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Ephesians

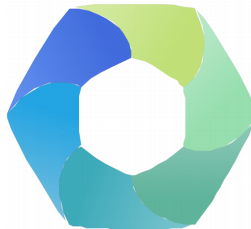
Daily Readings and Bible Studies



WHEN TWO BECOME ONE

Daily Readings and Bible Studies

Ephesians



FREE *for* **ALL**
RESOURCES

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE
(Daily Readings and Bible Studies)

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Origins (Genesis)

When Two Become One (Ephesians)

Introduction

Introducing Ephesians

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:31-32)

The Apostle Paul tells us that when God spoke about marriage at the creation of the world, he was actually unveiling his plan for humanity: union with his Son, Jesus Christ, which in turn should lead to unity with other Christians.

By nature, no one is united to God or to another Christian. Rather, we are enemies with God and therefore enemies of one another.

Ephesians is all about union with God and union with other Christians: how God planned it, how he made it possible; what the benefits of that union are; what it looks like for church families to be united; what it means for husbands and wives, and what it means for individuals to be united to God and to other Christians.

“When Two Become One” will challenge you to be united to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to grow in your oneness with him. It will encourage you to seek unity with other Christians, and it will teach you that union with Jesus should radically transform all of your life.

How to use this book

This booklet is designed to be used privately and corporately. There is one passage that will be studied each week. Before coming together with your small group, work through the questions on days 1 to 5. Each question will be based on the passage being studied. Think carefully, slowly, broadly and prayerfully, listening to God addressing you and responding to his convicting love. It won't take you more than 10 minutes to note down your thoughts. These will form the basis of your corporate Bible Study.

When you come together, share what God has been teaching you, using the 5 questions as a foundation from which to work. Discuss what you have all seen in the passage. Then ask yourselves:

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Each Bible passage will teach us about God and his work, ourselves and our sin, as well as about godliness and hope. Apply and turn these things to prayer, also committing your church and one another to the Lord.

1.

United by Jesus

Ephesians 1 : 1 - 2

The opening verses of Ephesians will give us the background to the book: who wrote it and who received it. The readings and study will also explore the message of the book as a whole and help us to begin seeing God's big plan for the world.

Ephesians 1:1-2

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: *

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

** or "To the saints in Ephesus, and the faithful" as in the American Standard Version of the Bible, thus describing two groups: the saints and the faithful.*

Daily Reading



What do these verses tell us about the author of this letter? What else can you find out about him from **Acts 9:1-16** and **Ephesians 3:7-9**. Why is his God-given task so surprising?



When Paul's preaching took him to Ephesus, what was the response of the Ephesians? Look up **Acts 19 and 20**.



Who is this letter sent to, according to v.1? Who are the 'saints' and the 'faithful' referring to? See **1:12-13, 15-19, 2:11-19** and **3:17-19**. What are these groups called by **6:23-24**?



As you read the book as a whole, how did these two sworn enemies come to a place of being called 'brothers', in 6:23-24?



What then, is God's BIG plan for our lives? Or, put another way, what is the big theme of Ephesians? Have you submitted to God's plan for your life?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

2.

All Things under Jesus

Ephesians 1 : 3 - 10

The readings and study this week will reveal God's big plan for the world: to bring all things under the headship of Jesus. We will also see how God has made this possible and what privileges Christians now enjoy as the adopted children of God.

Ephesians 1:3-10

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

⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--

⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Daily Reading



What is God's BIG plan according to this passage? Focus on v.4-5 and v.10 especially. Have you submitted to his plan?



What has God done to accomplish his BIG plan? See v.3-6. How does this make you feel?



What else has God done to accomplish his BIG plan? See v.7-10.



Why did God act with so much kindness towards Christians? Is this you see the work of Jesus?



What responses should Christians make to the abundant grace of God?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

3.

One and the Same

Ephesians 1 : 11 - 14

The readings and study this week will show us that all Christians are equal before God, no matter their background, evidenced by the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells all God's people. We will also see that God has done the work of choosing and saving people for his glory.

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

Daily Reading



Remembering who the letter is addressed to, who do the pronouns ('we' and 'you') refer to?



What is Paul's message to each of these groups? How does this make you, as a Gentile, feel?



What reasons does Paul give for why God chooses to adopt people into his family? Is your thinking in line with this?



What is the means or the process by which God adopts people into his family? What does this mean then, for our evangelism?



Why does God give his Holy Spirit to those who hear and believe the Gospel? How does your thinking about the Holy Spirit need to be reformed?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

4.

Knowing God

Ephesians 1 : 15 - 23

As we listen in to the prayers of Paul this week, we will hear him asking God to give Christians a deeper knowledge of himself and a greater sense of hope. We will also hear Paul asking God to give Christians certainty of his power to do what he has promised to do.

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

¹⁸ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Daily Reading



What is Paul thankful for and asking for, in v.15-17? What does he say is his reason for praying in this way?



What does Paul pray for in v.18-19a and what is his purpose for praying in this way? Rewrite these verses in your own words.



What evidence does Paul give in v.19-23 to assure us that God can and will fulfil all the promises made in this chapter?



How is Jesus described in v.19-23 and how should that shape our knowledge of God and our view of the present and future?



What do we learn about prayer, as we listen in to Paul's prayer for the Ephesians? What things do you generally pray about?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

5.

Dead, but made Alive

Ephesians 2 : 1 - 10

The reality that all Christians need to grasp is that they are undeserving of God's grace. We were dead in our sins, disobedient and enslaved. This passage will tell us what happened for us to be brought to life. It will also challenge us to live lives of service as God's rescued people.

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Daily Reading



How does this passage link to chapter 1? (Also, compare 1:20 with 2:5-6).



How do v.1-3 describe people before they became Christians? In what ways were these things true for you?



What did God do about our situation, according to v.4-7? When did he do it, how did he do it, and why did he do it?



What things do not save sinners, according to v.8-9? How are you tempted to think incorrectly about this?



What should the grace of God in Christ, generate in the life of the Christian, as seen in v.10? How could this be true in your life?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

6. Far Off, but Brought Near

Ephesians 2 : 11 - 22

If it is true that all people are naturally enemies of God, it is also true that we are enemies of one another, as was the case in Paul's day between converted Jews and Gentiles. However, God's desire and goal focus on making Christians one with each other, sharing the same privileges as members of the same family.

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Daily Reading



How does Paul describe the Gentile-background-Christians in v.11-12? What do these phrases mean?



What happened, according to v.13-17, to change everything for these Gentile believers? Are you “far away” or “brought near” and why do you say so?



What are the results of Jesus’ work for us? See v.18-19. How should this shape our lives?



What does it mean to be a “citizen with God’s people” and a “member of God’s household”? Who can call themselves this? See v.20.



What goals should Christians have as members of God’s household? How can you be showing this more and more? See v.21-22.

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

7.

The Mystery of the Gospel

Ephesians 3 : 1 - 13

The readings and study this week will reveal God's long-hidden mystery. Paul's task was to make the mystery plain to all, through preaching, and the church's role is to declare the wisdom of God, in Christ; as Jews and Gentiles unite under the headship of Christ.

Ephesians 3:1-13

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Daily Reading



What is the 'mystery' that this passage speaks of? What made it a 'mystery'?



How did Paul come to understand this mystery himself? What did it take for Paul's life to be transformed? See v.2-3.



How did Paul make the mystery known to others, v.4-9? How does God continue to reveal this mystery today? How should this shape the life of a church?



How does God view the church which he has created by the Gospel? See v.10-13. Do you see the church in the same positive way?



What does v.13 say Christians can expect when they declare the truth of the Gospel? What makes it worthwhile?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer



Power to Trust and to Know

Ephesians 3 : 14 - 21

The readings and study this week will again listen in on the prayers of the Apostle Paul. His request to God focusses on Christians being strengthened to grasp the great love of Christ, so that they will be filled with the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Daily Reading



What is Paul referring to in v.14, when he says “For this reason”? How does this section relate to the previous one?



What is Paul praying for, in v.16-17a? Why was this important for the Ephesians? Why is it important for us also?



What has been said about Jesus in the first 3 chapters that should strengthen our faith in him, even in the face of suffering?



What is Paul praying for in v.17b-19? What does he want them to grasp especially? Why is it so important to understand this?



What encouragement can we take from v.20-21 as we pray for growing faith and an understanding of God's love? What things might we also do to grow in these areas?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

9.

Live Worthy of your Calling

Ephesians 4 : 1 - 6

The readings and study this week begin to focus on the practical outworking of the great truths expressed in the first 3 chapters. Christians are to walk worthy of their calling, notably in the area of Christian unity, making every effort to stand united with one another.

Ephesians 4:1-6

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Daily Reading



Glance through ch 4-6. What differences do you notice to ch 1-3? What would be the danger of focussing on the second half of the book, excluding the first?



How does v.1 help us to think through our motivation for living the Christian life?



What is the link between v.2 and v.3 and what particular challenges do they present to you? Do you share the same commitment as v.3?



What is the motivation given in v.4-6 for eagerly maintaining peace with other Christians? What do these terms each refer to?



As someone who is united to Jesus, what practical areas do you need to address as you seek to grow your unity with other believers and within the church?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

10.

The Spoils of War

Ephesians 4 : 7 - 16

The readings and study this week will reveal that God's grace has not only been given that Christians may come to salvation, but that they may grow in their faith. Growth comes through all Christians using their gifts in the body of Christ and results in a mature faith that is able to withstand false teaching.

Ephesians 4:7-16

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 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.

Daily Reading



If the previous passage called for Christian unity, what does this passage expect there to be within the Christian church? How will this be visible in your local church?



In the ancient world victorious commanders shared the spoils of war with their people. How do we see that taking place here and in 1:18-23. (Psalm 68 also shows God dividing the spoils of war).



What is the purpose of God pouring out grace gifts to his people?



What are the gifts this passage mentions and how are they similar to each other?



What are some “winds of teaching” and “deceitful schemes” that we should be aware of today and how can we help each other mature, so as to not be caught out by these things?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

11.

Put Off, Put On

Ephesians 4 : 17 - 5 : 2

Having been rescued from sin, death and judgment, Christians are to live new lives. The readings and study this week will help you to rid yourself of your past passions and to live a new life for Christ, motivated by his great sacrifice of himself for our sins.

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. ²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. ^{5:1} Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Daily Reading



How are we to think of non-Christians according to v.17 and 18 and what is the cause and result of their situation? Also see v.19. How should this affect us according to v.17?



What do verses 20-22 say about the means that God uses to bring people into a relationship with himself? How should this shape our witness and ministries?



What metaphor is used in v.22-24 to describe the Christian life? How does that help you to think about your daily living? How similar are your goals, to God's goals for you?



Pick out this formula in the following verses: "Do not do this, rather do that, for this reason", in v.25, 26-27, 28, 29 and 30-32.



What further motivation is given to Christians to live this way, according to 5:1-2?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

12. Living as Children of the Light

Ephesians 5 : 3 - 21

The readings and study this week will help you to see the world as God sees it: filled with people who either love darkness or light. Living in darkness is in essence the pursuit of idols, and should not hold any interest for Christians, who should reject darkness and pursue the light, as Spirit filled people.

Ephesians 5:3-21

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Daily Reading



What does v.5 call someone who is caught up in the sins of v.3-4? Why is this the case? What should they be caught up with?



What warnings are issued to the disobedient, in v.5-6? Are we not all disobedient? Who does this warning refer to then?



As children of light, how should we go about living in a world that loves darkness, see v.7-14? How does this apply to you currently?



What steps can you take from v.15-18 to grow as God's holy people?



How is "being filled with the Spirit" defined in v.18b-21? How is that different to what many people believe? Does your life reveal the presence of the Holy Spirit in you?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

13.

When Two become One

Ephesians 5 : 22 - 33

This passage reveals God's plan for humanity which he revealed at the creation of the world. He desires all people to enter into relationship with Jesus his Son. That marriage should transform Christian marriages, as husbands and wives look to Jesus and the church as their models.

Ephesians 5:22-33

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Daily Reading



What relationship does this passage have in mind primarily, and how does v.31-32 help us to understand God's purposes in creation?



What has Jesus done for the church? How should this shape our relationship with him?



How should God's purposes in creation - of creating people to be one with his Son - challenge ALL people, married or single?



What commands are given to Christian husbands? How do these commands relate to Jesus and the church? How can you apply these commands to yourself?



What commands are given to Christian wives? How do these commands relate to Jesus and the church? How can you apply these commands to yourself?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

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Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

14. Growing Children in the Lord

Ephesians 6 : 1 - 4

The readings and study this week will help you to further see what the Spirit-filled life should look like. As headship and submission are part of the marriage relationship, so they should also be seen in the relationship between parents and children. The primary goal of that relationship is that children are trained and instructed in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4

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

² "Honour your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Daily Reading



How does 5:18b and 5:21 relate to this passage and to the previous one, 5:22-33? Is this how you view being “filled with the Spirit”?



What commands are given to children? When will these commands be applicable? (Remember that adults who have parents are still their children).



What practical things can you think of, as you seek to honour your parents? Also see 1 Timothy 5:8. When will it not be right to obey your parents? What is this section not commanding?



What promise (from the 10 commandments) is given to children? What does this mean and NOT mean?



What are the negative and positive goals fathers should have in their parenting? What should mothers with unsaved husbands do?

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

15.

Serve the Lord, not men

Ephesians 6 : 5 - 9

The readings and study this week will challenge all Christians to consider their employment as an extension of serving the Lord. Christian unity should even extend between employers and employees because they have the same Master who they are each called to serve.

Ephesians 6:5-9

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. ⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. 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.

Daily Reading



What is submission in the workplace based on? How does this compare to how you view your employers or boss?



How should you view the actual work that you do? How does this compare to the way you view your tasks?



What should you keep your eye on as you do your work (especially perhaps, if you are in a difficult situation)?



What does the phrase “in the same way” in v.9 refer to, as masters are addressed?



What must leaders keep in mind, as they exercise authority over others? Discuss the difficulties that certain situations may result in for Christian employers and employees.

Group Study

What have I learned about Jesus and God?

What have I learned to cause shame?

What have I learned about following good?

Is there a promise to claim?

Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

16.

Power Dressing

Ephesians 6 : 10 - 24

The readings and study this week reveal that the reality for the Christian is that life is a battle waged against Satan. The call therefore, is to be clothed with Gospel armour, so that in the midst of the onslaught, each Christian can stand firm and even advance the Gospel.

Ephesians 6:10-24

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

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. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, 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. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. ²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing.

²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. ²³ Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Daily Reading



What have chapters 4 to 6 called for, from Christians so far?
What reasons do chapters 1 to 3 give, for living this way?



What threat do Christians face as they seek to live lives worthy of their calling? See v.10-13. What methods will the devil employ to achieve his goals? Also see 2:1-3.



How should a Christian respond to the devil's tactics, according to v.10-13?



How should a Christian respond according to v.14-18? Also see Isaiah 59:15b-19.



What practical ways can you think of, to bring about v.14-18 in your life?

Group Study

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Personal Application

Corporate Prayer

In a world where people are desperately seeking purpose in life, the Apostle Paul tells us that when God spoke about marriage at the creation of the world, he was actually unveiling his plan for all humanity: union with his Son, Jesus Christ.

“When Two Become One” will challenge you to submit to God's purpose for your life, it will encourage you to seek unity with other Christians, and it will teach you that union with Jesus should radically transform all of your life.



Resources for growing churches
www.freeforall.co.za