

# GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence

*A Flexible Inductive Study of*

**Ephesians**

by

*pam gillaspie*

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Adolescence**

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## Dedicated to . . .

My Millennials. You know who you are. You are like sons and daughters to me. You know the Word of God and are not swayed by culture's lies. You are the remnant and I am blessed to minister alongside of you. Continue to grow and be strong in the Lord!

## Acknowledgements

When I sit down to write the acknowledgements, I am vividly reminded that I am such a small part of the body of Christ! Thank you to my Bible study class at Immanuel Church for piloting this material with me. Thank you to my Equip Boot Camp class and fellow staffers—I had a blast studying Ephesians with you! Thank you to my family for always putting up with me and, of course, to Rick and Pete for editing and scraping off the rough edges small and great!

# GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

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## Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence

There is nothing quite like your favorite pair of jeans. You can dress them up, you can dress them down. You can work in them, play in them, shop in them . . . live in them. They always feel right. It is my hope that the structure of this Bible study will fit you like those jeans; that it will work with your life right now, right where you are whether you're new to this whole Bible thing or whether you've been studying the Book for years!

How is this even possible? Smoke and mirrors, perhaps? The new mercilessly thrown in the deep end? The experienced given pompoms and the job of simply cheering others on? None of the above.

*Sweeter than Chocolate!*<sup>®</sup> flexible studies are designed with options that will allow you to go as deep each week as you desire. If you're just starting out and feeling a little overwhelmed, stick with the main text and don't think a second thought about the sidebar assignments. If you're looking for a challenge, then take the sidebar prompts and go ahead and dig all the way to China! As you move along through the study, think of the sidebars and "Digging Deeper" boxes as that 2% of Lycra™ that you find in certain jeans . . . the wiggle room that will help them fit just right.

Beginners may find that they want to start adding in some of the optional assignments as they go along. Experts may find that when three children are throwing up for three days straight, foregoing those assignments for the week is the way to live wisely.

Life has a way of ebbing and flowing and this study is designed to ebb and flow right along with it!

**Enjoy!**

### Contents

Week One	
<b>The Mystery!</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Week Two	
<b>God's Kind Intention</b>	
<b>Toward You!</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Week Three	
<b>The Walking Dead</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Week Four	
<b>Then and Now, Far</b>	
<b>and Near</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Week Five	
<b>God's Mystery</b>	
<b>Revealed!</b> .....	<b>57</b>
Week Six	
<b>Complete Unity in God-Given Diversity</b> 77	
Week Seven	
<b>Use the New Mind God Gave</b>	
<b>You!</b> .....	<b>91</b>
Week Eight	
<b>Learning What Is</b>	
<b>Pleasing</b> .....	<b>101</b>
Week Nine	
<b>Subject to One</b>	
<b>Another</b> .....	<b>115</b>
Week Ten	
<b>Resist! Stand Firm!</b> .....	<b>129</b>
<b>Resources</b> .....	<b>143</b>

# GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

# How to use this study

*Sweeter than Chocolate!*<sup>®</sup> studies meet you where you are and take you as far as you want to go.

**1. WEEKLY STUDY:** The main text guides you through the complete topic of study for the week.

**2. FYI boxes:** For Your Information boxes provide bite-sized material to shed additional light on the topic.

## FYI:

### Reading Tip: Begin with prayer

You may have heard this a million times over and if this is a million and one, so be it. Whenever you read or study God's Word, first pray and ask His Spirit to be your Guide.

**3. ONE STEP FURTHER and other sidebar boxes:** Sidebar boxes give you the option to push yourself a little further. If you have extra time or are looking for an extra challenge, you can try one, all, or any number in between! These boxes give you the ultimate in flexibility.

## ONE STEP FURTHER:

### Word Study: *torah*/law

The first of eight Hebrew key words we encounter for God's Word is *torah*, translated "law." If you're up for a challenge this week, do a word study to learn what you can about *torah*. Run a concordance search and examine where the word *torah* appears in the Old Testament and see what you can learn from the contexts.

If you decide to look for the word for "law" in the New Testament, you'll find that the primary Greek word is *nomos*.

Be sure to see what Paul says about the law in Galatians 3 and what Jesus says in Matthew 5.

**4. DIGGING DEEPER boxes:** If you're looking to go further, Digging Deeper sections will help you sharpen your skills as you continue to mine the truths of Scripture for yourself.

## Digging Deeper

### What else does God's Word say about counselors?

If you can, spend some time this week digging around for what God's Word says about counselors.

Start by considering what you already know about counsel from the Word of God and see if you can actually show where these truths are in the Bible. Make sure that the Word actually says what you think it says.

# GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

# WEEK ONE

## The Mystery!

*“ . . . He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”*

—Ephesians 1:4

Chosen. Loved. Adopted. Reconciled. Let those words sit for a moment in your mind. To be *chosen* for a team, to be *loved* by another, to be *adopted* into a family, to be *reconciled* with those you've been at odds with . . . these are powerful verbs. They touch us at our core because we were created relational beings. To discover that God Himself has chosen, loved, adopted, and reconciled us exceeds our human comprehension.

Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul unfolds, unpacks, and flat out lavishes on his readers the truth of what it means to be in Christ and thus the object and recipient of God's ineffable love. His goodness and kindness toward those who believe is without measure! I could just keep going . . . but let's let God speak for Himself through His Word! Are you ready?!

### FYI:

#### If You're in a Class

Begin **Week One** together on your first day of class. This will be a great way to start getting to know one another and will help those who are newer to Bible study get their bearings.

## GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

## **CONSIDER the WAY you THINK**

We all come to Bible study with different views and experiences. Before we get started, let's consider some of those together.

What is your view of the Bible? Do you think it is a work of man? A work of God? A little of both? Or are you not quite sure?

Do you think your view of the Bible impacts how you respond to what you read? Explain.

Do you have a background in a specific denomination or church tradition? If so, consider how that affects your reading and application of the Bible.

What is your reason for studying the Bible in general and the book of Ephesians in particular?

### **FYI:**

#### **Handle the Word Accurately**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

—2 Timothy 2:15

As we study together, it is my prayer that to the best of our ability we will drop our presuppositions and allow God's Word to speak for itself. In this we will be doing exegesis. Exegesis literally means "to lead out." When we deal in presuppositions and subjectivism we're falling into the trap of eisegesis (literally "to lead into")—taking the text of Scripture and tailoring it to our agendas. Eisegesis molds Scripture to fit man, but the Word accurately handled calls man to submit to the plumb line of Scripture. My goal in this class is that we will handle accurately the Word of truth and have God speak to us and change *us* through it.

## **GROW UP**

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

## GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

As we begin our study together, we're going to look at the whole letter to the Ephesians, reading it through several times before we go back to examine it more thoroughly chapter by chapter. We'll start by simply reading through the letter three times this week. Use the NASB included in this Workbook for the first reading, then select two other versions of your choice.

Most Bible translations are easily accessible online if you don't have extra Bibles around the house. Try to do each read-through in a single sitting. While you may have a paraphrase version in your possession, we strongly commend a Word-For-Word version (WFW) like the NASB, ESV, or KJV.

Paraphrase translators start with the assumption that WFW versions either do not accurately translate original-language (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic) words or, if they do, the ideas are intrinsically unclear, and so they have to either add "in-between" words or substitute new English words to explain biblical texts.

Whether or not a WFW is clear is a decision you can and should make. You'll want to use a WFW version to judge the expanded-thought text of a paraphrased version, not the other way around.

See if you can detect ideas paraphrased versions are "reading in" to the texts. And as you read, simply jot down your main observations and your biggest questions.

## WEEKLY READ-THROUGH #1

**Version I read:** *New American Standard*

Main observations:

Big questions:

### FYI:

#### **NASB and ESV**

The NASB and ESV are two reliable word-for-word translations from the original languages. While the KJV and NKJV are also translated word for word, they do not include consideration of earlier-dated original-language manuscripts discovered more recently.

### FYI:

#### **Start with Prayer**

You've probably heard it before and if we study together in the future, you're sure to hear it again. Whenever you read or study God's Word, first pray and ask His Spirit to be your Guide. Jesus says that the Spirit will lead us into all truth.

## GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

## FYI:

### Key Words

Identifying key words helps us discover the author's main point or points. Key words are often repeated and are "key" to unlocking a text's meaning.

## KEY WORDS:

### Ephesians 1

As you read, jot down repeated words and phrases that you notice. As we overview, only mark down things that jump off the page at you. We'll have the next several weeks to immerse ourselves in the details.

### Ephesians 1

- 1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:*
- 2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*
- 4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love*
- 5 *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,*
- 6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*
- 7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*
- 8 *which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight*
- 9 *He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him*
- 10 *with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him*
- 11 *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*
- 12 *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.*
- 13 *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*
- 14 *who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*
- 15 *For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,*
- 16 *do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;*
- 17 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.*
- 18 *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*
- 19 *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*
- 20 *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

- 21 *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*
- 22 *And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,*
- 23 *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

## **Ephesians 2**

- 1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*
- 2 *in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*
- 3 *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*
- 4 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*
- 5 *even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*
- 6 *and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*
- 7 *so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*
- 8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*
- 9 *not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
- 10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*
- 11 *Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—*
- 12 *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*
- 13 *But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*
- 14 *For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,*
- 15 *by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,*
- 16 *and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*

## **KEY WORDS:**

### **Ephesians 2**

As you read, jot down repeated words and phrases that you notice.

- 17 *AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;*
- 18 *for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.*
- 19 *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,*
- 20 *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,*
- 21 *in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,*
- 22 *in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*

## KEY WORDS:

### **Ephesians 3**

Jot down repeated words and phrases that you notice.

### **Ephesians 3**

- 1 *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—*
- 2 *if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;*
- 3 *that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.*
- 4 *By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,*
- 5 *which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;*
- 6 *to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,*
- 7 *of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.*
- 8 *To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,*
- 9 *and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;*
- 10 *so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.*
- 11 *This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,*
- 12 *in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.*
- 13 *Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.*
- 14 *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,*
- 15 *from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,*
- 16 *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,*

- 17 *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*
- 18 *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,*
- 19 *and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*
- 20 *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,*
- 21 *to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

### **Ephesians 4**

- 1 *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,*
- 2 *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,*
- 3 *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
- 4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;*
- 5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*
- 6 *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*
- 7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*
- 8 *Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."*
- 9 *(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?*
- 10 *He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)*
- 11 *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,*
- 12 *for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*
- 13 *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*
- 14 *As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;*
- 15 *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

## KEY WORDS:

### **Ephesians 4**

Continue to jot down repeated words and phrases that you notice. This should be getting easier! Is it?

## GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

## Week One: **The Mystery!**

- 16 *from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*
- 17 *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,*
- 18 *being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;*
- 19 *and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*
- 20 *But you did not learn Christ in this way,*
- 21 *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,*
- 22 *that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,*
- 23 *and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*
- 24 *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*
- 25 *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.*
- 26 *BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,*
- 27 *and do not give the devil an opportunity.*
- 28 *He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*
- 29 *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*
- 30 *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
- 31 *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*
- 32 *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

## **Ephesians 5**

- 1 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;*
- 2 *and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*
- 3 *But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;*
- 4 *and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

- 5 *For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*
- 6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*
- 7 *Therefore do not be partakers with them;*
- 8 *for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light*
- 9 *(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),*
- 10 *trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.*
- 11 *Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;*
- 12 *for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.*
- 13 *But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.*
- 14 *For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*
- 15 *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,*
- 16 *making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*
- 17 *So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*
- 18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,*
- 19 *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*
- 20 *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;*
- 21 *and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*
- 22 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*
- 23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.*
- 24 *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*
- 25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*
- 26 *so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*
- 27 *that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*
- 28 *So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;*

**KEY WORDS:****Ephesians 5**

Jot down key words and repeated phrases.

- 29 *for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,*
- 30 *because we are members of His body.*
- 31 **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**
- 32 *This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*
- 33 *Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.*

## KEY WORDS:

### Ephesians 6

You're pretty close to "professional" by now! Finish strong by jotting down the key words and phrases you've observed in Ephesians 6.

### Ephesians 6

- 1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*
- 2 **HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER** (which is the first commandment with a promise),
- 3 **SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.**
- 4 *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*
- 5 *Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;*
- 6 *not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*
- 7 *With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,*
- 8 *knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.*
- 9 *And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*
- 10 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*
- 11 *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*
- 12 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*
- 13 *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*
- 14 *Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,*
- 15 *and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;*
- 16 *in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

- 17 *And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
- 18 *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,*
- 19 *and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,*
- 20 *for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*
- 21 *But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.*
- 22 *I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.*
- 23 *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 24 *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.*

## **WEEKLY READ-THROUGH #2**

### **Version I read:**

Main observations:

Big questions:

# Notes

## ONE STEP FURTHER:

### What are you bringing to the text?

We've already talked about general presuppositions we bring to the Bible, but now that you've read the text, it would be good to revisit any you may have missed that relate to the content of this specific letter. I'll start you off with a few hot topics and you can complete the list with others. What presuppositions do you bring with regard to:

- Marriage
- God's will/purpose
- The Church
- Spiritual gifts
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Week One: **The Mystery!**

## WEEKLY READ-THROUGH #3

### Version I read:

Main observations:

Big questions:

### DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

As you read, were you aware of any presuppositions you brought to the text? Do you have views that predisposed you toward a particular interpretation? If so, make note of them.

What differences did you notice between the translations?

If you used a paraphrase, what differences did you notice with it?

# GROW UP

Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence  
EPHESIANS

## **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW**

Who wrote Ephesians? Who was he writing to? (author and recipients)

What kind of writing is this? (genre)

Approximately when do you think Ephesians was written? What timing clues did you see?

Where was the author writing from (origin)? Can we know for certain? Why/why not?

Where were the recipients located (destination)? What were they like? How does Paul describe them?

Why did Paul write the Ephesians (occasion)?

**EPHESUS ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE**

Having read through Ephesians at least three times this week, you've seen for yourself that the believers there were a faithful bunch. Unlike many other New Testament letters that address some serious junk going on in churches, Ephesians doesn't.

Whether the letter was written to a specific church or to a group of churches in the region of Ephesus, the internal evidence points to a group of people who, for the most part, had their collective act together.

Before we call it a week, let's look at the last mention of the Ephesian church in Scripture as it is a cautionary word we'll want to keep in mind as we study.

**OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE**

Jesus addresses seven churches in the book of Revelation. The first of these churches was located in Ephesus. From the first chapter (1:1, 12-16) we can infer that the speaker is Jesus.

**READ** Revelation 2:1-7 and **MARK** every reference to *Jesus*. Next, **MARK** every reference to the *church in Ephesus* (be sure to include pronouns). Finally, **MARK** every occurrence of *deeds*.

**Revelation 2:1-7**

- 1 *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:  
The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:*
- 2 *'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;*
- 3 *and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.*
- 4 *'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*
- 5 *'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.*
- 6 *'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*
- 7 *'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'*

**FYI:****Writing Dates of Ephesians and Revelation**

While it's not possible to nail down the dates of either Ephesians or Revelation with a Gmail time stamp, most New Testament scholars believe Paul wrote to the Ephesians between AD 59 and 63 and that John wrote Revelation between AD 81 and 96. In short, in the neighborhood of 20 years passed between Paul's letter to Ephesus and Jesus' message to them through John. My how the times had changed.

## **DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .**

Let's start out by looking at Jesus. Summarize in a short paragraph or list what you learned about Him in this text.

According to verses 2 and 3, what does Jesus say He knows about the Ephesian church?

Based on these verses, what kind of threats do you think had come against them?

What action(s) did they take in the face of the threats and why?

What does Jesus have *against* them? What three actions does He call them to do in response?

According to verse 6, what does Jesus have in common with the Ephesian church?

Week One: **The Mystery!**

Compare the usages of the term *deeds* in verses 2, 5, and 6.

How do you think the difference in the deeds of verses 2 and 5 relates to the Ephesians' abandonment of their first love?

## **@THE END OF THE DAY . . .**

I hope you've enjoyed reading and rereading the letter to the Ephesians this week. There is perhaps no better way to study the text of Scripture than to simply read and reread carefully, asking questions along the way. That said, remember as we move forward in our study that this Workbook is designed to help you get into God's Book and learn to ask good questions; it is never supposed to be a replacement. When the weeks get busy and the calendar boxes aren't big enough to hold all of the day's events, remember that God's Book always trumps a workbook! Always!

Before you call it a day, take a few minutes to think and pray through what you've studied this week. Then, write down your one biggest takeaway. Yup, only one for now. We'll get to more later!