

## **PART ONE: Doctrine for the Believer (chapters 1-3)**

### **A. Introduction (1:1-2)**

*Ephesians 1:1-2* - As we open this letter written by the Apostle Paul, we see that his spiritual gift Apostle was given to him by the will of God. In the same way, each of us as believers has at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7). Our spiritual gift is not our own choosing or attainment. It is by God's choice (1 Cor. 12:18) and the will of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). This letter was written to the saints, i.e. believers at Ephesus. The word "saints" does not refer to some type of super-Christian. It is a term that reflects the standing or identity of everyone who has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. It emphasizes the fact that we are a people set apart for God's purpose rather than our own purpose or the purpose of other people. The words "who are" are supplied by the translator. The New Century Version and the footnote of the previous edition of the NIV translates the phrase "the faithful in Christ Jesus" as "the believers who are in Christ," Notice that the grace and peace come from both the Father and the Son showing that they are equal in the Godhead. The grace that Paul is desiring for these believers is not for the most part the grace that saves them from sin's punishment (Eph. 2:8) but is the grace by which we live the Christian life (1 Cor. 15:10). The peace that Paul is desiring for these believers is more than just peace with God (Rom. 5:1), but is the peace that we are to have with one another as believers as we try to preserve the unity that the Holy Spirit has already given us (Eph. 4:2-3). It is also the peace that we are to have in not being worried (Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:15). As believers we are to desire these aspects of grace and peace not only for ourselves but other believers as well.

### **B. Praise for the believer's spiritual blessings (1:3-14)**

*Ephesians 1:3* - This begins a list that continues through verse 14 of this chapter concerning the blessings that God has already given to us. We see these blessings are given to us because we are in Christ. Before we were saved, we were not in Christ. However, when we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ to save us, the Holy Spirit baptized us or placed us in Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Eph. 2:1 explains that we were in our sins prior to being saved rather than in Christ. When we were placed in Christ, we were given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. The heavenly world is that part of the world that is not visible and is only known through faith. It consists not only of heaven itself but the unseen spiritual world consisting of all the angels – good or bad (Eph. 6:12). The fact that God has given us every spiritual blessing in that supernatural world shows that we do not need the so called "second blessing" taught by some Christians who try to

persuade us that we should want everything God has for us. However, if we have every spiritual blessing, we can clearly see that what have in Christ is sufficient. In Col. 2:10, we are reminded that we are complete in Christ. There is nothing to be added to completeness. 2 Peter 1:3 states that we have everything that we need for life (salvation) and godliness (our Christian life). If we have everything that we need, we do not need something else. John 1:16 states that we have received all the fullness of Christ. Finally, we note that this verse would instruct us to praise God for giving every spiritual blessing in the supernatural realm. Christian growth and spirituality is not about us having more of Christ or more of the Holy Spirit, but is about Christ and the Holy Spirit having more of us.

*Ephesians 1:4* - The first of the spiritual blessings mentioned in Eph. 1:3 is the fact that God chose those of us who are now in Christ prior to the creation of the world. Please note that this verse does not say that God chose our choice to believe. It is simply saying that God made His choice prior to the creation of the world. God's election or choice is in agreement with His foreknowledge according to 1 Pet. 1:2. Some would argue that foreknowledge refers to the fact that God had a prior relationship with us as in Jer. 1:5. However, this does not eliminate the fact that God knew in advance who would choose to trust Christ as Savior and who would not. In other words our choice to trust Christ was not rigged by God before the creation of the world but it was known. While God had a prior relationship with us before creation and before the time we trusted Christ for salvation, it was an elective relationship and not a salvation relationship. Salvation is not applied to us until we trust the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:24). Our faith in Christ although it is aided by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9) and by the word of God (Rom. 10:17) is still our responsibility. People can and do resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51) and then on hearing the word of God fail to exercise faith (Heb. 4:2). As people, we would not know that someone had trusted Christ until they openly confess Him, but God who is unlimited in understanding (Ps. 147:5) would know this long before the fact and could choose us. He did not have to wait until He saw them trust Christ as savior. What this reminds us of, is that we have been in God's plan even before He created the world. God's purpose in choosing us is for us to be holy and blameless. This is our standing before God and will be our actual condition when Jesus returns (1 The. 5:23-24). In the meantime we are to live holy lives (1 Pet. 1:14-16) and blameless lives (Phil. 2:15) knowing that we will not reach sinless perfection this side of eternity (Phil. 3:12; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8, 10).

*Ephesians 1:5-6* - We see the next spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. God predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself. Once again, we must read this verse carefully and observe what it does not say. It does not say that God predestined those of us who are now in Christ to trust

Christ for salvation. He predestined one of the benefits or blessings that go with that decision. For example, a wealthy father predestined the money to pay for his three year old son to attend the university when he reached age 18. However, he let the son choose whether or not he would even go to the university. In my example, the son chose to go to the university and in doing so received the benefit of the money set aside by the Father. God's will decides how salvation is going to be provided (1 Cor. 15:3-4 – the death and resurrection of Christ), what benefits are going to be given to those who believe on that provision, and the terms on which people may receive that provision. However, people are responsible to believe or not believe in God's provision. God, knowing who would or would not believe predestined this benefit for each of these people who believe. To be adopted as sons simply means that God placed us with the full rights of a grown son in the family of God. Under the Old Covenant, the believers had fellowship with God through a human priest and were like young children who were given over to special servant for their upbringing until they were of age to receive these full rights (Gal. 4:1-5). Under the New Covenant, we have full fellowship with the Heavenly Father through our ascended and eternal high priest Jesus Christ. Remember, do not think of adoption as we think of it in our culture. Think of it as a transition from being a minor child to being an adult child. In the culture of the time, there were two ceremonies for this rite of passage: a private ceremony which corresponds to the time we trusted Christ and received this adoption and a public ceremony which occurred later and corresponds to the time that Jesus returns (Rom. 8:23). In looking at our passage, in this meditation we must remember the last two words of Eph. 1:4, "In love" belong with verse 5. God predestined this special benefit because of His love for us. He also did this because it was the good pleasure of His will. The goal for this is that God would receive praise from us for this grace that displays His full character that He freely poured out on us because we are in Christ.

*Ephesians 1:7* - We continue discussing the list of blessings God has given those of us who are in Christ. We have redemption through His blood. The word translated redemption speaks of the fact that we were purchased and set free from the penalty of sin by Christ's blood. This is one of the benefits that we receive the moment that we trust Christ as Savior. 1 Peter 2:15 reminds us that this freedom is not meant to cover up evil deeds, but to be used as willing servants of God. We also receive the forgiveness of sins. This speaks of our being set free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2 cp. 6:23). This comes to us when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation (Acts 10:43 cp. Col. 2:13). Christ's death is the provision and our faith is the appropriation of that provision. This once and for all forgiveness is not to be confused with the forgiveness that we need after we have received Christ by faith. That forgiveness after we have become Christians (John 13:8-11 cp. 1 John 1:8-2:1) has to do with cleansing from the

defilement of sin which disrupts our fellowship with God but not our salvation relationship. The forgiveness mentioned in Eph. 1:7 has to do with salvation forgiveness in which we are delivered from any future judgment of condemnation (John 5:24). In summary, we have these two blessings in the heavenly world or supernatural realm: redemption which sets us free to serve God and forgiveness which has us ready for heaven.

*Ephesians 1:8-10* - We continue looking at the spiritual blessings of the heavenly world or unseen spiritual world which are ours. The first item mentioned in this is the grace that God so richly poured out on us as believers. This grace not only saves us (Eph. 2:8) but it also keeps us saved (Rom. 5:2). The words "with all wisdom and understanding" belong best as an introduction for verse 9. We do not possess all wisdom or God would not have told us to pray for that wisdom in James 1:5. We do not possess all understanding because it is God's understanding that is infinite not ours (Ps. 147:5). What the last part of verse 8 and the first part of verse 9 are saying is that God in His total wisdom and understanding made known to us as believers the mystery of His will. The word "mystery" or "secret" (in some translations) speaks of something that was concealed in the Old Testament but is now revealed to us in the New Testament. God revealing this New Testament truth to us was based on His good pleasure that He purposed to carry out in Christ. It is God's plan to bring everything in heaven and on earth together in Christ at the right time. There will be a merging of the visible world on earth with the heavenly world or spiritual realm. Notice that it does not include merging those things that are under the earth (Phil. 2:10 mentions the realm of "under the earth" where Satan and his demons will be confined {Rev. 20:1-3; Isa. 24:21-22} during the 1000 year kingdom when Jesus and believers rule over the entire earth {Rev. 20:6 cp. 5:9-10}). They are not part of the things being brought together. This merger was not the unrevealed truth because it was predicted in the Old Testament, but the mystery, i.e. the newly revealed truth, was that this would be accomplished in Jesus Christ as the focal point of that unity. This includes not only the 1000 kingdom but the new heavens and new earth mentioned which will be ushered in after the 1000 year kingdom (Revelation chapters 21 and 22; 2 Pet. 3:13). In summary, the blessings mentioned are the outpouring of God's grace and the promise of the merging of the earthly and heavenly realms through and in Christ.

*Ephesians 1:11-12* - The next spiritual blessing that we see is that we received is an inheritance from God. This inheritance is ours simply because we are in Christ. Some of our inheritance is received because we are in Christ and is related to the fact that we are saved. Other aspects of our inheritance are related to blessings (Heb. 6:11-12) and reward at the judgment seat of Christ (Col. 3:22-24). These other aspects are related to our ongoing faith in Christ and our deeds. However,

in Eph. 1:11, this aspect of our inheritance is bestowed on us simply because we are in Christ. 1 Peter 1:3-4 explains that this future inheritance is reserved for us in heaven, and that it is imperishable, not ruined by sin (undefiled), and does not lose value with the passing of time. Notice that this inheritance was predestined by God. It does not say that our choice to trust Christ (which resulted in us being in Christ) was predestined by God, but that this benefit of salvation was predestined by God. This predestination of an inheritance was in agreement with the plan of our sovereign God. Notice that it states that God works out everything in His plan in agreement with the purpose of His will. God's will encompasses the fact that we are allowed to choose to accept or reject Christ. The outcome of God's plan and the blessings bestowed on us who have put our confidence for the future in Christ might bring praise to God's glory or honor. Notice the word "might" which expresses possibility. How, we handle this great blessing of having an assured inheritance will affect how much praise is brought to the glory and greatness of God.

*Ephesians 1:13-14* - The final spiritual blessing in the heavenly world or supernatural realm is the sealing work of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ so that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13), He also sealed us. The seal is a mark of ownership reminding us that we are not our own (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We are now under new ownership. This sealing occurred when we heard the gospel as the word of truth (1 Thes. 2:13) and when we believed. The Holy Spirit by sealing us for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30), is the earnest or down payment that guarantees our inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-4) which we discussed in Eph. 1:11-12. The redemption spoken of here and in Eph. 4:30 is future and is the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23). Our body is set free from the bondage to decay (Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 15:51-53). We notice that the Holy Spirit was promised in Mt. 3:11; John 14:16-17; 16:7. The promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:33 at Pentecost and on everyone who after that points trusts Christ for salvation. The sealing of the Holy Spirit puts us believers under the new ownership of God and guarantees the redemption of our body for our inheritance in heaven to the praise of God's glory which encompasses all His goodness.

### C. Prayer for spiritual insight and Christ's full power (1:15-23)

*Ephesians 1:15-17* - This passage is valuable as it tells us how we need to be giving thanks for other believers. The first area of attention is their faith in Christ. This speaks of both the faith that they exercised in receiving the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and the faith by which they are living their Christian lives on a day-to-day basis in trusting Him for the power to obey His word (Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6). As

we see the faith of other believers in action, are we giving thanks as modeled in this passage? The next area of attention for giving thanks is the love believers are demonstrating for one another. This is how they show that they are Christ's disciples, i.e. people who have learned from Him and are following Him (John 13:34-35). Notice the words, "do not cease" show us that giving thanks for the faith and love of believers is to an ongoing consistent part of our prayer lives. Finally, we see the importance of praying for a spirit or inner disposition characterized by wisdom and revelation in our knowledge of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Wisdom in the inner man is obedient thinking which issues in obedient behavior (Mt. 7:24-27). Revelation or insight in our knowledge of Christ is gained by obedience to Christ (John 14:21). We are to pray for this inner disposition which obeys and understands what it means to more fully know Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the truth.

*Ephesians 1:18* - As we continue looking at Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers, this prayer serves as a model in praying for other believers and in praying for ourselves. The eyes of our body help us to know and understand the physical world. The eyes of our heart help us to know and understand the spiritual world. The prayer here is for the knowledge and understanding of the hope of God's calling. In the gospel we heard of this hope laid up for us in heaven (Col. 1:5). 2 Thes. 2:14 explains that the calling related to this hope came through the gospel. This hope is future and involves the appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13) and His changing us to be like Him in our character (1 John 3:2-3). This hope is reserved for us in heaven and is not subject to decay, being spoiled by sin, or losing value and meaning with the passage of time (1 Peter 1:3-4). Finally, this hope is both sure (certain) and steadfast (secure) and is anchored to the very presence of God in heaven (Heb. 6:18-19). As believers, this is an important prayer that we understand and know this hope and its implications for our lives. The last part of this verse is not talking about our inheritance from God. Rather, it speaks of the fact that we are God's inheritance. The essence of this truth is that we may know how valuable and important we are to God. Others may not see us as important or valuable, but God considers us His most valuable and rich inheritance.

*Ephesians 1:19-23* - Here the prayer is for understanding and knowledge of God's power which surpasses all power since He is almighty. This speaks of God's power and working for us. Later on in Ephesians 3:20, we will see the power of God working in us. This power enables us as believers to live supernaturally instead of on a natural plane like the unsaved world. When we know and understand the overwhelming extent of this power, we are motivated to live for Christ knowing that as we trust and depend on Him moment by moment that He will help us in temptation (Heb. 2:18) and strengthen us (Phil. 4:13) to obey Him and carry out

His will. The extent of this power is detailed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the seating of Him at the highest place of honor which is at God's right hand, the giving of authority which is above and over every angelic rank both now and in the future, a name or reputation that is greater than any other name or reputation. Positionally God's power put all things in the old creation and the church (the new creation) under Christ's authority. With power like God exerted in Christ working for us, we have all the resources we need to live a godly life (2 Pet. 1:3).

We see this passage concluding with the role of Christ. We know that God's supernatural power raised Him from the dead and seated Christ at His own right hand which is the place of honor and authority. Christ stated that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him (Mt. 28:18). His authority is over all the angelic ranks and kingdoms. His name and reputation are greater than any other both now and in the future. The entire creation has been made subject to Christ. The church is God's new creation in Christ, who is the head over the church. The church is said to be Christ's spiritual body through which He does His work on earth. The church is said to be the fullness of Christ. Just as the wife completes the husband so the church completes Christ. Christ is said to fill all in all. This simply means that He gives full meaning and purpose to everything in creation.

People often debate whether the church began during Christ's earthly ministry or whether it began at Pentecost. While the church as a local entity appears to have been in existence during Christ's earthly ministry (Mt. 18:15-17), the church as the body of Christ appears to have begun at Pentecost since it is formed by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13). This passage in Ephesians 1:22-23 would support the Pentecost beginning of the church because Christ did not become its head until He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. Otherwise, it would have been a headless body. We will see other passages in the book of Ephesians which support a Pentecost beginning for the church as the body of Christ. Since Christ is the head of the church, as believers, each of us are to be subject to Him (Eph. 5:24). This reminds us that life is not about what we want, but what God wants.

#### **D. Believer's move from death to life (2:1-10)**

*Ephesians 2:1-3* - These verses detail the spiritual condition of every human being before they trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as savior. The first problem is that we were said to be dead in trespasses and sins. There are three deaths that are prominent in scripture. We must remember that death denotes separation and not extinction. Physical death is the separation of the human body from the soul

(Gen. 35:18) and spirit (James 2:26). The next kind of death which is discussed in this passage is spiritual death. This does not mean that we did not have a human spirit before we were saved (all people have a human spirit - Num. 16:22 and Num. 27:16). When we committed our first sin, our human spirit did not cease to exist, but it was separated from God. James 2:10 states that it only takes one sin to be guilty of all sins. This is why we need to trust Christ as savior and have a birth of our spirit (John 1:12-13 cp. John 3:6-7). The eternal life that we receive when we trust Christ as savior is life for our human spirit. This life in our human spirit is always spoken of in the present or past tense. When the future tense is used for "eternal life", it speaks of our bodily resurrection (Mt. 19:29). If a spiritually dead individual dies physically, he will eventually experience the second death which is the lake of fire, i.e. Hell (Rev. 21:8). In summary, prior to our salvation we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. We will continue looking at the description of our lost condition prior to the time we were saved. We may not have been as bad as we could be, but we were as bad off as we could be.

We have seen that spiritual death describes the lives of everyone who has not trusted Christ as savior. We also saw that this death is a separation from God. Prior to our salvation, we walked or lived our lives in trespasses and sins. This was in keeping with the course of this world. According to 1 John 2:15-16, the course of this world is characterized by the boastful pride of life (the drive for prominence and self-promotion), the lust or desire of the flesh/sinful nature (the desire for pleasure) and the lust of the eye (the desire for possessions or material things). The world is ruled by Satan according to John 14:30 cp. 1 John 5:19 who is a usurper over God and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is logical to understand as stated here that the world is according to or following Satan. Here Satan is referred to as the prince (better ruler) of the power of (literally, authority over) the air. Here, Satan is said to be a spirit. In 2 Cor. 11:13-15, Satan is also said to be an angel (obviously in opposition to God). Since angels are said to be spirits (Heb. 1:14), this means that they do not possess a body like people (Luke 24:39). The terms "sons of disobedience" is used for unsaved people as in Eph. 5:6 and reminds us that unbelievers are characterized by sin (1 John 3:9-10). This passage explains that Satan is at work in the lives and hearts of unbelievers. Such was our condition before we received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. We will continue looking at our past condition before we trusted Christ. It is important that we do not live in the past – like we did before we were saved (Eph. 4:17) but in the glorious liberty of the children of God that we are (Rom. 8:21 cp John 8:36).

Prior to our salvation, we lived among the unsaved and were driven by the impulses or passions of our sinful nature. This resulted in carrying out and acting out on bodily desires as well as focusing the mind on fleshly impulses. By nature,



i.e. birth we were children of wrath meaning that we possessed a sinful nature from the very moment we were conceived (Psalm 51:5). Once that sinful nature turned out the first sin, we were under God's wrath. Prior to our salvation, the wrath of God hung over us continually because of our failure to embrace God's remedy (John 3:36). God's wrath is continually revealed from heaven against all (not just some) ungodliness and unrighteousness according to Rom. 1:18, and God is angry with the wicked every day (Ps. 7:11). Prior to our salvation, we were on the road to hell along with the rest of mankind. The purpose of pointing this out prepares us for the next verses of Ephesians 2 so that we will appreciate God's grace, mercy, love and kindness. Once again, we are given a clear picture of just how bad off we were before we trusted Jesus Christ. Because of the dilemma of the unsaved, it is of utmost importance that we point them to Jesus Christ who saved us from the righteous and just wrath of a holy God (Rom. 5:1, 9).

*Ephesians 2:4-7* - We see the character of God in saving us from His righteous and just wrath because of our sinfulness. First of all, we see that God was rich in mercy. Mercy is God withholding the wrath and punishment that we deserve. 1 Peter 2:10 states that we had not obtained mercy in the past but now after trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we have obtained mercy. In our passage in Eph. 2:4-7, we see that God's mercy is based on His great love with which He loved us. God showed this love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Eph. 5:8). The first undertaking that God did when we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation was to make us alive with Christ. The Holy Spirit imparted this new life according to John 6:63 and Tit. 3:5. Notice that we are said to be alive together with Christ. Christ is said to be our life (Col. 3:4). According to Col. 2:13, this brought about the forgiveness of all our sins. This sharing of the life of Christ enables us to have fellowship with a holy God so that there is a two-way communication in which we can pray to God because our sinfulness no longer blocks our prayers (Isa. 59:2). The other way that we have communication with God is that He communicates with us through His word (Psalm 119:105) and through the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14). We will continue looking at this passage in the next paragraph and its implications for our Christian lives.

In the last paragraph we discussed the attributes and actions of God that were involved in our salvation from the penalty of sin. We saw that His love was the foundation for His mercy. His first undertaking mentioned here was making us alive with Christ so we could have fellowship, i.e. two way communication with a holy god. In making us alive with Christ, it is clearly stated that it is by grace that we have been saved. The verb tense used here speaks of an action that took place in the past with present results. God's grace is His goodness that we do not deserve. We will see in Eph. 2:8-9 that this grace or undeserved goodness is

accessed by faith (see also Rom. 5:2). The word “saved” simply means that we have been saved from the penalty of sin so that we are ready to go to heaven if we die or if Jesus returns first. In addition to being made alive with Christ and saved by grace, we are said to have been raised with Christ. Notice that this is something that has already happened. This does not refer to our future bodily resurrection (1 Thes. 4:16-17) but to a spiritual resurrection. When we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ and His spiritual body (1 Cor. 12:12-13). This baptism makes us one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17) in joining us to Him. We also share through Spirit baptism in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:11-13). This is why it is best to baptize by immersion because it so clearly pictures the Holy Spirit’s baptizing work when we were saved. Our spiritual resurrection with Christ makes it possible for us to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4) as we reckon or count ourselves alive to God in Christ (Rom. 6:11). This frees us from the power (but not the presence) of our sinful nature so that we can express this new life we have in Christ in actions done to honor God.

We have seen how God’s mercy based on His love made us alive with Christ when we started out separated from God in our sins, and all of this was based on God’s grace (His goodness that we do not deserve). Then we spiritually shared Christ’s resurrection enabling us to live our lives in God’s new way. Now we observe that we were seated with Christ in the heavenly world. Obviously, this is in a spiritual sense and not a literal or actual sense. When Christ was seated at the Father’s right hand, He had all authority (Eph. 1:21-23). By being seated with Christ, we share His authority. This authority includes: the church restoration/discipline process (Mt. 18:15-18 cp. 1 Cor. 5:4-5); to gather together as believers (Mt. 18:20); to carry out the great commission by evangelizing, baptizing and instructing (Mt. 28:18-20); to pray in Jesus’ name (John 14:13-14); and to intercede or pray for all people especially for those who are in authority over us (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Finally, this passage is summed up by noting that God’s making us alive with Christ, raising us up with Christ and seating us with Him in the heavenly world is for the purpose of showing the supreme value of His grace in kindness toward us. The Greek word for kindness is doing good to others for the purpose of making their Christian life smoother or easier. God’s grace expressed in this kindness made it easier to be saved and easier to live out the truth of His word. What God has done for us in the past in the work of Christ works in our present lives and will be on display in the future ages.

*Ephesians 2:8-10* - This passage very carefully explains a lot about salvation and about doing good deeds. We see that salvation is provided by God’s grace (= His goodness that we do not deserve). We appropriate this salvation provided by God’s grace by personal faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor.

15:3-4 cp. Rom. 1:16). The phrase “and that not of yourselves” has confused many. The word “that” (neuter in the Greek) does not refer to grace (feminine in the Greek) nor to faith (feminine in the Greek) but to the whole process. Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9). Notice that this salvation is a gift of God and is not appropriated or received by our works, i.e. what we do in the way of good deeds. God’s reason for so appointing salvation to be provided by grace as a free gift is so that no one would boast or in any way take credit for this salvation (1 Cor. 1:29, 31) but give any credit and boasting to the Lord Himself. According to Rom. 3:27-28, salvation is by faith apart from any works so that boasting (other than in the Lord) is excluded. Finally, we see that we are God’s handiwork or workmanship created in Christ Jesus as a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) for the purpose of doing good deeds or good works. God has prepared an entire set of good works so that we should walk in doing them as we live our Christian lives. So we are not saved by good works, but we are saved to do good works. Each of us needs to get busy.

#### E. Believers move from being outsiders to being insiders (2:11-22)

*Ephesians 2:11-12* - Paul’s letter returned to a discussion of the status of non-Jewish people, i.e. Gentiles. Before they came to Christ, they were called “the uncircumcised” by the Jewish people who had experienced outward or physical circumcision, but only the remnant of the Jews had placed their faith in Christ and experienced that inward spiritual circumcision. (Rom. 2:28-29). However, the non-Christian, but religious, Jews looked down on non-Jewish people. Today, often nominal Christians who are religious but unsaved look down on non-religious people. Prior to salvation, we believers were without Christ or any concept of who He was. We lacked citizenship with the people of God, Israel. However, after, we were saved, we were the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10) although we had not been beforehand. We became citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). Prior to salvation we were foreigners to the covenants of the promise. We were not yet part of the covenant with Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9), the covenant with David (Col. 1:13), or the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6). Prior to our salvation, we were without hope. Based on 1 Peter 1:3-4, hope speaks of the confident expectation that our future is in heaven – incorruptible (will not perish or be destroyed), undefiled (not ruined by sin) and will not fade away (lose value and meaning with the passing of time). Finally, we were without God in the world. 1 John 2:23 reminds us that whoever does not acknowledge the Son, i.e. Christ, does not have God the Father. Because of this, we were without God prior to our salvation. In the next paragraph, we will see how the status of non-Jewish

believers changes when they trust Christ as savior. We cannot fully appreciate how well off we are after trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation until we see just how bad off we were prior to salvation.

*Ephesians 2:13-18* - By these Gentile believers being presently in Christ, the provision of the bloodshed death of Christ has brought them near. Prior to Jesus' death the Jews had a nearness or advantage over the Gentiles (non-Jews). However, with the death of Christ, there is an equal availability of His bloodshed death for both Jew and Gentile. Christ is said to be the peace for both Jewish and Gentile believers. This shows us that when people trust Christ –regardless of their ethnic or religious background -, there is a harmony or unity among them. It is important to make every effort to keep this peace or harmony in practice (Eph. 4:3). In the case of Jew and Gentile, to make this peace or harmony, Christ's death made the Old Testament law of no effect. This does not mean that certain commands do not carry over to the law of Christ in the New Testament because 9 of the 10 commandments are repeated in the New Testament law of Christ. Even the sabbath commandment which is not repeated (Rom. 14:5-6; Col. 2:16-17) has certain features of that commandment that carried over to the New Testament law of Christ. These features are noted in the chart below:

<b>Old Testament Scripture Reference</b>	<b>New Testament Scripture Reference</b>	<b>Lesson for Believers Today</b>
Exodus 20:8-11	1 Thessalonians 4:11-12	Believers are to labor or work
Exodus 20:8-11	Mark 6:31	Believers are to set aside time for rest
Leviticus 23:2,3	Hebrews 10:24-25	Believers are to assemble or meet together
Exodus 20:8-11	Acts 4:24; Revelation 4:11; 14:7	Believers are to praise and worship God's work in creation
Exodus 20:8-11	Matthew 11:29; Hebrews 4:9,11	Believers experience spiritual rest as they enter into full discipleship.

The Old Testament law created a dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, but its setting aside by Christ's death has torn down this hostility. We will continue looking at the unifying effect of Christ's death in our next meditation on this passage.

We have seen how God made the Old Testament law of no effect to take the two groups, Jew and Gentile, and make them one new man or one new group

which brought about peace or harmony between the two groups. The cross of Christ reconciled both believing Jews and believing Gentiles in one body. This shows us that the church as the body of Christ did not exist prior to Pentecost. Matthew 18:17 would suggest the local church existed prior to Pentecost, but not the church at large as the body of Christ. The hostility between Jew and Gentile was put to death by the cross. The phrase “put to death” simply means this hostility was separated from this new body consisting of Jews and Gentiles. It is very important that we make every effort to keep this unity which Christ created so that the world can see it and be more fully convicted of their need of Christ (John 13:34-35 cp. 17:21). When Christ came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to Jews primarily (near - Mt. 10:5-6; 15:24-28) but also to Gentiles (far away - Mt. 8:10-13; Mark 5:1, 19-20). Christ’s message is called the “good news of peace” because when anyone trusts Christ as Savior, they are justified – declared and treated as righteous before God – and have, as a result, peace with God. As a result of Christ’s work on the cross, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles have equal access to God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. This direct access to God, mediated by the Lord Jesus Christ, is a unique feature of the New Covenant that brings us into the very presence of our holy and just God (Heb. 10:19-22). Let us never take this wonderful privilege for granted.

*Ephesians 2:19-22* - Before being saved, we like all Gentiles were strangers to the covenants of promise to which we referred in our comments on Eph. 2:11-12. These covenants are the covenants with Abraham, David and the New Covenant. In relation to the nation of Israel, prior to Christ merging Jew and Gentile into one body, those who were not Jews (i.e. Gentiles) were aliens in not having an identity as the people of God (1 Pet. 2:10). Because both the saved of Israel and the saved of the Gentiles have been merged into one body, we saved Gentiles are now fellow-citizens with God’s holy people, the Jewish saved remnant. In addition, we are members of God’s household or family. John 1:12 states that we become children of God when we trust Jesus for salvation. Paul uses an illustration. He pictures a temple building in which the apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation with Jesus Christ Himself as the cornerstone. Christ keeps on putting together the whole building (cp. Mt. 16:18 “I will build my church”). As a result, this building representing the church at large keeps growing into a holy temple or sanctuary in Christ. As believers, we are continuing to be built together as a part of this building for a place for God to dwell in the person of the Holy Spirit. Under the New Covenant, there are three temples in relation to believers. The physical body of the individual believer is a temple (1 Cor. 6:19). The local church is said to be a temple in 1 Cor. 3:16. The word “you” is plural in the Greek in that verse. Here in Eph. 2:19-22, the church at large, the body of Christ, is said to be continually growing into a holy temple.

Peter describes us as living stones which are a part of this building or spiritual house to be a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).

One of the questions that is often asked on this passage is: does the word prophets refer to New Testament prophets as in the spiritual gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:28), or does it refer to the Old Testament prophets. Ephesians 3:5, just a few verses later, points out a revelation that is now revealed to the apostles and prophets. This would argue strongly for the view that this is referring to the New Testament prophets. One of the things that is clearly pointed out in Eph. 2:19-22 is the fact that we are part of a spiritual house or temple that is under continuing construction. There is a quantitative or numerical growth in this temple (see also Acts 2:47) as we as living stones (the moment we are saved – 1 Pet. 2:5) are added to the structure. There is also a process of continually being built together emphasizing a growth in the likeness of Christ among those stones, i.e. believers, who have been added. Another key observation is that the foundation of this temple is the apostles and prophets. This shows us that these spiritual gifts were foundational in relation to the church. We believers, some 2000 years, later are well above that foundation, and for that reason, there is not likely a need or use for these gifts other than the legacy they have given us in God's word. It is important that we as believers let Christ continue to build us together so that we more accurately reflect the love and unity that he asks us to demonstrate before the watching world (John 13:34-35 cp. Eph. 4:3).

#### F. New truth disclosed about the church and the gospel (3:1-13)

*Ephesians 3:1-6* - Because Paul had been teaching that Christ's death had opened up a new understanding of God's plan that was at variance with the understanding of the Jewish leaders, he was now a prisoner because of the Gentiles and his teaching that at salvation, both Jews and Gentiles had equal access to God for the purpose of fellowship. The word "if" in verse 2 in the Greek is a first class condition that could translated as "Assuming you have heard". The readers of the letter would probably have heard of the trust or stewardship that Paul had been given by God's grace to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). By a revelation or disclosure from Christ either directly or through the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15), there was a mystery that was made known to Paul. A mystery in the New Testament is simply a truth that was not revealed in the Old Testament but is now revealed in the New Testament. He had written instructions regarding this at some prior time and so is going over and clarifying this with these believers again. This reminds us that teaching needs to be repeated so that believers remain stabilized in their walk with Christ (Phil. 3:1).

This previous communication clarifies Paul's insight into this newly revealed truth. In previous generations, this new truth was not made known to people as it now had been revealed to the apostles and New Testament prophets by the Holy Spirit. The specific of this mystery (newly revealed truth) was that the Gentile believers were fellow-heirs with the Jewish believers, fellow-members of the body of Christ and fellow-sharers in the promise of God to send the Messiah. This came about through the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4 cp. Rom. 1:16). Notice that the mystery was not that the Gentiles would be saved, but that as saved people, they would be on an equal footing with the Jewish believers in the benefits of this salvation relationship. As believers, our relationship with God is not based on race, religious background or ritual or socio-economic factors but is totally based on the Lord Jesus Christ (Col, 3:11).

*Ephesians 3:7-12* - Paul and all of us who have trusted Christ have been made ministers or servants of the gospel. This enablement to tell others the gospel was a result of the gift of God's grace and His power working in and through us. Paul considered himself the least of all believers who had been given grace to tell the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. This communicates to us as believers that humility is necessary if we are to be effective in telling others about Christ. We also see that God's grace has to be at work in us in what we are doing in sharing the gospel. Finally, we see that as we present Christ, we are giving people something valuable beyond any measure. Not only was Paul a servant to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, but he was used by God to help understand the newly revealed truth (i.e. mystery) that had not been revealed to people in past ages and was hidden with God. He notes that this is the same God, the true God who created all things and had this plan. God used Paul to help make known the many aspects of His wisdom to all levels and ranks of authority among the angels in the heavenly or spiritual world. This was made known through the church (this group of saved Jews and Gentiles who were one body with equal access to God). This merging of saved Jews and Gentiles to demonstrate God's wisdom to the angels was realized or made a reality in Jesus Christ and was based on God's eternal purpose and plan. As a result of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have bold and confident access to the very presence of God. When Paul speaks of unsearchable riches of Christ, he speaks not just of our salvation from the penalty of sin, but he also speaks of this wonderful access we have to God that believers under the Old Covenant did not have and enables us not to just have life (salvation or eternal life) but to have abundant life (John 10:10).

**G. Prayer for spiritual power for God's glory  
(3:14-21)**

*Ephesians 3:13-16* - Because of God's great plan to merge Jewish believers and Gentile believers into one body on equal status with one another in relation to God, Paul had suffered being imprisoned. However, he asks that these believers do not give up living for Christ because this will be for their glory or greatest good. When we suffer persecution for doing what is right, we must encourage other believers to persevere and not give up. We are to follow the example of Paul and come to God in prayer with an attitude of submission ("bow my knees"). Notice that our prayer is directed to God the Father who is the one that gives His entire family in heaven (dead believers who have departed to be with Christ – Phil. 1:23 – and the holy angels) and those believers on earth (who have become children of God which happened when they trusted Christ for salvation – John 1:12) their name or identity. The request focuses on asking that God would grant or give inner strength to fellow-believers for whom we are praying. Notice that this giving of inner strength would be through the indwelling Holy Spirit who is at work in each believer (Rom. 8:9). Finally, we see that this request is according to the riches of God's glory. God's glory speaks of all His goodness (Ex. 33:18-23, especially vv. 18-19, 22). Since God gives us what is good (Mt. 7:11) and that He does not withhold anything good from those believers who walk or live their lives uprightly, i.e. in harmony with God's standards (Psalm 84:11), this is the type of prayer that is going to be answered if we are obeying God in our lives and do not have unconfessed sin in the way (Psalm. 66:18; 1 John 1:9).

*Ephesians 3:17-19* - Paul's prayer continues and sets a model for praying for others and for ourselves. In praying for inward strength from the Holy Spirit in Eph. 3:16, the desired outcome is for Christ to be at home in our hearts or thought life as we trust and depend on Him on an ongoing basis. The word "dwell" is a different Greek word than just signifying that Christ is present in us. The word for "dwell" carries the idea that Christ finds our heart or thought life a place where He can minister and make needed changes in our thinking. As believers, we are to have been rooted and grounded in love. This rooting and grounding is something that has taken place in the past with present results in the lives of these people. It reminds us that love is the stabilizing stone and the foundation stone for living out the truths of God's word in our lives. This starts with God's love for us (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10) and is expressed by loving God with our whole being (Mt. 22:37-38) and our fellowman in the same way that we love ourselves (Mt. 22:39-40) which includes even our enemies (Mt. 5:44). In addition, this love is expressed toward fellow-believers by loving them in the same sacrificial way



that Christ loved us (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-18). Love for God and love for fellow-believers is always expressed by obedience to the New Testament commandments of Christ (1 John 5:2-3 and 2 John 1:5-6). This prayer continues by asking that other believers – and obviously ourselves – gain understanding not just individually but as a group the full extent of Christ's love and to know or experience the love of Christ which is supernatural and beyond the capacity of the human mind. Finally, we are to pray that all that God has for us might fill our lives and our hearts.

*Ephesians 3:20-21* - Paul's prayer concludes with praising God's power or ability to do far more and beyond what we ask of Him or even think or imagine. Luke 1:37 states that nothing is impossible with God, and Mt. 19:26 where we see that what is not possible with people is contrasted with the fact that all things are possible with God. Jer. 32:17, 27 points out that nothing is too hard or difficult for God. When we pray, it is okay to doubt whether it is God's will or not (Mt. 8:2-3), but we must believe that God has the power or ability to do what we are asking (Mt. 9:28). We must remember that God not only has the power to do what we are asking, but His power goes far beyond that and what we might even think. This is the same power that works in us to enable us do what pleases God according to Phil. 2:13. This is the same power that works in us to transform us into the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18). God is to be praised or honored forever, i.e. repeatedly and consistently for what He did in forming the church (the body of Jewish and Gentile believers merged together as one with equal access and enablement from God) through Jesus Christ. Jesus had promised in Mt. 16:18 that He would in the future of that time be building His church. In Ephesians 2:21-22, we see that He does this by adding to our numbers and by building us together as a growing people. We participate in this not only as beneficiaries but by being His fellow-laborers (1 Cor. 3:9).

## PART TWO: Duties and Deeds of the Believer (chapters 4-6)

### A. Living worthy of our calling as believers (4:1-16)

*Ephesians 4:1-3* - The word "then" in verse 1 functions like the word "therefore" in many of your translations and takes us back to the fact that Paul is suffering the loss of liberty as a prisoner for Christ because of teaching that both Jew and Gentile are on an equal footing before God. This had aroused the extreme ire of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who had managed to secure his arrest. As a result, he was still in custody awaiting the outcome of his appeal to the Roman emperor. As believers, we may suffer in some way because of our stand for the

Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel, or for simply doing the right thing (Mt. 5:10-12). Despite his circumstances, he was encouraging the believers in Ephesus to live in a manner consistent with their calling which was a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9). The first virtue that they were to practice was complete humility. Humility is simply the recognition and expression of our inadequacy apart from God. Scriptures such as John 3:30; 15:5; 1 Cor. 4:7; 15:10; 2 Cor. 3:5 help us to understand what humility is. It is not to think more highly of ourselves than we should (Rom. 12:3) but to think sensibly concerning ourselves. Often, believers who try to develop this quality veer off the other side of the road in valuing themselves less than they should (1 Cor. 12:15-16; Gal. 6:4). Just like driving a car down the road and veering off the right side of the road, the corrective is to get back on the road and not to veer off the left side of the road. We will continue looking at the virtues and practices that make for walking worthy of this holy calling that we have as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to look at the virtues that make for living a life worthy of the calling we have received as believers. Not only are we to be completely humble, but we are to be completely gentle. This speaks of a sensitive regard for one another as believers. It is concerned with not running over people's feelings and concerns, but being sensitive in relation to them. This is important if the recipient of gentleness is trapped in a sin according to Gal. 6:2. It is important according to 2 Tim. 2:25 in correcting error. It is willing to listen enough to find out how people got into error and to diplomatically but clearly introduce the corrective scriptures so that the one in error can see for themselves how to correct their error. We are also to be patient with one another as believers by bearing with one another. Forgiveness has to do with sin and restoring fellowship. Bearing with one another deals with differences that we have with other believers that do not involve sin but simply different convictions concerning issues not commanded or forbidden by scripture. Romans chapter 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 are good chapters that explain this issue. For example, one Christian may believe that it is okay to mow one's lawn on Sunday while another Christian may see this as wrong. Since God's word does not have any command or prohibition on this, it is important that we are tolerant or forbearing with one another. Some believers are opposed to certain forms of entertainment (not forbidden or commanded by scripture) while other believers are not. These are areas where patience with one another in bearing with these matters is crucial. We will continue looking at the description of what it means to walk worthy of our calling in our Christian lives.

The final characteristic of the virtues that flow out of living a life worthy of our calling is our efforts to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit. This part of the passage has suffered greatly from those who want churches to drop their doctrinal distinctives and just merge into one entity. That is a general call for unity. This

passage speaks of the unity of the Spirit. This simply means a unity created by the Holy Spirit. The moment that we trust Christ as Savior the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13 cp. Col. 2:12). This creates a unity between all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not called on to create the unity of the Spirit. It already has occurred. In relating to other believers, we are not even commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit. We cannot do this with those believers who do not yield to the authority of God's word. To throw overboard biblical teaching would make it a man-made unity and not a unity of the Spirit. Notice that the command is to make every effort to keep this unity that God has created among us. We are told to do this through the bond of peace. This means that we have an obligation in making this effort to be peacemakers and not troublemakers. This is not peace at any price but peace that comes through the word of God having first place (John 16:33; Psalm 119:65). In the next paragraph, we will look at what the main components of this unity are in Ephesians 4:4-6.

*Ephesians 4:4-6* - There are 7 aspects of the unity of the Holy Spirit that we are to make every effort to keep. The first of these is the fact that every believer is part of the body of Christ. Ephesians 5:29 explains that we believers are members of Christ's body, which is the true church according to Ephesians 1:22-23. This is not a denomination but every genuine believer regardless of church label. This is something that we must not forget. Since the bulk of our interaction is with believers in our local church, this is where we have to focus on practicing unity in relation to one another. The second aspect is that fact that we have one hope or one future and that is the appearing of Jesus Christ when we are caught up and either bodily raised from the dead or bodily changed if we are still living when Jesus returns (Tit. 2:13; 1 Thes. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:21). This hope comes through our calling by means of the gospel (2 Thes. 2:14 cp. Col. 1:5). We have one Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:2). This means that he is God, i.e. the supreme authority in our lives. This does not mean that He has total control of our lives, or otherwise there would not have been the problem of errant churches such as the Corinthian church, the Galatian church and the church of the Colossians. Furthermore, there would be no room for spiritual growth if Christ had total control of our lives. However, the recognition of Him as Lord (=God, i.e. the supreme source of authority in our lives) is clearly part of saving faith. We have a common faith in Christ that saves us (2 Pet, 2:1). This is the fourth aspect in unity. This involves faith in His work (1 Cor. 15:3-4) which is His substitutionary bloodshed death and bodily resurrection and faith in His person (that He is Lord, i.e. God, the supreme authority in our lives – Acts 16:31; Col. 2:6). This faith comes to us through the hearing of God's word (Rom. 10:17). We will examine the other three aspects: one Spirit, one baptism and God and Father in the next paragraph.

To review the last paragraph, we noted the 7 aspects of spiritual unity detailed in this passage. We noted that there is one body the true church of which all believers are a part, the hope or future we have which is the return of Christ, one Lord as God (the supreme source of authority) for all true believers and, of course, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which is how we entered the family of God as His children (John 1:12). One Spirit reminds us that all believers share His indwelling (Gal. 3:26 cp. 4:6), His baptism into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), His sealing (Eph. 1:13-14), His positional sanctification (1 Cor. 6:11 cp. Acts 26:18), His washing of regeneration or impartation of new life (Tit. 3:5 cp. John 6:63), and His work in justification (1 Cor. 6:11). The term “one baptism” has caused a lot of controversy. This is not saying that there are not multiple baptisms as mentioned in Heb. 6:2). There is Christian water baptism which Christ commanded for all believers (Mt. 28:19), Spirit baptism which happens at salvation (1 Cor. 12:13) and is distinct from Christian water baptism (Acts 10:44-48 cp 11:15-17) and the water baptism of John the Baptist which is distinct from Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5) and distinct from Christian water baptism (Acts 19:1-7). Some have tried to make this mean one mode of baptism, but that is not what is being taught in this passage although other scriptures would support immersion as the mode to be used. The common baptism that binds all believers together into one body or entity is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which occurs at salvation. This is not some sort of super-zap that we get after salvation, but at salvation it results in the Holy Spirit placing us in the spiritual body of Christ. Still others have taught that this phrase “one baptism” means that water baptism is no longer required for Christians, but since Christ commanded Christian water baptism (Mt. 28:19), that is very much a false assumption. The final common denominator of unity among true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is that we have one spiritual Father, God the Father. That happens when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith according to John 1:12. God is sovereign or ruler over each of us as believers, works through each of us and lives in each one of us. As we encounter other believers, these 7 aspects are the critical points of unity among us.

*Ephesians 4:7-11* - This passages speaks of spiritual gifts being given after Christ ascended into heaven. Each spiritual gift corresponds to a part of the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor. 12:13-30). Just as the Holy Spirit was not given until after Christ ascended (John 16:7), so spiritual gifts were not given to the body of Christ until after Jesus ascended. Ephesians 4:7 mentions that each of us receives a spiritual gift from the head, Christ, by God’s grace. This agrees with 1 Cor. 12:7 and 1 Pet. 4:10 which tell us that every believer has at least one spiritual gift. Ephesians 4:8 tells us that spiritual gifts were not given until Christ ascended. Ephesians 4:11 gives us a partial list of the spiritual gifts. A complete list of spiritual gifts is given on the next page:

## NOTES ON EPHESIANS

### Lists of Spiritual Gifts

<b>1 Corinthians 12:8-10</b>	<b>1 Corinthians 12:28-30</b>	<b>Romans 12:6-8</b>	<b>Ephesians 4:11</b>
Word of wisdom	Apostleship	Prophecy	Apostleship
Word of knowledge	Prophecy	Service	Prophecy
Faith	Teachers	Teaching	Evangelism
Healing	Miracles	Exhortation	Pastor-teacher*
Miracles	Healing	Giving	
Prophecy	Helps	Leading	
Discerning of spirits	Administrations	Showing mercy	
Tongues	Tongues		
Interpretation	Interpretation		

*\*Note: Pastors and teachers is considered one gift because in the Greek the definite article appears before "Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastors but not before teachers. The rules of Greek grammar tell us that this means that it is one office not two offices.*

*Note: There is a distinction between the office of apostle and the spiritual gift of apostle. The office of apostle was confined to the 12 with Judas being replaced by Matthias. Except for Matthias this occurred during Christ's earthly ministry (Mt.10:1-4). All of these subsequently received the spiritual gift of apostle at Pentecost. In addition several other men received that gift as noted above but are not part of the 12 who will administer as judges over the 12 tribes of Israel during the coming kingdom of Christ (Matthew 19:28; Revelation 20:6; Isaiah 1:26) and will have their names on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem in the eternal state following Christ's 1000 year kingdom (Revelation 21:14)*

**When we look at the passage following Eph. 4:11, we will see some clear reasons for spiritual gifts. In the meantime, we need to use our spiritual gift(s) to serve one another (1 Pet. 4:10).**

The spiritual gift of Apostle and the spiritual gift of prophet are foundational gifts according to Ephesians 2:20. These gifts functioned as the New Testament for the believers in the early church prior to the completion of the New Testament. The gift of evangelist serves as a special spiritual gift to reach people for Christ, and by doing so, add them to the church. We all are to do the work of a evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5), even if we do not have that particular spiritual gift. The final gift that is mentioned is pastor-teacher. We noted that this is one particular spiritual gift in our notes under the chart of spiritual gifts. The evangelist is the leader in adding to the church numerically or quantitatively while the pastor-teacher is the leader of building up the church qualitatively or in Christ-likeness. With relation to Christ's ascension, He is said to have ascended far above all the heavens. Hebrews 4:14 states that Christ passed through the heavens and in Hebrews 9:24 to enter heaven itself. These statements appear confusing. However, we must remember that heaven is spoken of as three different areas as shown in the chart below:

## CHART OF THE HEAVENS

Hebrew word "shamayim": translated heaven or heavens, but in many versions, it is translated "sky".

<b>Different heavens</b>	<b>Scripture references</b>	<b>Description</b>
1st heaven or atmospheric heaven	Gen. 7:23; 1 Kings 18:45	Abode of the birds and clouds
2nd heaven or stellar heaven	Genesis 26:4	Abode of sun, moon, planets and stars
3rd heaven or heaven of heavens or highest heaven	2 Chronicles 6:18, 30; 2 Corinthians 12:1-4	Dwelling place of God

When Christ ascended, He passed through the heavens as stated in Heb. 4:14 and far above all the heavens as stated in Eph. 4:10. This simply means that in going into heaven that He had to pass through and above the atmospheric heaven and the stellar heaven. The phrase "*that he might fill all things*" corresponds to the phrase in Eph. 1:23 "*who fills all in all*" and simply means that He gives full meaning and purpose to everything in creation. This includes us and our lives.

The last question that we will consider is, what does it mean that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth. Jesus stated that He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt. 12:40). The heart of the earth refers to the center of the earth. It would appear that Jesus' soul went to Hades when he died according to Acts 2:27-31. Consult a good literal translation of the scripture to have an accurate translation of this passage. By comparing these two scriptures, it would appear that Hades is located in the center of the earth. Jesus told the repentant dying thief that he would be with Jesus that very day in paradise (Luke 23:43). Old Testament saints went to sheol/hades in the Old Testament according to Gen. 37:35. This would agree with the Talmud that paradise and Abraham's bosom were located in a special section of Hades. Since by the time of Paul, paradise was located in heaven, it follows that paradise was moved from Hades/sheol at some point. Ephesians 4:8 explains that Christ led a host of captives when He ascended to heaven. These were the souls of the Old Testament saints as suggested by Isa. 42:9 and Zech. 9:14. Satan lost his realm of the dead at the death of Christ according to Heb. 2:14. The word translated "power" in Heb. 2:14 is "kratos" which means a realm over which someone or some ones rule. Any way that one interprets Christ leading the captives into heaven, it reminds us that Christ's death, resurrection and ascension were a major victory.

*Ephesians 4:12* – We notice that the word “For” connects this verse to the giving of gifted people or spiritual gifts to the body of Christ. The Greek word for “equipping” has the idea of setting something in the order that it should be in. It was used of the disciples mending their nets in Mt. 4:21, restoring a believer trapped in sin in Gal. 6:1 and God putting the creation in the order that He designed in Heb. 11:3. The word “preparing” is a good synonym for this word. It reminds us that the pastor’s job is to prepare believers to do works of service for God. We have been saved for good works according to Eph. 2:10, and we are to be servants according to Mark 10:42-45. As pastors and other spiritually gifted people do this preparing of the believers in their local church to do works of service, they build up the body of Christ. To build up simply means to increase the Christ-likeness of the believers. If we as believers fail to meet together, we miss out on receiving the benefit of spiritual growth, i.e. being built up. Not only does it affect our growth, but it robs other believers of the use of our particular spiritual gift or gifts in building them up to greater Christ-likeness. In summary the purpose of spiritually gifted people (true of all believers – 1 Cor. 12:7) is the following chain: equipping or preparing >>> works of service >>> corporate and individual growth in the likeness of Christ. Let’s help each other grow.

*Ephesians 4:13* – We see the results of the process in Ephesians 4:12 which happens as believers are prepared for works of service to build up one another toward greater Christ-likeness. These results are a unity of the faith. The term “the faith” is not used of saving faith here Eph. 2:8-9) or of the faith by which we live the Christian life (Col. 2:6; Gal. 2:20). It speaks of the New Testament law of Christ or Christ’s commandments. We are united in our understanding of this body of truth called “the faith”. Likewise our knowledge of Christ goes beyond knowing Him as Savior (John 17:3) to knowing Him in a way that frees us from the power of sin on a practical level (John 8:31-32; 14:21) by obeying His word. The goal of preparing believers for works of service and building greater Christ-likeness, then, not only produces a united understanding of the truth of the New Testament, but also produces this knowing Christ in a close and intimate way that changes our lives. Notice the outcome of these two unities is a mature believer as measured by complete Christ-likeness. Finally, we see the first word “until” in this verse which reminds us that bringing believers to maturity as a group takes time. It is not an overnight or microwave process. The same thought is expressed in Heb. 5:11-14 where the Hebrew Christians were rebuked for the fact that they had not matured and should have done so by this time after becoming believers.

*Ephesians 4:14* – The reason that spiritual maturity is important is set forth in this verse. Once spiritual maturity is developed, we are no longer immature children. We have stability in our Christian lives. The phrase “every wind of

doctrine” refers to all the errant or distorted teachings that are being promoted. Some of these may appear very good but may be very harmful. Anyone who has been a Christian for any length of time will notice how new books and new teachings spread like wildfire. Some of these are blatantly false. Other teachings are an overemphasis on certain teachings or doctrines. This reminds us that balance is very important in how the Bible is taught. How we handle scripture depends on our level of maturity according to Heb. 5:11-14. Some Christians are so unstable that they get carried away with every new book that comes out or every new teaching that comes through TV evangelists. There are three things which drive these false and destabilizing teachings. In some cases, only one of these three things is present and in other cases all three of these things are present. Trickery is present to persuade immature believers to allow these promoters of error or imbalance an opportunity to indoctrinate them with their error or imbalance. In other cases, the promoters will use craftiness to persuade the immature believer to drop what truth that they have learned and adopt the error that they promote. Finally, some purposefully plan on dressing up error as truth to deceive and destabilize those who are vulnerable. As a believer, I have seen errors come and go and then be recycled again. According to 1 Timothy 4:1-2, demons (=angels of Satan) may be behind some of the error and imbalance that continually blows across Christendom. Both the mature believers and immature believers have a responsibility. The mature are responsible to help immature believers move on to maturity (Heb. 6:1). The immature believer is responsible to do those basics that promote spiritual growth (2 Pet. 3:17-18) such as searching the scriptures daily to insure that what is being taught is true (Acts 17:11), Spirit-led prayer (Jude 1:20); sharing the gospel with the unsaved (Acts 9:20-22), meeting with other believers to receive the benefit of their spiritual gift and to give them the benefit of your spiritual gift (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 14:12, 26).

*Ephesians 4:15-16* - To see the likeness of Christ produced in the body of believers as a group, we saw in Eph. 4:11-14 how spiritual gifts used by the leadership of the church especially promote the chain effect of preparing the group of believers for works of service to build one another toward the likeness of Christ and avoiding spiritual immaturity and instability. Here, we see that believers, both individually and as a group, should focus on speaking the truth in love so that we grow in every part of our Christian life into closeness with our head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice that God wants us to be truthful in our speech. However, just being truthful is not sufficient. We are to speak the truth in harmony with love. 1 Cor. 8:1 reminds us that love builds up and promotes the likeness of Christ. As we speak to fellow-believers, it is important that we speak the truth in a way that promotes the likeness of Christ in the hearer as well as the speaker. Christ as the head is the point of connection from whom the whole group is fitted and interconnected by these lesser parts in order to promote the growth of the body



or group of believers by building up one another in Christ-likeness. This is done by each individual part working as it should in harmony with God's word. In summary, we are to focus on being both truthful and loving. If we cannot speak the truth without doing it in love, then we need to remain silent. Likewise, if we try to love without being truthful, it fails to bring forth joy (1 Cor. 13:6). We must be sure, we are doing our part in promoting the spiritual growth of the group in becoming more like Christ and pursuing greater closeness with Him.

### B. Living differently from the unsaved

*Ephesians 4:17-19* - As believers, we are challenged to avoid living in the same manner as the unsaved people of this world live. The life of the unsaved is clearly described. They are said to walk in the futility of their mind, i.e. thoughts. Psalm 10:4 (NKJV) states that with regard to the natural man that "God is not in all his thoughts." Rom. 1:18-21 states that when people reject the idea of a God-designed creation that their imaginations run amuck. Because people do not reason from the scriptures (Acts 17:2), they have an emptiness in their reasoning and thinking. In addition the unsaved person's understanding is lessened or darkened because they do not have the light of God's word (Ps. 119:105, 130). When one begins with the wrong assumptions, there is a total lack of understanding. Thirdly, we see that the unsaved person is excluded from the life of God. This life is in Christ according to John 1:4. The one who has Christ has the life, and the one who does not have Christ does not have the life (1 John 5:11-12). Their very lack of knowledge, i.e. ignorance holds them back from receiving Christ for salvation. This lack of knowledge in the unsaved person has its roots in the hardness of their heart. This is caused by the deceitfulness of sin, i.e. their sinful nature/inclination (Heb. 3:13). The heart itself is deceitful (Jer. 17:9) and not to be trusted (Prov. 28:26 – NASB or NKJV). Over time, the heart or thinking of the unsaved person becomes callous or insensitive to the things of God. This comes out in behavior that is based on sensuality (= preoccupation with bodily pleasure) which drives every kind of impurity in thought and deed plus greediness for more and more. 1 Thes. 4:7 reminds us that as believers, we are called to holiness rather than to impurity. In Luke 12:15 Jesus teaches that greediness is not the way to go because a individual's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. When believers try to live like the unsaved, it distorts their thinking, reasoning and understanding and opens them up to needless temptations. There is nothing in the old unsaved life that is worth hanging on to. We will continue looking in Ephesians 4 at God's counsel on how to make a break with this type of thinking and living.

*Ephesians 4:20-21* - Ephesians 4:17-19 outlined the hardened and insensitive mindset and sinful choices of those who have not trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as

savior. After we note how we are not supposed to live in Ephesians 4:17-19, we are reminded that living and thinking like the unsaved is not the way of life that we learned when we were taught by Him in keeping with the truth that is in Christ. This truth is the word of God (John 17:17) which Jesus spoke (John 7:16; 12:49). Jesus was also truthful in his interaction with others (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus was the very incarnation of truth (John 1:14; 14:6). His message and His life communicated truth. So rather than living like the unsaved and communicating that which is false, we are to live like Jesus and in keeping with the truth of His word that both our lips and our lives communicate truth. Our culture like the culture of Jesus' time is in very bad need of truth. Post-modern thinking has made truth a relative and fluid matter which says, "If it's truth for you, that is all that matters and that it may not be truth for someone else. Still others believe that truth is best derived by majority consensus. This kind of thinking is best illustrated by the young kindergarten boy who told his class that he did not know which gender his gerbil was, but maybe they could all vote to decide which gender it was. God's word clearly predicted that during this era known as the last days (Heb. 1:1-2), people would turn their ears from the truth of God's word to embrace myths, i.e. man-made explanations of what God has revealed in creation and scripture (2 Tim. 4:3-4). One of the tenets of Bible-believing Christianity is that there is such a thing as absolute truth, and that truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ and in the word of God.

*Ephesians 4:22-24* - Because of the tension between the life-style and mindset of the unsaved and what we have been taught as Christians concerning the truth by which we are to live, we are to make a definite decision to put off the old sinful nature (i.e. old man) with the conduct of our pre-salvation life. The Greek language indicates a point of time act. It obviously does not signify arriving at sinless perfection but breaking with our dabbling in sin. We will see the specifics of this in Eph. 4:25 through 5:5 as far as behaviors to be put off or discarded and behaviors to be added and practiced. Notice that we are to put off the old nature not to put it out. Our sinful nature stays with us for the rest of our physical life. Picture your life as a throne as in the illustrations (both show 2 different kinds of believers):

**Carnal Person**

Unbelief  
Disobedience  
Poor prayer life  
No desire for Bible study

Legalistic attitude or critical spirit  
Impure thoughts, jealousy, guilt  
Frustration, aimlessness  
Worry, discouragement  
Loss of love for God and others



In this situation, we see S or sin on the throne of our life and Christ in our life. What Eph. 4:22 is commanding us to do is take sin off the throne so that our lives look like this with Christ on the throne:

### Spiritual Person

Christ-centered  
Empowered by the Holy Spirit  
Introduces others to Christ  
Effective prayer life

Understands God's Word  
Trusts & obeys God  
Experiences love, joy, peace,  
patience, kindness, faithfulness,  
gentleness, goodness & self-control



We see that our sinful nature keeps on growing (verb in the Greek speaks of continuing and ongoing action) corrupt in keeping with its desires which are deceitful rather than truthful. So far, we have seen what we are to do on the subtraction side of our Christian life. As we move on in this passage, we will see what we do on the addition side of our Christian life.

In our last meditation, we saw that God is commanding us as believers to put off the old man, i.e. sinful nature from the throne of our lives. This starts when we believers confess the sin to God and forsake it as stated in Prov. 28:13. The next step involves being renewed in our innermost thoughts (= the spirit of our minds). To alter our thinking, we are to fill it with God's word as stated in Psalm 119:11. Sin starts in the heart or thought life according to Jesus (Mark 7:21). We are to guard our hearts with all diligence because the issues of life spring from our thinking according to Prov. 4:23. Likewise, we are to focus our thoughts as stated in Phil. 4:8 and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Prayer is important on being renewed in our innermost thoughts (Psalm 19:14). We see in vv. 22 and 24 that the old nature is to be put off like a garment. It is to be dethroned with its behaviors being discarded. Like a garment, we are to put on the new nature or new man which bears the moral image of God in true righteousness and holiness. This part of our human makeup was lost in the fall, but is ours when we trust Christ. The issue is decisively appropriating this new nature which we received when we trusted Christ for salvation. Righteousness is living, speaking and thinking in keeping with God's standards. We are to pursue righteousness according to 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22. Jesus stated that we are to hunger and thirst for righteousness in Mt. 5:6. Heb. 12:14 commands us to pursue holiness which means to live for God's purposes rather than our own purposes or the purposes of the world. The Christian is like a man with two file cabinets titled "old nature" and "new nature". These cabinets contain tapes. Our life choices involve choosing which cabinet to pull the tape from. Do we choose sin which is living in the past, or do we choose righteousness and holiness in living for the present and for eternity?

*Ephesians 4:25* - This is the first of several verses that explain how we put off the old man, i.e. old sinful nature with its sinful behavior and put on the new man (the new life we received from Christ) with its righteous behavior. The word "therefore" connects us to the thoughts in Eph. 4:22-24. Specifically, we are to put away lying. Lying can involve not only telling others a falsehood but

deceiving ourselves. Ps. 51:6 states that God desires truth in our inward parts. Lying is done sometimes to make ourselves look extra-spiritual like Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10. Sometimes, people lie, like David when he told the priest that he was on the king's business when in reality, he and his men were running for their lives in 1 Sam. 21:2. Whatever rationale we may have for lying, God's word commands us to cease and desist and to speak truth to our fellow-human beings, i.e. our neighbor. However, we must remember to speak that truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and that we do not have to tell someone everything we know about a matter (1 Sam. 16:1-5). Finally, we see the importance of not lying and simply telling the truth to people. The importance lies in the fact that we as believers are members or part of one another. If I lie, it reflects on other believers because what one member does or says affects other members of the body of Christ for good or for bad (1 Cor. 12:26). In summary, we are to discard lying, practice telling the truth motivated by the fact that it will have a positive effect on the rest of the body of Christ, i.e. believers. The chart below helps us to see the full scope of this command.

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Lying	Telling the truth to all people	Our membership in one another as believers

*Ephesians 4:26-27*- In the putting off the sinful nature, i.e. old man, and putting on the new nature, i.e. new man, we saw the need for truthfulness. Here we see the need to deal with the problem of anger. So often, anger pushes us into sin. We are commanded to not let our anger do this. This especially speaks of being quick-tempered as in James 1:19-20. By taking time to listen and being slow to speak and slow to let out our anger we are able to work the righteous life that God desires to use. Jesus offers a classic example of how to handle this type of anger. In Mark 3:5, we are told that Jesus was angry with Jews who wanted to forbid him from healing on the Sabbath. However, there is an interesting phrase that is added after the word "angry" which is "being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts". Since Jesus did not sin, we see that his anger at the sin of others was also expressed as grief. This reminds us that before we go up in flames in our anger to be grieved about the matter. In Eph. 4:26-27, we also see the need to avoid another kind of anger, and that is the anger that we harbor over a period of time. The first kind of anger that we looked at was rage while this type of anger is resentment. In this kind of anger, there is a desire to get even or get revenge. However, God's word instructs to let go of this kind of anger quickly - by the end of the day -and not to take revenge, but to leave

room for God's wrath to work in the situation (Rom. 12:19). Then Rom. 12:20-21 instructs to do good to these people toward whom we felt that resentment so that we overcome their evil deeds with good deeds. Our motivation in controlling our rage and putting away resentment is to not give Satan an opportunity to work.

The chart below helps to see the putting off and putting on dynamic:

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Rage (Eph. 4:26)	Grief, quick to hear and slow to speak (Mark 3:5; James 1:19-20)	Don't give Satan an opportunity (Eph. 4:27) Rage does not work God's righteousness (James 1:20)
Resentment (Eph. 4:26)	Doing good for those against whom we felt that resentment (Rom. 12:20-21)	Don't give Satan an opportunity (Eph. 4:27) Leave room for God's wrath to work and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:19-21)

*Ephesians 4:28* - In putting off the sinful nature and putting on the new nature, we are given a command that is summed up by the word "honesty". Stealing is a sin that we are to put off. Stealing can take many forms. Tit. 2:9-10 warns people not to take things from the workplace for personal use. We are to pay our debts or bills on time according to Rom. 13:8. A police detective and his wife had an \$800 item stolen off their front porch. A few days later, a fellow-officer called him to state that they had found the thief and the item. When he went to the house where the item was located, the thief (with whom this detective had experienced previous dealings) blurted out, "Oh, Jerry, I didn't know that was your house and your item, or I would have never taken it. Obviously, as believers, we know the answer. This sin is not to be a part of our new life in Christ (1 Pet. 4:15). We are not to be taking other people's stuff. One pseudo-Christian cult was justifying stealing by saying that shoplifted items were a provision of the Lord. Notice that it is not enough to quit stealing, but it is important to substitute for this behavior working in a way that is beneficial to self and others. 1 Thes. 4:11-12 commands us to work so that our needs are

supplied and that we have a good testimony with the unsaved. Finally, we see that the motivation for working rather than stealing is so that we can give to the one who is in need. The chart below helps us to see how this works.

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Stealing	Working what is good (beneficial)	Helping those in need.

*Ephesians 4:29-30* - This is the next of several verses that explain how we put off the old man, i.e. old sinful nature with its sinful behavior and put on the new man (the new life we received from Christ) with its righteous behavior. First of all, we are to avoid and not use unwholesome talk. Many ask what this means. The obvious answer is to contrast it with that which is good for edification. Unwholesome talk fails to promote Christ-likeness in the believer who uses it, the believer about whom it is used and the believer to whom it is spoken. Unwholesome talk about unbelievers or to unbelievers fails to attract them to Christ. Dirty language is specified in the command in Ephesians 5:4 although that would certainly be unwholesome speech. After discarding unwholesome talk, we are to speak that which is good for edification. This means that the speaker is helped to be more like Christ as well as the believing hearer and the believing subject of the speech. What speech edifies is situational in relation to its timing, i.e. the need of the moment. We see that the motivation to avoid unwholesome talk and to substitute and practice edifying speech is that it gives grace to those who hear. This does not speak of saving grace or even of enabling grace but simply that it says what is said in such a way that it gives the hearer and the subject goodness that they do not deserve. My father's Christian aunt was a master of gracious speech when discussing others and did not tear down with what she said. All of us can think of believers who demonstrate that quality whom we can use as models for our own speech. Finally, we see another motivation for discarding unwholesome speech and saying what edifies. We are reminded that if we do not do so that it will grieve the Holy Spirit. Simply put, this makes Him as God sad. I have put a chart below to show what is to be discarded, its replacement and its motivations.

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Unwholesome speech	Timely edifying speech	To show grace to hearers and subjects of our speech. To avoid grieving the Holy Spirit

We are now ready to discuss the teaching regarding the Holy Spirit which is supplied by Eph. 4:30.

We also see why grieving the Holy Spirit is a critical issue. He sealed us for the day of redemption when we trusted Christ as savior according to Eph 1:13-14. This seal reminds us of God's ownership over our lives and also the fact that our salvation as believers is secure and cannot be lost. The day of redemption is clarified in Romans 8:23. It is the time when Jesus returns and our body is redeemed by being raised from the dead (1 Thes. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). There is also a present aspect to our redemption according to Eph. 1:7 which has to do with the fact that our souls have been redeemed (cp. Psalm 49:7-8). Finally, we see that the Holy Spirit is a person. By person, what is meant is that He possesses personality: intellect (1 Cor. 2:11), a will or ability to choose (1 Cor. 12:11) and finally emotion as Eph. 4:30 states that he can be grieved. Notice the word order of God in Eph. 4:30. It does not say that we are to avoid grieving the Spirit so that He will seal us for the day of redemption (law emphasis). Rather, it says that because He has already sealed us for the day of redemption, we are to avoid grieving Him (grace emphasis!). It emphasizes that wholesome speech should be important to us because of what the Holy Spirit has already done for us.

*Ephesians 4:31-32* - This is the next of several verses that explain how we put off the old man, i.e. old sinful nature with its sinful behavior and put on the new man (the new life we received from Christ) with its righteous behavior. The chart below shows how this is to work. However, we must understand the terminology that is used here. Bitterness is focused on being either bitter or unforgiving toward someone as in Col. 3:19. It also can mean being bitter toward the bad circumstances that have occurred in our lives as in Ruth 1:20-21. In the context of this verse, it means bitterness or unforgiveness toward others. We are also warned against being quick-tempered or raging in James 1:19-20. Then we are warned against the kind of anger that holds a grudge against someone as in Mt. 5:21-22. Clamor is simply loud quarrelsome speaking. Slander involves saying things to cut other people down that are exaggerated or untrue. Malice involves thinking, speaking or behaving in a way that is harmful to others. Notice the remedy for this kind of mindset and behavior. The first of these is kindness. Kindness involves actions that help others by smoothing or expediting their situation so that it is less difficult for them to handle the situation. We are to be tender-hearted or compassionate toward other believers so that they know that we share their feelings. Finally, we are to show the same type of forgiveness that God showed us in our dealings with one another and in this way imitate Him. In the next paragraph, we will be discussing additional motivations given for putting off the sinful behaviors mentioned in this passage and putting on the right behaviors in their place.

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Bitterness, rage, resentment, loud quarrelsome talking and slander	Kindness, compassion, forgiving each other	To imitate God's response of forgiveness to those of us who are now in Christ.

*Ephesians 5:1-2* - We have noted that we were commanded to forgive each other as believers in the same manner as God has forgiven us. In addition we were commanded to be kind and compassionate toward one another. The word "therefore" in Eph. 5:1 means "for this reason". Because God is kind, compassionate and forgiving, we as His children - whom He loves - are to imitate Him in practicing these characteristics just like children imitate their parents. The word "and" in Eph. 5:2 gives an additional motivation for practicing these character qualities. That motivation is to walk in the same self-sacrificial love with which Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. This self-sacrificial love is exercised toward one another as believers. This kind of love is said to be a fragrant aroma which simply means that it is pleasing to God just as Jesus' sacrifice for us was pleasing to God. In summary, showing kindness, compassion and forgiveness toward one another is to be motivated by imitating God as our Father and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. The chart below adds to the motivations that help us to live out these character qualities.

Put off	Put On	Motivation
Bitterness, rage, resentment, loud quarrelsome talking and slander	Kindness, compassion, forgiving each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. To imitate God's response to those of us who are now in Christ.</li> <li>. To imitate God our Father as children imitate their earthly fathers</li> <li>. To show the same sacrificial love toward one another to please God that Jesus showed when He died on the cross.</li> </ul>

### C. Living a pure and generous life (5:3-7)

*Ephesians 5:3-5* - Notice that sex outside of marriage is not only contrary to God's word (1 Thes. 4:3; Heb. 13:4), but we are to avoid anything that would lead people to believe that we are in such a relationship. Staying overnight with someone of the opposite sex (other than close relatives such as spouse, mother, sibling, grandparents) would be an example of such behavior. Impurity has to do with preoccupation with sexual pleasure such as fantasizing about illicit sex (Mt. 5:27-28) and viewing, reading or listening to sexually suggestive material.



Impurity starts as a mental-attitude sin and progresses to more overt sins if not confessed and forsaken. To avoid any appearance of these sins, we are to flee or intensively avoid any compromising situation. Billy Graham refused to be alone with another woman unless, there was someone else present. He wanted there to be no idea on any one's part that he was indulging in these sins. To overcome impurity, we are to focus on wholesome sexuality with one's spouse (Prov. 5:18-19; 1 Cor. 7:3-5), guarding our thought life (Prov. 4:23), focusing our thoughts on what is pure (Phil. 4:8), and asking God for thoughts that are pleasing to Him (Psalm 19:14) and to turn our eyes away from worthless things (Psalm 119:37). Finally, we also see that we are to avoid any hint of greed. Greed is a sin committed by both the wealthy and the poor (Jer. 6:13; 8:10). It can involve asserting our rights for money in inheritance disputes (Luke 12:13-15), suing another believer (1 Cor. 6:1-8), not paying debts or bills on time (Rom. 13:8); wanting to get rich (e.g. high dollar gambling – 1 Tim. 6:9-10); or lying to gain or retain money (Proverbs 19:22). To overcome greed, we are to replace it with contentment (Heb. 13:5). We will continue looking at this passage in our next meditation.

Notice the motivation for avoiding the sins of sexual immorality, impurity and greed. These sins are not consistent with the fact that God has set us apart as His people from the moment that we were saved. This also serves as a motivation for avoiding several types of speech. Obscene or filthy speech is speech that wrongly intensifies or misuses words for excretion, sex, God, Jesus Christ or their judgment. Foolish talk is talk with a double meaning – one that is clean and one that is dirty. Coarse joking describes “gross-out” jokes or remarks. These types of speech are stated to be out of place which simply means that they are not befitting of those of us who name the name of Christ. The behavior that is to characterize our speech is one of thanksgiving and gratitude. The last part of this passage strongly warns those who profess to know God but deny Him by their works (Tit 1:15-16). People who are characterized by sexual immorality, impurity of greed show that they have not yet experienced a genuine salvation encounter with Christ. We notice that greed is nothing more than idolatry because it makes a god out of material things. This has been the besetting sin of the United States since its very inception. This is not talking about someone like David who veered off into these sins for several months but someone who continues unabated in such behavior after a profession of faith. These people have assurance that they will not be in heaven or the coming phases of the kingdom unless they repent (change their minds) and place genuine faith in Christ. These are the ones to whom Jesus will say, “Depart from Me for I never knew you” (Mt. 7:23). With some of these mere professors of faith, who lack genuine salvation, their lack of salvation is open and obvious (1 Tim. 5:24). However, for others, their sins are not obvious and will follow them to judgment.

*Ephesians 5:6-7* - As we look at this passage in relation to Eph. 5:5, we see the term “sons of disobedience”. This term is used for the unsaved in Ephesians 2:2. There are believers who would try to convince us that people are genuine believers who after confessing Christ continue unabated in the sins of sexual immorality, impurity and greediness. This is not saying someone who has been saved cannot commit these sins, but 1 John 3:9 would certainly show us that their sin pattern would not continue business as usual after salvation. When people try to tell us that someone (who has no change in their sin pattern after salvation) is saved, we are letting ourselves be deceived with words that do not measure up with the reality of God’s words and are therefore empty words. The people who remain unchanged after confessing Christ need to be helped to come to a saving knowledge of Christ because they are going to experience God’s wrath if they do not trust the Lord Jesus Christ. Because these people who continue unabated in these sins are facing an eternity in hell, we as believers should not decide to dabble in these sins. While forgiveness is available to restore our fellowship with God, this does not undo the lasting damage to our usefulness to God, lost blessings and our testimony for Christ.

#### D. Living as children of God's light (5:8-14)

*Ephesians 5:8-14* - Before we were saved, we were instruments of spiritual darkness. Because we are in the Lord Jesus Christ we are light (this light is because we possess the life of Christ – John 1:4). This is our standing or position in relation to Christ. We are commanded to live out this standing or position in our practical experience. The Greek present tense of the word “walk” shows us that this is to be a continuing experience. The fruit or result of living as the light of Christ in this dark world is complete goodness, righteousness and truth. Goodness emphasizes the reason that we were saved was to walk in the good works that God planned beforehand (Eph. 2:10). The Greek word for “goodness” is the same word category as the word “good” mentioned in the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 and shows that it is a result of our dependence on the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16). It means good in the sense of being helpful or beneficial. Righteousness speaks of thoughts, speech and behavior that is in keeping with God’s standards set forth in His word. Jesus emphasized in His teaching in Mt. chapter 5 for righteousness to be a heart issue rather than solely an external issue. Truth is what we as believers are to be about in our hearts (Ps. 51:6), in our speech (Eph. 4:15, 25) and in our lives (John 18:37 cp. John 20:21). We must each ask ourselves as we live each day, am I a light for the Lord Jesus Christ and the word of God, or am I adding to the spiritual darkness of this world?

In this matter of living out the fact that we are children of spiritual light in our practical everyday life, we see that an additional result is that we will be trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. The main way that we learn what is pleasing to the Lord is by hearing (Rom. 10:17), reading (Rev. 1:3), studying (Acts 17:11, memorizing (Psalm 119:11) and meditating on (Ps. 1:2) the word of God. The word of God gives us specific commands or precepts such as we found in Eph. 4:25-32 and principles which we find in 1 Cor. 6:12, 19; 8:9, 13; 10:31 and 11:1). In addition we have the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14) which will never be contrary to the written word of God. Finally, we see that learning what is pleasing to the Lord requires time, effort and purposefulness on our part. This is shown by the word “trying”. Being a light for Christ is work, but it is profitable for the present life in terms of blessings and the life to come in terms of rewards at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Tim. 4:8 cp. Luke 11:28; 1 Cor. 3:10-15).

If we are going walk as children of light in our daily Christian lives, we must not participate or share in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. These type of deeds are in contrast to the fruit of the light in Eph. 5:9. These deeds would be deeds that lack goodness, truth and fail to meet God’s standard for our conduct (i.e. righteousness). Instead of bringing more spiritual light into this dark and sinful world, the deeds of darkness add to the spiritual darkness. This makes it harder for unbelievers to see the light of the gospel and place their faith in Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-4). It makes it harder for other believers to see what it means to walk as children of light. Rather than taking part in any works of darkness, we are to expose these works by the way that we live. Notice that this exposure is by our behavior more so than any verbal denunciation of these works as verse 12 explains. Many of the works of darkness, i.e. sins, bring forth disgrace to discuss them in conversation. While obviously, any sin in scripture is to be clearly taught against, it is very important that sin not be taught against in such a manner that it entices either saved or unsaved people to participate or dabble in it. All these works of darkness are exposed by the light of our lives so that they are visible or obvious as works of darkness. In addition living as a light dispenser in this dark world glorifies the Father by honorable conduct (Mt. 5:16). The term “sleeper” speaks of believers who are spiritually indifferent as in 1 Thes. 5:6. The term “awake” is a command for us as believers to forsake any vestiges of spiritual indifference and arise out from among the spiritually dead people of this world. A similar thought is expressed in Rom. 13:11-14. The Greek word for “from” means “out from among”. This is a command for us to separate ourselves from those who are not believers (Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33). Certainly, we are to associate with unbelievers, but we do not need to hang around with them on an ongoing basis to the exclusion of hanging around with believers. Separation is not isolation for then we would be like the Pharisees of Jesus’ time. We have to

associate with unbelievers so that we can introduce them to Christ. Mt. 9:12-13 points that out very well in the example of Christ. Our relationships with unbelievers are to introduce them to the Great Physician so they can be healed of sin and not to be a party to spreading the disease of sin.

**E. Living wisely by the power of the Holy Spirit  
(5:15-6:9)**

*Ephesians 5:15-17* - We discussed walking worthy of our calling in Eph. 4:1-16, not walking like the unsaved in Eph. 4:17-5:1; walking in love in Ephesians 5:2-8 and walking as children of light in Eph. 5:8-14. Now we look at our walk from another point of reference in God's word. We are commanded to walk or live our Christian lives in a circumspect (=careful) manner. To do this we must not be fools. The words "fool" and "wise" are well-defined for us in Jesus' parable of the two builders in Mt. 7:24-27. The fool is someone who hears and knows God's word but does not obey it. The wise individual is someone who hears God's word and obeys it. To be wise, we are to redeem or make wise use of our times and our opportunities (cp. Psalm 90:12). The fact that we live in evil days is the motivation for us to do this (cp. 2 Tim. 3:1, 13). We never know when an opportunity will pass us by to share the gospel with unbelievers or teach and model the Christian life to believers. For this reason, we are not to be unwise, i.e. fools in our approach to God's word, but to understand what the will of the Lord is. Keep in mind that the will of the Lord means the same as the word of the Lord (Mt. 12:50 cp. with Luke 8:21 which refers to the same incident). Also, keep in view that God's wisdom is found in His word (Jer. 8:9) known and obeyed. To understand God's will is a command. This requires rightly dividing God's word with carefulness (2 Tim. 2:15) and asking for His wisdom in the midst of trials and difficulties (James 1:5). We must always remember that carnality in our Christian lives limits our ability to understand the word of God as in the case of the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 3:1-3) and the Hebrew Christians (Heb. 5:10-14). This is why it is important to walk in step with the Holy Spirit as He guides us through the written word of God and by filling or controlling us (Gal. 5:16-17).

*Ephesians 5:18* - The believer is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is used in contrast to being drunk with wine which promotes wild living. The idea of being filled is a matter of control. Just as God does not want us to let wine or any chemical addiction control us, He wants us to let the Holy Spirit control us. It is not about us having more of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit having more of us. The command to be filled with the Holy Spirit is continuous action meaning that it is not a one-time or permanent experience. We see how the Holy Spirit's filling is involved in the life of believers by looking at the following chart:

<b>Ltr.</b>	<b>Scripture Reference</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
a.	Acts 2:4,11	Speaking of God's wonders in other languages.
b.	Acts 4:8-12	Speaking the gospel
c.	Acts 4:31	Speaking God's word with boldness
d.	Acts 6:3	Qualification for service as a deacon
e.	Acts 7:55	Enabled testimony of seeing heaven opened, God's glory and Christ at His right hand.
f.	Acts 9:17-20	Enabled Paul to testify of Christ
g.	Acts 11:23-24	Encourage believers and evangelize lost.
h.	Acts 13:9 cp. 13:7-12	To refute occult worker's efforts to hinder the gospel.

As can be seen, the purpose of the filling of the Holy Spirit is for Him to use us and not for us to use Him.

Many believers mix up the filling of the Holy Spirit with the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. At this point, we will look at a chart On the next page which distinguishes these two works. This confusion arises from the fact that the Holy Spirit filled the believers on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) but were also baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:15-17). As a result, some Bible teachers have mistakenly assumed that these two works were one and the same. I will also include a chart On the next page showing how the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. The charts on the following page should prove helpful in helping us as believers to see that the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit are two distinct works.

### Contrasts of the filling of the Holy Spirit with the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

<b>Ltr.</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptism</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Filling</b>
a.	<b>Happens once</b> 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5 – occurs only once at a point of time – Greek aorist verb tense.	<b>Happens repeatedly</b> Ephesians 5:18 – Greek verb tense is present tense command which tells the believer to keep on being filled by the Holy Spirit
b.	<b>Not commanded to seek it.</b>	<b>Commanded to be filled</b>
c.	<b>True of all believers</b> 1 Corinthians 12:13	<b>Not true of all believers</b>
d.	<b>Cannot be undone</b> No scriptural passage telling us of someone being upbaptized by the Spirit	<b>Can be undone</b> Peter was filled with the Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and was later filled again in Acts 4:8
e.	<b>Received by initial faith in Christ at salvation</b> 1 Corinthians 12:13 cp. Colossians 2:12	<b>Received by yieldedness and ongoing faith in Christ</b> See chart below
f.	<b>Did not occur before Pentecost</b> Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5	<b>Did occur before Pentecost</b> Exodus 31:3; 35:31; Luke 1:41,67
g.	<b>Places the believer in Christ and His spiritual body</b> 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27	<b>Empowers the believer for service, sharing the gospel and godly living</b> See chart in previous meditation.

### How the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit

<b>Ltr.</b>	<b>Scripture Reference</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
a.	Romans 12:1-2	Surrendered life
b.	1 John 1:9	No unconfessed sin
c.	Galatians 5:16,25 cp. 2:20; 3:1-3; Colossians 2:6	Walking or living our life by the Holy Spirit which is to trust Christ for the power and direction to live the Christian life.

*Ephesians 5:19-21* - One of the results of the filling of the Holy Spirit has to do with the music that believers sing to one another when they are gathered together. There is no huge distinction in the terms for psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The word "Psalms" emphasizes music with instrumental accompaniment. This destroys the teaching held by some churches that instrumental music is not mentioned in the New Testament. The word hymns overlaps with the Psalms as Psalms 113-118 were most likely sung as a hymn by the disciples and Jesus at the conclusion of the Last Supper (Mt. 26:30). The word for "hymns" is translated "hymns of praise" in Heb. 2:12 and Acts 16:25. Spiritual songs would include a wide variety of songs and should be consistent with the leading of the Holy Spirit. Music that is a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit should communicate to ("speaking to") other believers. Notice that the melody quality is measured by the heart and not the voice of the singing believer – a comfort for those of us believers whose singing voices leave something to be desired. The singing of Psalms has largely fell out of favor with the church although there have been some recent upsurges of Psalm singing on the eastern coast of the United States. I would recommend that believers go to the internet and listen to the Psalter being sung by the "Psalm choir" and also to the recent revisions to the Psalter by Timothy and Julie Tennant. The Psalter is simply the Psalms paraphrased and set to music. 1 Cor. 14:15-17 makes it very clear that the words should be audible and understood so that edification of other believers occurs. One time a believer was concerned because the singer(s) did not sing intelligibly. Another believer retorted that they were singing to the Lord and as long as He understood, nothing else mattered. That attitude of the second believer contradicts 1 Cor. 14:15-17 because music is communication to both "one another" and "to the Lord". Otherwise, it is not an outcome of the Holy Spirit's filling and it does not edify (=promote Christ-likeness). 1 Cor. 14:26 states that this even applies to those who sing solos. We will continue looking at this passage to see how the results of the filling of the Holy Spirit work out in our personal lives as believers and in our life together in the local church.

We have seen how the filling of the Holy Spirit is to impact the music of the church and the individual believers participating in it. The next item that the filling of the Holy Spirit gives us is to enable us to always give thanks for all things. The word "always" reminds us that we are enabled to give thanks in all situations and events. 1 Thes. 5:18 states that we can do so because it is the will of God. This is not something that we can do naturally. We can only do it supernaturally. This is why we desperately need the filling of the Holy Spirit. And if that were not enough, the verse explains that we are to give thanks "for" all things. This would include the good and bad events of our lives. This would include significant losses or gains. The reason that we can do this is the promise of God in Romans 8:28 which assures us that God causes all things to work together

for good in the life of the believer. This is not saying that everything that happens in our lives is good, but it does say that it works together for good. All the ingredients that go into a tasty cake taste awful by themselves but when combined with other ingredients, they make for a very delicious cake. The same principle works in our lives. Joseph explained that his brothers' evil act of selling him into slavery and lying to his father was meant for evil by them, but was meant for good by God because God rescued the family of Jacob from a devastating famine. This Spirit-enabled thanksgiving for all things and in all circumstances which we give to God the Father is given in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that we are giving this thanksgiving as His representatives or ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) in a dark and evil world that has turned its back on God.

The third outcome of the filling of the Holy Spirit is for believers to be subject to one another motivated by the fear of Christ who is God. This subjection forms the topical sentence for Eph. 5:22-6:9. This subjection consists of wives to be subject to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-25), husbands to love their wives in a Christ-like, sacrificial way (Eph. 5:25-33), children to obey and respect their parents (Eph. 6:1-3), parents to consistently discipline and instruct their children (Eph. 6:4), employees to be subject to their boss in the workplace (Eph. 6:5-8) and finally for bosses to supervise in a non-threatening manner (Eph. 6:9). The fear of Christ or God is to motivate this type of conduct in submitting to one another. This fear is not being terrified of Christ but to value and take seriously what He declares to us in His word (Ex. 20:20; 9:20-21). Being willing to submit to one another is very helpful when the one who is submitting realizes that the other person has more skill in that area than I do. For example, I submit to my wife's instructions when doing laundry since she is more experienced in that area than I am. On the other hand, when it comes to finding directions in a strange place, my wife submits to me because I am able to read maps and follow pre-written instructions more effectively. To submit to one another is one of the ways that we as believers demonstrate humility in our relationships to one another.

*Ephesians 5:22-33* - We will examine this passage from three perspectives: (1) The responsibilities of the wife, (2) the responsibilities of the husband and (3) the relationship between Christ and the church. In this paragraph, we will discuss the responsibilities of the wife. The first responsibility is to submit to the husband just as she would (or should) submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. The pattern for this submission is the submission of the church to the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice that this submission includes all things. Obviously, the one exception is the exception for any human authority relationship. This is found in Acts 5:29 where the authorities commanded Peter and John to not speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anytime that a husband asks a wife to obey him in doing something or saying



something contrary to God's word, her clear command is to obey Christ and disobey the husband in that situation. Finally, we see that the wife is responsible to show respect for her husband. Wives must ask themselves: am I showing respect for my husband by the way I speak and behave toward him and toward others? Am I showing submission to my husband by the way I speak and behave toward him and toward others? Finally, husbands must fully recognize that the responsibilities of the wife are hers, and they are not his entitlements or rights. We will examine the responsibilities of the husband in the next paragraph.

We have looked at the responsibilities of the wife. In this paragraph, we will look at the responsibilities of the husband. The husband is, first of all, to exercise headship or leadership over his wife. This does not mean that he does not consider her input. Consider the example of Sarah (1 Pet. 3:6 cp. Gen. 21:9-12) who is held as an example of obedience and respect. Yet God instructed Abraham to listen to Sarah's input when it came to deciding what to do with Hagar and her son. The next responsibility of the husband is to exercise sacrificial, Christ-like love for his wife. In any decision or directive, the husband must ask, who is on the cross – my wife or me? If the answer is the wife, then the husband is not loving her in the sacrificial way that Christ loved the church. Just as God uses the cleansing of God's word to make the church holy, so the husband is to use God's word to promote holiness in the life of his wife. By holiness, we simply are referring to the fact that he helps the wife to be set apart not for his own agenda but for God's agenda or purpose. The husband is commanded to love his wife as his own physical body and give her the same consideration for the well-being of her body as he would his own. Next we see that the husband is responsible to provide for the wife. This would include food, clothing and conjugal rights as spelled out in Ex. 21:10 (cp. with 1 Cor. 7:3-5 and 1 Tim. 5:8). The next responsibility of the husband is to care for his wife. This would mean to give her the time and concern that she needs and wants. The husband is to be in a position to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife to form one flesh. The wife must take precedence over his parents within the limits of God's word. The forming of one flesh speaks of the sexual union (cp. 1 Cor. 6:16). What Eph. 5:31 is saying is that the sexual union creates a one-flesh relationship. All marriages (man/woman) are one flesh relationships. However, all one-flesh relationships are not marriages (1 Cor. 6:16). Finally, we saw in the last paragraph that the wife is to respect her husband. However, the husband is to honor, i.e. respect his wife, according to 1 Pet. 3:7. It is important that both partners show this respect even if they do not feel it, even if they think it is not deserved and even if it is not reciprocated. Living for Christ is about giving not getting (Acts 20:35). Wives must keep in mind that these commanded responsibilities of the husband are his responsibilities and not her bill of rights.

In this passage, Paul very skillfully interwove the truths of the husband/wife relationship with the relationship between Christ and the church. When we speak of the church in this context, we are not discussing the local church, but discussing the spiritual body of Christ, which is the church, which is made up of all who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. First of all, Christ is the head of the church. Each of us as believers are part of that church. Headship means that Christ calls the shots. He communicates to us through the written word and the Holy Spirit's guidance. It also implies that when the thoughts in our head differ from the thoughts of Christ, our head, we had best choose the thoughts of Christ. We also see that Christ is the Savior of the body or the church. This was accomplished through His death and resurrection (Rom. 4:25; 5:9-11). In Eph. 5:25, it tells us that Christ showed His love for us as His body by dying for us. This reminds us that there are two ways to view Christ's death. The first is that Christ died for everyone (1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2). This explains the sufficiency of His sacrifice. His dying for believers, who comprise His spiritual body the church, explains the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice. It only avails for those who receive it by faith. Christ's death made the church holy and cleansed in her standing before God. This once-and-for-all cleansing was performed by the word of God (John 15:3). In this way, He can present it to Himself when He returns, perfect, sinless and unflawed so that it would continue to be holy and blameless. We see that Christ provides for the church. According to 2 Pet. 1:3, He gives everything needed for life (salvation) and godliness (Christian living). He provides for our needs (Phil. 4:19) and strengthens us (Phil 4:13). He also gives grace to sustain us in our difficulties (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Christ also shows His care or concern for us by praying for us (Rom. 8:34; Luke 22:31-32) so that our faith does not fail, to defend us as our advocate before the Father against the slanders of Satan (1 John 2:1 cp. Rev. 12:10), and to aid us in time of temptation (Heb. 2:18). The newly revealed truth or mystery as it is called is that Christ left His Father in heaven to take a bride (the true church, i.e. believers) for Himself. The bride also had to leave her old relationship to the flesh, the world and the devil. Upon leaving, the groom (Christ) and the bride (the church) formed a new one-spirit relationship with each other (1 Cor. 6:17). While Christ loves everyone, the love for His bride, the church, is a closer love and enables us to fellowship with Him. We must remember that Christ GAVE Himself for us. It is a gift and not anything that we deserve or ever will deserve.

*Ephesians 6:1-3* - This verse is a command for children who are not of age to be on their own (Heb. 11:24). Children are commanded to obey their parents. The reason given is that this is right. This simply means that obedience of children to parents meets God's standard. The phrase "in the Lord" would reinforce the idea that even if the parents are believers, the children are to be obedient. Again, if parents ask a child to disobey God's word, the child has God's approval to

disobey that particular command (Acts 5:29). Col. 3:20 reminds children that obedience to parents is well-pleasing to God. The command to honor or respect one's parents is carried over from the law of Moses into the law of Christ. The promise attached to that commandment also carries over to the New Testament. To honor or respect one's parents is a lifelong commandment and includes providing for them if they become financially impoverished (Mt. 15:4-6). The promise must be read carefully. The first promise is "so that it may be well with you". Basically, what this is saying is that our well-being is always attached to our obedience to this command. Notice that this does not guarantee well-being. The verse does not say that it will be well but that it may (possibly) be well. The same idea is communicated by the final provision of the promise is that showing respect for parents sets up the possibility of a long life. For some people, relating to parents can be a problem and more difficult while for others it goes more smoothly. An example of this occurred when a widow became impoverished and needed financial help with her medicines. One son was in bad health and without sufficient means. One son (a professing Christian) stated that his mother would just have to tighten her belt even though he had adequate funds to help her. One of her daughters and her husband were so heavily in debt that they could not help. Finally, the remaining daughter and her husband (both believers) provided the needed help even though their income was lower than two of the siblings. Keep in mind that this command is an outflowing of the command to submit to one another in Eph. 5:21 which is a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

*Ephesians 6:4* - Parents - with an emphasis on the father - have the responsibility to see that their children have the discipline and the instruction that is required by God in His word. The instruction of the Lord would obviously be the word of God. There are many books with Bible stories and lessons written on a child's level which can help them learn the word of God. Deut. 6:6-7 explains how this is to be done, *"And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup> You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning"* (TLB). In order to instruct our children (or grandchildren), God's word must be important to us so that we think about it constantly in the situations of life. The commandments and the word of God must be taught to them. We are to be teaching our children while we are at home doing various activities. In addition, when we leave the house, we must talk about the word of God to our children as we encounter different situations. Bedtime is especially a good time to teach God's word as well as the early waking hours of the day. This keeps God's word in the entire context of life. The words "bring them up" are present tense which speaks of consistent, ongoing action in doing this. We notice that we are not to provoke our children to anger. This does not mean that our children

will not be angry with us, but we must avoid doing things to them that we would not want done to us. Mt. 7:12 which is the golden rule is a good way to relate to our children so that we know how we would want to be treated if we were in their place, remembering that we have knowledge of dangers and concerns that they have not yet fully realized. In our next meditation, we will talk about the discipline of the Lord which is found in God's word.

In the last paragraph, we dealt with the instruction of the Lord and the command to not provoke our children to anger. In this meditation, we will be examining the discipline of the Lord. Obviously, the word of God gives us the principles of disciplining children. When it comes to disciplining children, the discipline must be unpleasant enough to discourage repeat misbehavior (Prov. 20:30; Heb. 12:11). Prov. 13:24 states that those who love their children carefully discipline their children, but the one who withholds discipline under the pretense of love really hates the child. Prov. 19:18 warns parents to discipline their children while there is hope, and to fail to do so, is desiring their death. Foolishness, i.e. rebellion, is bound up in the heart of children, but sufficient discipline will work to remove that from their heart according to Prov. 22:15. Prov. 23:13-14 remind us that if discipline is unpleasant enough, it will not kill the kid, but it will work to save their soul from an eternity in Hell. A combination of verbal communication and unpleasant discipline are needed to move the child toward wisdom (knowing and obeying God's word – Mt. 7:24-27). Otherwise, the child will bring shame to his parents instead of delight (Prov. 29:15, 17). Prov. 29:19 establishes the principle that words alone will not bring about appropriate behavior. Prov. 22:8 states that discipline in anger will bring about the failure of that discipline. Prov. 27:22 reminds us that there comes a point that very unpleasant discipline will not remove the foolishness or rebellion in children (Prov. 27:22). This tends to happen as they move toward adulthood (Deut. 21:18-21). Unpleasant discipline does not always have to be spanking, but spanking should not be removed from the consequence list especially for younger children. One of the best books on child rearing that I have ever seen is John Rosemond's "Six Point Plan for Raising Happy, Healthy Children" and "Teen Proofing". John Rosemond is an evangelical Christian although this fact did not come out until his later books.

*Ephesians 6:5-8* - Slavery does not exist in most cultures. The best parallel between this passage and modern cultures is the supervisor and subordinate relationship in the workplace. The subordinate is to obey their supervisor just like they would obey a command from Jesus Christ. There are several phrases and words that explain how the subordinate is to obey. The phrase "with fear and trembling" is used to describe an eagerness to please the supervisor. The next phrase "sincerity of heart" would tell us that the obedience to the supervisor is not to be pretentious even in our thought life. The phrase "not by way of

eyeservice” explains that we should be working just as diligently and hard when the supervisor is present as when he is absent. To obey only when he is present or watching would be to be a “man-pleaser” when we are to be a “God-pleaser” (Gal. 1:10). God wants the inner being or person involved in doing His will by being this kind of worker. By working in this way, subordinates are servants of Christ showing good will in carrying out their job responsibilities. Finally, one of the motivations that is given to subordinates for being faithful to Christ and to their supervisor is that it will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10 cp. 1 Cor. 3:10-15). Two issues are to be kept in mind. First, subordinates are not to obey their supervisor when they are ordered to disobey God’s word (Acts 5:29). Secondly, this kind of conduct in the workplace is only the outflow of being filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) which results in being able to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21).

*Ephesians 6:9* - Notice that supervisors are to treat their subordinates in the same way as their subordinates are to respond to them in handling his role as though he were working for Christ. Col. 4:1 asks supervisors to be fair to their subordinates and to treat them as they would like to be treated. Supervisors are to always keep in mind that their supervisor or master is in heaven and that they are accountable to Him. There is a day when all believers will have to give an account of their Christian life to God (Rom. 14:10, 12). Finally, we note that there is no partiality or favoritism with God when it comes to our station in life. As believers, each supervisor must bear this in mind. In addition, this is one way he is to imitate God (Eph. 5:1) by showing his subordinates that there is no partiality or favoritism with him. Supervisors must be careful not to be making threats to their subordinates. This does not mean that performance problems should not be addressed and the consequences outlined for future problems, but it does imply that supervisors should show the employee that they want them to be the best that they can be and give them reasonable guidance and direction to help them do so.

#### F. Spiritual warfare (6:10-20)

*Ephesians 6:10-18* - Eph. 6:10 connects what Paul has stated before in Eph. 4:1 – Eph. 6:9 with what follows in vv. 11-18. We are commanded to be strong. However, this power is not from us but from God. As we abide in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are able to have this power, but it requires faith or dependence on our part. However, we have certain responsibilities that go with this dependence or faith and require that we discipline ourselves. We are to put on the whole armor of God. This speaks of all the specific pieces which correspond to specific behaviors and resources that we purposefully put into our lives. Notice the word “all”. These provisions of God will be of no, or limited, help if we only utilize

part of them. The purpose of these spiritual provisions spoken of as the armor of God is to enable us to stand against the schemes of Satan. Sometimes, Satan works to overpower us like a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). Other times, Satan works to deceive us as in 2 Cor. 11:13-15. Satan, at other times seeks to hinder us (1 Thes. 2:17-18) or to in some way divert us (1 Thes. 3:5). The reason that we need all of these spiritual provisions (=armor of God) is that our struggles are not primarily with human beings, but all of the organized ranks of Satan's angels (also known as demons) in the heavenly or supernatural realm. Notice that these demons are responsible for the spiritual darkness of this age or present time. We will continue looking at our spiritual responsibilities as we move into this passage and also learning to show our dependence or faith on the Lord's working. In the meantime, we must remember that even though Satan has multiple armies of angels/demons at his disposal that "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4) and that in Christ, we are more than conquerors through Christ and His love for us (Rom. 8:37).

We saw in our last meditation that it is important to use or appropriate all the spiritual provisions that God has given us in our struggle with Satan and his demons. These provisions are called the armor of God. We also saw in v. 10 that it is important to depend on the Lord Jesus and His power in this struggle. We are going to look at verse 13 to discuss the correlation between the dependence of faith and the duty and discipline of utilizing all the spiritual armor or provisions that God has provided. The evil day refers to the times that Satan and his demons assail us to try to overwhelm us and move us in an ungodly direction. Our responsibility and duty is be sure we are using all of God's provisions or armor. Once we have done this, then comes the time for dependence and faith in Christ's enablement and power. We stand and wait for the Lord to work. When we wait on the Lord with courage, He promises to strengthen our heart (Psalm 27:14). We will discuss the first of these provisions which is truth. Truth begins in the inner being of every human being and is God's desire for each of us as believers (Psalm 51:6). We are repeatedly commanded in the word of God to not be deceived. The worst lies are the ones of which we convince ourselves. We are commanded to put away lying and speak truth to our fellow-human beings in Eph. 4:25 and to speak that truth in love in Eph. 4:15. Finally, if we stick to the truth in our speech and our heart, we will find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and of people (Prov. 3:3).

As we look at the spiritual provisions or specific parts of our spiritual armor, we look at the breastplate of righteousness. This is not speaking of the positional righteousness that is credited to us when we trust Christ as savior (Rom. 4:3-5, 22-24; Phil. 3:9). This speaks of practical righteousness. Practical righteousness is simply thinking and behaving in keeping with God's standards. Jesus stated that

God blesses those believers who hunger and thirst for righteousness in Mt. 5:6. 1 Tim. 6:11 reminds us that in fleeing from the love of money that one of the important qualities that we are to pursue is this practical righteousness. In 2 Timothy 2:22 practical righteousness is one of the qualities that we are to pursue in fleeing youthful desires. The breastplate guarded the heart. Practical righteousness guards our hearts so that Satan cannot fill them (Acts 5:3-4) with his thoughts. Our footwear pictures being prepared to share the gospel of peace. The gospel is defined for us in 1 Cor. 15:1, 3-4 and how to receive its benefits is described in Rom. 1:16. Finally, the reason that we need the gospel is given in Rom. 2:16. To be prepared to communicate the gospel requires knowing it and being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in sharing it with people (Acts 8:29). 1 Pet. 3:15 commands us as believers to set apart Jesus Christ as Lord in our hearts and be prepared to gently and respectfully explain to people this hope (= this future that we are looking forward to) when they ask us. Finally, the gospel is the gospel of peace. When someone trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as savior, they have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). This is one of the ways that we reach in and help someone out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13). The footwear reminds that sharing the gospel involves going. This means we have to be deliberate or purposeful in this.

As we study the next spiritual provision of God, we see a reminder that Satan is making multiple and destructive attacks against us. The words "all the fiery darts of the wicked one" emphasize this truth. We are told to take up the shield of faith. Since these are already people who have placed their faith in Christ, this would be the faith by which we live the Christian life as mentioned in Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7 and Col. 2:6. It is faith in Christ's power and wisdom that enables us to defeat Satan and to repel and resist his attacks. We must remember that faith in Christ's power is based on the word of God and not any wishful thinking or presumption on our part (Rom. 10:17). Faith is both active and dependent. We, by faith, do what God's word tells us to do even if it seems less than reasonable (Prov. 3:5). After having done what God's word tells us to do, our faith is a dependence on God's power and working in the situation. Without such faith, we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). When we are struggling to have that faith, we can pray for Christ's help to deal with lack in that area (Mk. 9:24). We can also enlist the prayers of other believers to help us in developing faith (1 Thes. 3:10). 1 Thes. 3:2 and Phil. 1:25 would remind us that encouragement from other believers promotes and builds faith. This is another reason that we need to be sure that we are meeting together with other believers on a regular basis. Coupled with an intake of God's word, this builds the kind of faith that God desires.

The next spiritual provision which is part of the Christian armor is the helmet of salvation. Salvation occurs in three tenses: (1) salvation from the penalty of sin (John 5:24), (2) salvation from the power of sin (1 Tim. 4:16) and (3) salvation from the presence of sin at Christ's return (Rom. 13:11; 1 John 3:2). By comparing this passage with 1 Thes. 5:8, we see that it is the hope (=future expectation) of salvation that is in view which is salvation from the presence of sin at the return of Jesus Christ. A clear mindset that looks for the return of Christ is concerned with living cleansed, godly, righteous and sensible lives here and now (1 John 3:2-3; Titus 2:12-13). The next spiritual provision which is part of the Christian armor is the sword of the Holy Spirit which is God's word. This is our prime offensive weapon. Jesus modeled for us in his temptation how to use the word of God to defeat the Devil in Mt. 4:1-11. As believers we are to hear God's word (Rom. 10:17), read God's word (Rev. 1:3), study God's word daily (Acts 17:11), memorize God's word (Psalm 119:11), meditate on God's word (Josh 1:8) and most importantly, obey God's word (James 1:22, 25). The word of God is said to be the sword of the Holy Spirit which He uses to convict the unsaved of their sin of unbelief (John 16:8-9). God promises that when we use His word that He will use it to accomplish what He desires (Isa. 55:11). It is God's word that makes people wise for salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). We are now ready to look at the final provision God has given us to defeat Satan.

While prayer is not mentioned as one of the parts of the Christian armor, it is very much needed as one of God's provisions. Making prayer in the Spirit has been falsely taught as praying in some type of language. This is based on a misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 14:14-16 where v. 15 is used. What Paul was saying there was that his human spirit prayed when he prayed in a tongue but his understanding was not involved. However, when he prayed in his own language, both his spirit and understanding were involved. Those who have erred have taught that praying with the spirit means praying with the Holy Spirit. Yet 1 Cor. 14:14 makes it clear that it is Paul's own human spirit that is involved. A better understanding of Eph. 6:18 is that praying in the Spirit means praying under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 22:43 uses the same phrase "in the Spirit" to mean under the direction of the Holy Spirit which means that what David wrote in Ps. 110 was under the direction of the Holy Spirit. According to this verse, we are to be praying for all believers. To apply this, it is good to think of all the believers that we know and set aside time to pray for them. The word "always" implies that we are to be consistent or regular in this regard. The words "all prayer" could also be translated all types of prayer. The word "supplication" reminds us that prayer is to be specific to the person and the matter involved. This type of Spirit-led prayer requires watchfulness or spiritual alertness on our part. Finally, we see that our prayers require that we persevere and not give up (Luke 18:1-7). In order for our prayers to be under the Holy



Spirit's control, it is important that we confess any sins to unblock the access to God (Psalm 66:18 cp. 1 John 1:9), that we ask in faith without doubting (James 1:6-7) and that we ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14) and not for our selfish desires (James 4:3).

*Ephesians 6:19-20* - Here we see a perfect example of praying for a specific person for a specific issue. Paul was functioning as a missionary and as an evangelist. This also serves as a model of praying for someone that you may know who is going to be sharing the gospel with a lost person. First, we are to pray that they may be given the words to speak. Next, we are to pray that speak and communicate the gospel in a bold manner. The specific message to be brought to lost people's knowledge is the gospel. The gospel involves the provision of Christ's death for our sins and His bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4), the reception of the gospel by faith in Christ (Rom. 1:16) and the need for the gospel because of God's coming judgment (Rom. 2:16). The gospel is called a mystery because in the Old Testament times, the name of the promised savior and Messiah was not known, but is now known as revealed in the New Testament. The giving out of the gospel is an obligation as noted in the words "ought to speak" (Rom. 1:14 – see the words "debtor" or "under obligation"). As believers, we are citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), are in this world but not of this world (John 17:14-16), but are here to represent the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13) as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). Paul mentioned that he was an ambassador in chains. This reminds us that being an ambassador for Christ involves suffering in the form of minor persecution mentioned in Luke 6:22 which mentions being hated (either by open antagonism or indifference as in Luke 10:31-32), ostracism, being insulted or ridiculed or having a bad reputation because of standing for Christ or doing the right thing. It may involve major persecution in some areas of the world such as being physically abused (2 Cor. 11:24-26), loss of property and possessions (Heb. 10:32-34) and finally imprisonment and even death (Rev. 2:10). For this reason, we are to pray for the safety of missionaries (2 Thes. 3:2) and Christians in areas of intense persecution.

### G. Conclusion (6:21-24)

*Ephesians 6:21-24* - This passage which closes the book of Ephesians reminds us of the importance of relationships within the body of Christ. Tychicus was described as a brother. This emphasizes that we as believers are part of a family, the family of God (Eph. 3:15) when we become a child of God by faith in Christ (John 1:12). He is also said to be a servant. Jesus put a high value on believers having a servant heart (Mark 10:42-45). In addition he was faithful as a servant. We know that such faithfulness will be rewarded by God (Mt. 25:21, 23). His role was to represent Paul's presence to these believers. Missionary reports to a local

church are very important (Acts 14:27) so that the believers in that church will know how they should pray for that specific missionary. People need to know how the missionary is doing and what he or she is doing so that any needed aid can be sent (Phil. 4:14-16). When things are not going well in the mission field as with Paul in his imprisonment, such reports are to encourage the hearts or thoughts of the believers in the local church. There are four things that are important in his desires and prayers for these believers and for all believers. They are peace – both inner peace (Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7) and peace with one another (Rom. 14:17-19). There is grace that accompanies undying or pure love for the Lord Jesus Christ. This is shown by our obedience to His commandments (John 14:15). There is love which comes from God according to 1 John 4:10-11 which is to be passed on or shared with other believers. We also see that faith comes from God. This is accomplished through His word (Rom. 10:17) and expresses itself in love (Gal. 5:6). Along with God the Father, Jesus is an equal source of this love with faith according to Eph. 6:23. We must remember that not all believers are lovable, but we are commanded to choose by faith (not feelings) to show love for them (1 John 3:18).