2. Why were they darkened in their understanding?
3. Why were they in ignorance?
4. What does it mean they became callous?
5. What is sensuality?
6. What is greediness?
7. Truth is in _____.
8. As believers we are to put off what?
9. We are to put on what?
10. How are we renewed in the spirit of our minds? Consider Titus 3:4-6 in your answer.
11. The new self that we put on is to be in the likeness of _____.
12. It is created in _____ and _____.
13. We are to lay aside _____ and speak _____.
14. Is it ever right to tell a lie?
15. Is there a difference in a big lie and a small one?
16. Is it wrong to be angry?
17. How does keeping our anger too long give the devil an opportunity?
18. Rather than steal we are to do what?
19. What are we to do with the things God has given us through our labor?

20. What are rotten or unwholesome words?
21. We are to speak words that do what?
22. What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit and how can we do that?
23. Read 1 Thes.5:19. Is there a difference in grieving the Holy Spirit and quenching the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.
24. What does each of the following mean and how are they related to each other?
- Bitterness
 - Wrath
 - Anger
 - Clamor
 - Slander
 - Malice
25. We are to _____ and _____ to one another.
26. How are we to forgive?
27. As beloved children we are to be _____ of _____.
28. We are to walk in _____. What does this mean?
29. Who determines what is immorality and impurity?
30. Why is telling dirty jokes wrong? (Give a reason other than “it says so”)
31. How can we best expose things that are sinful?
32. How can we know what is a wise and an unwise way to live (walk)?
33. How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?
34. Does verse 19 prove it is wrong to use instrumental music in worship?

5:21-6:9

While verse 21 belongs grammatically with the previous verses, it serves as the transition to the following section. I have therefore included it in this section. We are to be subject to one another. This same idea is given in Philippians 2:3-4 when Paul says we are to consider others as more important than ourselves and not to look out merely for our own interest but the interest of others. It is this attitude (humility) that Jesus has demonstrated for us to follow. It is also the key to unity within a church, a family or any other relationship based group. It is the opposite of being filled with pride and with selfishness. It is also opposed to the present day philosophy that we must look out for ourselves and not worry about others.

We are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. It could be translated that we are subject to one another because of reverence for Christ. Since we are in Him and are jointly members of each other, we respect His leadership by working together for His cause. When we demonstrate an attitude of stubbornness or selfishness, we destroy the unity He has given.

There is nowhere that this destruction is seen more often than in the home. When husbands, wives and children defer to each other out of love and concern for what is best for the entire family there will be peace and closeness. It is in this way that the family becomes what God wants us to be.

Husbands love your wives. This is not merely a suggestion. It is a command from God. Love is not just a feeling that overwhelms us at times. For too many, the idea of love is that feeling we had when we first met our wives that made us want them no matter what the cost. While that may have been related to love in some way it probably was not the kind of love that is discussed in this passage. Love is something we learn, practice and do. It is not something we just fall into or that comes over us. Genuine love will continue to grow, long after the honeymoon is over.

This is seen as Paul tells us how to love. We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her. He sanctified her (set her apart as really special). He cleansed her and made her beautiful and attractive to himself. He is preparing to present her in all her glory without any blemishes or defects. All of His attention is directed toward the good of His bride, the church.

When we as husbands demonstrate this kind of love for our wives it will change our families. If we are willing to give up self completely for our wives, it will be much easier for them to give themselves for us. If she sees that our only desire is for her good and her well being, she will be more willing to submit herself to our leadership. She will find security in our

determined efforts to provide for her needs; not only physically but mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

When the wife sees one who is submissive to God and to her needs, she will love in return. Too often, we as husbands, want to enforce our headship but for all the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways. The idea of a wife being submissive to her husband is taboo in our society. Yet, when we follow God's plan it is always a win – win situation for both husband and wife. It is when we, as husbands, allow our own selfishness and our desires to control us instead of the love of Christ and our love for our wives that we begin to have problems. If everything we do is guided by what is best for our wives and our families, in light of what God has said is good, we will have a relationship that is beyond description.

I had a teacher in high school who often said that a good marriage is the closest thing to heaven on earth but that a bad one may be the closest thing to hell we can imagine. There is nothing that can bring more happiness, peace and joy than a good marriage relationship. There is nothing that can bring more grief, sorrow and disappointment than a broken marriage relationship. Jesus intended that we pattern our marriage after His relationship with the church, His bride.

The idea of the wife being submissive is based on the concept of respect for rank or authority as seen in the military. This does not mean or even imply that the general is more intelligent than the private. It does not imply that higher rank makes one a better person. It means the position held is honored and respected. This is the way God intended the husband and wife relationship to be. Yet, when we love as Christ loves us, rank will never allow one to be selfish, bitter or demanding but will seek the good of those who are submissive to us.

Paul next turns to parents and children in their relationships with each other. Children are to be submissive and obedient to their parents in the Lord. Parents have been given the trust to raise their children to respect and to serve God. It is vital that the principle of authority be taught at a young age. This is perhaps, one of the greatest failings in our society. God has established levels of rank and authority in many areas (1 Cor. 11). The family is one of these with the father being under Christ and Christ under God. The wife is ranked (in authority) under the husband with the children holding the lowest of the rankings. As discussed previously, this does not imply anything other than the order of rank.

To be obedient in the Lord simply means that children obey the parents as long as it does not directly conflict with what God has ordered as being right. Even if this should occur, the children are to be respectful of the

parents' authority and treat them with this respect. The children in this way show honor to their father and mother.

Honor may be shown in a number of ways but the most honorable of all is to become and live faithfully as a Christian. When small children are allowed to be disrespectful to their parents, they need to be taught that this is not right. This may involve punishment in various ways but the lessons of respect must be taught. There is no age limit on honoring our parents. Long after they have left this earth we continue to give them honor by the way we live and the things we might say about them.

It is primarily the responsibility of the father to train the children. This does not mean that mothers do not share in this. In many homes it may fall upon the mothers to do more of the actual teaching than do the fathers. This does not remove any of the responsibility from the father to see that it is done and done properly. The training that must receive the most emphasis is not sports or secular education (although these have their place) but is the spiritual training. This involves training (discipline and correction) and also instruction.

The word for discipline or training in this text is one that is used of a young tree that is tied to grow a certain way. With time it is shaped to the desire of the one training it. Both training and instruction are best taught by the example of the parents. It does little good to tell our children what is right if we fail to live by it ourselves.

Paul gives a special warning to fathers that they not exasperate their children or provoke them to anger. This does not mean that we never do anything that would make our children angry with us. It means that we not break their spirit so that they don't even want to try to do what is right. When fathers expect too much, lack patience or treat their children abusively (verbally or physically), it is a violation of this principle. We need to commend and instill a positive image in our children while also correcting and even punishing them if they are wrong. The goal is to bring them up in the Lord. This means the entire process is based on love and submission to Christ by the parents.

Paul next discusses the relationship between slaves and their masters. For the time it was written, this was just another household relationship. There was husband and wife, parents and children along with slaves and their masters. All of these are guided by the principles of Christian behavior discussed earlier and especially that of submission to one another in the fear of Christ. The idea of slavery is repugnant to most of us today because we visualize the horrors we have seen on television and imagine in our minds.

As with a lot of things, the principle itself is not necessarily evil but is easily given to abuse. Paul does not condemn slavery but regulates it.

Slaves were to be treated as fellow humans and the respect that deserves. They were not to be abused. Paul warns masters that they too have a master who is in heaven and is Lord of both the slave and the earthly master. They are warned against threatening. In Colossians 4:1 Paul instructs masters to grant slaves justice and fairness.

Slaves were to be obedient to their masters. The slaves here addressed are probably fellow Christians at Ephesus. When this is considered, it is understood that they are brothers and sisters as well as fellow heirs. They are told to be hard working, honest in their efforts and serve from a sincere heart to please the Lord. Even if mistreated, they are reminded that God holds the final payday and He will make everything right.

Questions **5:21-6:9**

1. We are to all be _____ to one another in the fear of _____.
2. Wives are to be _____ to their husbands as to the _____.
3. The husband is the _____ of the wife.
4. _____ is head of the church.
5. Christ is the _____ of the body.
6. What does it mean to “be subject to” or to be “submissive”?
7. Husbands are to _____ their wives.
8. How is the husband to love his wife?
9. List at least 4 things that are given as demonstrations of the love of Christ for His church.
10. Husbands are to love their own wives as they love what?
11. How do we show love for our own selves?

12. What is the practical application for us today from verse 31?
13. Based on verse 32, what is the main lesson in these verses (21-33)?
14. The wife is to _____ her husband.
15. The husband is to _____ his wife.
16. Children, _____ your parents in the Lord.
17. What reason does he give for this?
18. What does it mean to honor (our parents) and how do we do this?
19. Why do you think fathers are told to not provoke their children to wrath and the mothers are not told this?
20. Why is the instruction to bring up children in the Lord given to fathers?
21. Do mothers have any responsibilities in this?
22. Do grandparents have any responsibilities in this area?
23. Slaves are told to be _____ to their masters.
24. They are to serve their masters as though they were serving whom?
25. What does “eye-service” and “men-pleasers” mean?
26. How are masters told to treat their slaves?
27. Who is the ultimate master?
28. Does this passage teach that slavery is right or that it is wrong?
29. Why do you think Paul did not condemn slavery and tell the Christian masters to set their slaves free?

6:10-24

As Paul begins his final remarks about Christian living, he admonishes the Ephesians to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. This is reminiscent of his prayer for them in chapter 1:18-20 and his second prayer in 3:14-21. In both of these he prays for them to be strong with the power that God gives them. One of the unique things about being strong as a Christian is that it only comes when we give up self and humbly allow God to work in us through His Holy Spirit. We can never be strong enough to overcome the temptations we face in our own might.

Some have underestimated the power of Satan. He is a powerful being and is crafty to deceive us. However, in Jesus Christ we will never be tempted beyond what we are able to bear and with every temptation God will provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). When we submit our will to God's will we can always overcome and by faith we can be victorious in every spiritual battle. Paul displays this courage by faith in Philippians 4:13 when he says he can do all things through Christ who gives him strength.

In order to win this struggle we must put on the full armor of God. He provides the weapon and the strength to fight and He provides the armor to protect us. We must put on the whole or full armor. It is not enough to put on part of it and leave off the rest. What God provides come as a package deal; we take it and use it all or we cannot use any of it effectively.

Satan is full of schemes and is intimidating. He can make things look like they would be good when they are evil. He can use his ability to lie to us and deceive us into doing things which we know deep down are wrong. He has a full army of spiritual beings that can take many different forms in this world. When we think of Satan, we think of those who commit terrible sins. We think of our temptations (or those of others) to be addicted to drugs or other sinful activities. We think of immorality and dishonesty.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that Satan even disguises himself as an angel of light. He comes in the form of preachers and teachers. He comes at times as an elder in the church. He may be family or friend, rich or poor but he is the great deceiver. He tempts us possibly the most with things that are not sinful in themselves but that will consume our energy and time and then control our hearts.

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Perhaps it would be easier for us if Satan and his powers came to us in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork. We could use a gun and shoot him and win the battle. But this battle takes place in the spiritual realm. It is in and for our hearts and our desires. This is why Jesus said the greatest command of all is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. It is also why he warned

that we cannot serve two masters. We will love one of them and serve that one while we hate (disdain) the other.

Again he tells us to take the full armor of God. It is with this armor that we can stand firm and resist in the evil day. When we go back and study the Judges, we see those who fought with pitchers and trumpets, with their army depleted in number to the point we would consider unreasonable. Yet, with the power of God they defeated the enemy who so greatly outnumbered them. So it is with us today; we can defeat all that Satan can hurl at us with the power and the armor of God.

He now defines this armor. We are to gird our loins with truth. There is nothing that can stand quite like the truth. Absolute truth from God does not falter or waver. It is not changed due to circumstance, popularity, social acceptance or even civil law. God is God and His word is truth. Jesus said He is truth. The Holy Spirit is named as truth. We must know the scripture to know the truth. We must come to a living relationship with Jesus and have the Holy Spirit living and working in us to understand truth.

We then put on the breastplate of righteousness. Jesus said we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We have seen already that we are created in Christ Jesus to righteousness and holiness. Righteousness, as used here, is putting truth into practice in our lives.

We then put on the shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. The Gospel brings peace into our hearts and our lives. It brings lasting peace with those around us. But most of all it gives us peace with God. When we face temptation, we can do so in complete calm and peace. There is no reason for us to panic or to become frantic in our behavior. We know before we begin that when we are faithful we will win the victory in Jesus.

Satan can shoot flaming arrows at us. When we use the shield of faith they cannot harm us. Satan can do a lot of things but he cannot penetrate faith that is solid. Read Hebrews 11 and see this faith in action. Men and women were tried and tempted in almost every way but by faith were able to overcome. John says that faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

We must never underestimate the power of the assurance of our salvation. It is in knowing that we are saved that we can continue to live for God and fight the spiritual battles we face. We never need to worry about the outcome of the battle or the end of the enemy. Jesus has already fought the battle for us and has been declared the victor – by His resurrection from the grave. Death is the greatest weapon that Satan has in his arsenal and Jesus has already disarmed it.

We fight our battle with only one offensive weapon; the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. To use this weapon we must know it. We

must know it in more than just an intellectual way. We must know it as we experience it in our lives. We must have knowledge of what it says. We must have understanding of what it means. We must have wisdom of how to apply it in our lives. It is only then that we can use it against the enemy.

As did Jesus when tempted of the devil, we must be able to say “it is written” and know what it says. We must know the truth of God’s word to be able to discern false teaching when it arises. It is in this knowledge that we are not tossed around by every wind of doctrine that comes our way. It is with knowledge of God’s word that we reach out to lost souls to lead them to Christ.

Paul then tells us there are two things we must continue to do. We must be on the alert and we must pray. It is when we think that everything is going fine that we fail. Paul said to the Corinthians that when we think we are standing firm, we must take heed lest we fall (I Cor. 10:12). Peter tells us to be alert because the devil is prowling around like a lion, seeking whom he may devour. This goes back to the deception of Satan that we discussed earlier. He will deceive us whenever he can.

In addition to being alert, we are to pray at all times. In other places he tells us to pray always and to pray without ceasing. We are to be given to prayer. Jesus often spent time in prayer and we should too. Prayer is our part of the communication with God. It is simply opening our minds and our hearts to him and expressing it. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to address the God of the universe. There should be nothing that we have in our minds that we cannot discuss with God. There should never be a place where we are found that we cannot talk with Him. He is always near and ready to hear what we have to say.

Paul requests the prayers of the Ephesians on his behalf. So today, all who are teaching and preaching the word of God need other believers to pray for them. Prayers for boldness to speak the truth are needed. Prayers for opportunities to reach open hearts are needed. Prayers for the necessary provisions are needed.

Paul concludes this letter with the same prayer with which he began. He prays for grace and peace to be theirs in Jesus Christ. This is coupled with and based on the love of God for us and our love for Him in return. My prayer is that this study has given us a greater understanding of the mystery of God as it has been revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in that understanding we will each love God more and love one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Questions
6:10-23

1. We are to be _____ in the Lord and in His _____.
2. We are to put on the _____ armor of _____.
3. Why do we need this armor?
4. What does he mean by the devil's schemes?
5. Our struggle is not against what?
6. Our struggle is against what / who?
7. Where does this battle take place?
8. What are we told to do so that we will be able to stand in the evil day?
9. After you have done everything, we are to _____.
10. How does the belt of truth help us to stand firm?
11. What is to be our breastplate?
12. What are we to wear on our feet?
13. What do we have for a shield?
14. How can a shield of faith protect us from the flaming darts of the devil?
15. What is our helmet?
16. We fight with the _____ of the _____ which is the _____ of _____.
17. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit?
18. What did Paul ask them to pray for on his behalf?