

## Growth Group Studies



# Ephesians 4-6

Sept 08 - Oct 20 The church-equipping, mind-changing,  
life-directing, marriage-making,  
power-checking, devil-resisting,  
prayer-generating grace of God.

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| 1. The grace that give gifts to the church   | Eph 4:1-16   |
| 2. The grace that leads to new thinking      | Eph 4:17-5:2 |
| 3. The grace that leads to life in the light | Eph 5:3-20   |
| 4. The grace of a Christ-like marriage       | Eph 5:21-33  |
| 5. The grace of keeping your power in check  | Eph 6:1-9    |
| 6. The grace of the armour of God            | Eph 6:10-17  |
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## **The Grace that Gives Gifts to the Church**

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

1. What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?
  
2. Read Ephesians 4:1. What is the 'calling' that the Ephesians have received?  
See 2:22
  
3. What are some possible ways you imagine a life might be 'worthy' of this calling.  
What picture of a worthy life is given in v2?
  
4. What is Paul's concern for the church in vs3-6? How do the virtues of v2 make unity possible?
  
5. How worthy is your life of this calling? Could others say you are a promoter of unity? What about gentle? Would they say you are a forbearing person?
  
6. What other feature of church life is described in vs 7-8?
  
7. What do the gifts of v11 have in common?

8. What are these gifts for, according to v12-13?

9. Do you feel that you are being equipped for service? Who in the group do you imagine might possess a gift listed in v11? How might they help you?

10. According to verses 14-15, what benefit is gained when gifts are exercised?

11. Consider v16. Are you doing your part? If, not what is stopping you? How might you overcome the obstacles? If you are doing your part, how can you develop your abilities further?

12. THANK God for those who equip us for service. CONFESS and REPENT of the pride and impatience that works against church unity. ASK God to show you how to play your part.

## The grace that leads to new thinking

### Ephesians 4:17-5:2

1. Who has been a great example or influence in your life? Share a bit about them with the group.

2. Read Ephesians 4:17-19 and map out the link between heart, mind and action. What might it look like for a Christian to loose “all sensitivity”?

3. Read Ephesians 4:20-24 and outline the teaching about Christ described by Paul in these verses. Are there elements of your old self that you’ve been putting back on recently? What positive motivation can you find in these verses to put on the new self?

4. Read through verses 25-32 and fill in the table (you may not be able to fill in every box).

Verses	Behaviour to put off	Behaviour to put on	Reason for the change
v 25			
vs 26-27			
v 28			
v29			
vs 31-32			

5. Go through the reasons Paul gives for these changes. Are there any that don't quite make sense to you? Discuss with the group what Paul could be getting at.
  
6. Of the changes listed in the table, where have you had some personal success? Why do you think you've been successful in putting on the new self in these areas?
  
7. Which changes are you struggling to implement? How might the reasons offered by Paul to make these changes help you in your struggle?
  
8. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. Who is the best example for Christian living, and how did he demonstrate this example?
  
9. How well do we do when it comes to keeping his example in front of us? How might his example be made more prominent? See 1 Cor 11:1 for one idea!
  
10. Pray that we might make further gains in living the new life in imitation of Christ.

**The Grace that leads to life in the light**  
**Ephesians 5:3-20**

1. What are the top 3 things you WILL NOT put up with?!
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read Ephesians 5:3-4. According to Paul, how tolerant should Christians be of sin in their lives? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What 'hints' of sexual immorality, impurity and greed are you leaving unattended?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you think Paul's pushing things too far in verse 4? What does this verse tell us about the gift of human speech?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What reason is given in verses 5-7 for being strict about sin? Is it simply a case of "God will be angry if you do this", or is there a deeper logic at play?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What might be some examples of the 'empty words' mentioned by Paul in verse 6?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Read verses 8-14 and explore the different aspects of being "light in the Lord".
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Does the metaphor of being "light in the Lord" offer anything new as to how you view the Christian life? When are you tempted to hide your light?

9. What does it mean to be wise, according to verses 15-17? What opportunities might Paul be speaking about in verse 16, given what's written in the preceding verses?

10. What is the danger of drinking too much (verse 18)? Have you observed this to be true?

11. What do verses 19-20 teach us about the place and use of music in the Christian life?

12. CONFESS those hints of sin that you allow to remain in your life.  
ASK that God will give you the resolve and ability to repent of these sins.  
PRAY that you might be light in the darkness.  
THANK GOD for the encouragement that sung praise can bring us.

## **The grace of a Christ-centered marriage**

### **Ephesians 5:21-33**

1. If you were to pick up a book titled *Keys to a Happy Marriage*, what chapter titles might you expect to find?
2. Read Ephesians 5:21-24. How do you feel reading these verses? What's the danger of these instructions?
3. What reasons are given for the wife's submission? What does this tell us about the purpose of marriage? See also Revelation 21:1-4
4. Read vs 25-30. What duty is placed on husbands? What model is given for husbands here? Which words are used to describe his actions towards the wife?
5. What extra motivation is found in v28-29 for husbands to love their wives?
6. Can you think of any real-life examples of men who've loved their wives in the way described by Paul?
7. Starting with the husband's role in loving his wife as Christ loved the church, how might the roles of men and women in marriage express themselves when it comes to:
  - a. Housework;



b. Parenting;

c. Finances;

d. Sex.

8. In what ways can men and women misinterpret or misuse these verses?

9. What personal barriers might we erect that stop us embracing the roles outlined in this passage? What might we need to do to work through them?

10. Read vs 31-33. What goal for marriage is articulated in v31? What measure might this verse provide for us when thinking through whether we're exercising our roles successfully?

11. Pray for the marriages in your family and in the church.

## **The grace of keeping your power in check**

### **Ephesians 6:1-9**

1. What did you appreciate about the parenting you received as a child? Based on this same experience, what would you suggest parents do differently?
  
2. Read Ephesians 6:1-3. To whom are these verses addressed? What does this suggest about the demographic make up of the church and of the audience for Christian teaching?
  
3. What is the instruction for children here? What reasons are given for this instruction? Can you think of ways obeying and honoring might bring blessing today?
  
4. Read v 4. What might honoring parents look like for:
  - i. the 6 year old;
  - ii. the 16 year old;
  - iii. the 26 year old;
  - iv. the 46 year old;
  - v. the 66 year old?
  
5. What does *exasperate* (v 4 NIV) mean? If others in the group have different Bible translations, take a look at how this verse is variously translated. What type of parenting might exasperate a child?
  
6. What should parents be proactive about, according to v 4? How have you seen this done well? How have you seen this done poorly?

7. Read vs 5-8. What words does Paul use to describe the attitude a slave should bring to their work? What would the opposite attitude look like?

8. Read v 9. To whom are both slaves and masters accountable? What sort of effect might this have had on the slave/master relationship?

9. What else does Paul say about slavery? See 1 Cor 7:21-24. 1 Tim 1:8-11, Philemon 8-16. What picture do these passages paint regarding Paul's attitude to slavery?

10. How do Paul's instructions to slaves and masters help us in those situations where we are a) powerless, and b) powerful?

11. Give thanks and pray for the families you are a part of. Pray for those times when you have to graciously serve under power and use your power.

## The grace of the armour of God

### Ephesians 6:10-17

1. In which areas of life would you like the most strength and power?
2. What does Paul call us to be in v10? Do the words *strong*, *mighty*, and *power* figure much in your conception of what it means to be Christian?
3. Who is our enemy, according to vs 11-12? What do these verses tell us about the way the Devil works? See also Eph 2:1-2.
4. According to verse 13, what is the end goal of putting on the armour of God?
5. Look at the NT examples provided for each piece of armour. In each example, how is the piece being used to promote steadfastness? Think of some relevant modern example of how these pieces can help us stand firm.

Armour item	NT Example	How steadfastness is promoted by the item in NT example	Example from modern Christian living
Truth	Colossians 3:9-10		
Righteousness	Eph 4:26-28		
Gospel of peace	Ephesians 2:14-22		
Faith	John 14:14-16		

Salvation	Heb 4:14-16		
Word of God	Matt 4:9-11		

6. Of these six pieces, which are you already making good use of? Which might you need to take up? How might you take them up?

7. As a Christian, are you ready for the type of action described in this passage? Why or why not? What is the cost of not arming yourself?

8. Spend some time praying against the Devil and his schemes. Pray about the specific items of armour that Paul lists, that you may get used to wearing them and using them against the Devil, and that you might stand firm as a result.

## **The grace of praying for others**

### **Ephesians 6:18-24**

1. When is your prayer life at its best? When does your prayer life tend to struggle?
2. Look at the verse preceding our passage (Ephesians 6:17). What tool does the Spirit like to use? How does the Spirit work according to verse 18? What does a truly spiritual person look like according to these verses?
3. What word do you notice being repeated in verse 18? What would it look like if you were to start praying on *all* occasions?
4. Note that Paul encourages us to pray with *all* kinds of prayers and requests. How many different kinds of prayers can you name? Are there any that are under-represented in your prayer-life?
5. Sticking with v 18, are you *alert* for opportunities to pray? Are there members of the Lord's people that you resist praying for?
6. Read verses 19-20. Do you ever follow Paul's example and ask for prayer for yourself? Why or why not?
7. What does Paul want prayer for? Who do you know who might need the same type of prayer?

8. Read verses 21-22. What ministry does Tychicus have? See also Col 4:7-9. How might you fulfill a similar ministry?

9. Read verses 23-24. What blessings does Paul wish the church to enjoy? Where do these blessings come from? What difference do these blessings make to our community life as a church? Is your love for Jesus *undying*?

10. Spend some time praying along the lines that Paul has suggested in this week's passage—pray a variety of prayers for a whole range of people, especially those who are speaking publically about Jesus.