

STUDY

Ephesians Bible Study Questions and Answers (Free PDF)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

An 11-session walk through Ephesians, from who you are in Christ to the armor of God, with open questions for your own answers. Free to print, no sign-up.

An 11-session study of Ephesians for groups or solo reading.

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

Ephesians 1:3 (NIV)

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

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

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

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

The study guide

SESSION 1 • EPHESIANS 1:1-2

Grace and Peace to You

Paul opens the letter to the faithful in Christ and sets its whole tone with two words he uses to greet them, grace and peace.

1. How does Paul describe the people he is writing to in these two opening verses, and what does he call them?

Paul calls them "God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1). Before he says anything about what they should do, he tells them who they are: set apart, and held in Christ.

2. Why might Paul begin with grace and peace before he teaches anything else, and what does that order tell you about him?

Grace is God's undeserved gift, and peace is the wholeness that follows when we are at rest with him (Ephesians 1:2). Paul puts both first because everything else in the letter rests on them. It shows a pastor who wants his readers to stand on what God has given before he asks anything of them.

3. If grace and peace are the first words God speaks over you in this letter, where do you most need to hear them in your life right now?

Leader's note: This question is not asking for a right answer. It is inviting each person to name one place where they feel restless or unforgiven. Read Ephesians 1:2 aloud slowly, then give the room a moment of quiet before anyone speaks.

SESSION 2 • EPHESIANS 1:3-14

Every Spiritual Blessing

In one long, soaring sentence Paul piles up what God has done in Christ: chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, and sealed with the Spirit.

1. List the things Paul says God has done for you in Christ in this passage. How many can you find?

The passage names many gifts. God blessed us with every spiritual blessing (1:3), chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless (1:4), and adopted us as his children (1:5). In Christ we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins (1:7), an inheritance (1:11), and the seal of the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing what is to come (1:13-14).

2. Why do you think Paul keeps repeating the phrase in Christ, and what does it mean that every blessing here comes through him?

The phrase points to where every blessing is kept. Nothing here comes from our effort or worth, it all comes to us because we are joined to Jesus. Paul wants us to hear that if we have Christ, we are not waiting on anything more from God.

3. Which of these blessings is hardest for you to believe is actually true of you, and what would change if you took it at God's word?

Leader's note: This question aims at the gap between what is true and what we feel is true. Many believers find it easiest to trust the promise of forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7) and hardest to trust that they are chosen and loved (1:4-5). Gently ask what it would look like to take God at his word on that one thing this week.

SESSION 3 • EPHESIANS 1:15-23

A Prayer to See

Paul prays not that his readers would get more, but that they would see what they already have: the hope of their calling and the power at work in them.

1. What exactly does Paul ask God to give the Ephesians in this prayer, and what does he want them to know?

Paul asks that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they may know him better (Ephesians 1:17). He prays that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to know the hope of his calling, the riches of his glorious inheritance, and his incomparably great power for those who believe (1:18-19).

2. Why does Paul point to the resurrection of Christ as the measure of God's power toward those who believe?

The resurrection is the greatest display of God's power we can point to. The same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand (Ephesians 1:20) is at work toward us who believe (1:19). Paul wants us to measure what God can do in us by the empty tomb.

3. If God answered this prayer for you this week and opened the eyes of your heart, what do you think you would finally see?

Leader's note: Paul's prayer is about sight, not about getting more. Invite each person to answer honestly: what do I keep missing about God's hope, his inheritance, or his power? Consider praying Ephesians 1:18 for one another before you close.

SESSION 4 • EPHESIANS 2:1-10

From Death to Life

Paul names the human condition plainly, dead in sin, then turns on the hinge word but, and shows salvation as God's gift from start to finish.

1. How does Paul describe people apart from Christ in the first three verses, and how does that change at the word but in verse 4?

Apart from Christ we were dead in transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1), following the ways of this world (2:2), and living by the cravings of our flesh (2:3). Then comes the turn: "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ" (2:4-5). The hinge is God's mercy, not our improvement.

2. What does it mean that you are saved by grace through faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9), and why does Paul say no one can boast?

It means salvation is a gift we receive, not a wage we earn (Ephesians 2:8-9). Faith is the empty hand that takes hold of what God gives. If any part of it were our doing, we would have something to boast about, but Paul says there is nothing here for us to boast in except Christ.

3. Ephesians 2:10 says you are God's handiwork, made for good works he prepared in advance. Where might God be inviting you into work he already has waiting for you?

Leader's note: This question turns from being saved by grace to being saved for something. Ephesians 2:10 says the good works were prepared in advance, so we are not inventing them. Ask gently where a need, a door, or a nudge has already been in front of you, and let the answer be small and specific.

SESSION 5 · EPHESIANS 2:11-22

One New Humanity

Christ tears down the wall between Jew and Gentile and builds something new, one household and one temple where God himself lives.

1. What was the relationship between Jews and Gentiles before Christ, according to this passage, and what did the cross do to it?

Gentiles were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12). Through the blood of Christ those far away were brought near (2:13). He is our peace, and he destroyed the dividing wall of hostility (2:14).

2. Why does Paul use the images of one body, one household, and one temple to describe the church here?

Each image shows a different side of belonging. One body speaks of reconciliation (Ephesians 2:16). One household speaks of family, with all of us fellow citizens and members of God's household (2:19). One temple speaks of God's presence, a holy dwelling in which he lives by his Spirit (2:21-22).

3. Where do you see walls between people that the gospel says should come down, and what part might you have in tearing one down?

Leader's note: The wall Paul names was between Jew and Gentile, but the question is about where walls stand today. Let people name them honestly, whether in a family, a church, or a neighborhood. Then anchor the talk in Ephesians 2:14 and ask what one small step toward someone would look like.

SESSION 6 · EPHESIANS 3:1-21

The Mystery Made Known

Paul explains the mystery he was given to preach, that the nations share in the promise, and ends on his knees praying for the church to be rooted in love.

1. What is the mystery Paul says was hidden and is now revealed, and who does it include?

The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:6). It was not fully seen in earlier ages, but now it is made known. It includes people who had been far off.

2. In his prayer at the end of the chapter, what does Paul ask God to do in the inner being of his readers?

Paul asks that God would strengthen them with power through his Spirit in their inner being (Ephesians 3:16). He prays that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith and that they would be rooted and established in love (3:17). He wants them to grasp how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is, and to know a love that surpasses knowledge (3:18-19).

3. Ephesians 3:20-21 says God can do far more than you ask or imagine. What have you stopped asking God for, and why?

Leader's note: This question is about the quiet places where hope has worn thin. Ephesians 3:20-21 reminds us that God's power at work in us is greater than our asking. Invite people to name one thing they have stopped bringing to him, and give them room to say why without hurry.

SESSION 7 · EPHESIANS 4:1-16

Walk Worthy, Walk Together

The turn comes here. Paul urges his readers to live worthy of their calling, in unity, as Christ gives gifts to build the whole body into maturity.

1. What attitudes does Paul say a worthy life looks like in the opening verses (Ephesians 4:1), and how do they hold unity together?

A worthy life is marked by being completely humble and gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). These qualities hold unity together because pride and impatience are what tear a fellowship apart. Paul urges us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (4:3).

2. Why does Christ give different gifts and roles to the church, according to verses 11 to 16, and what are they meant to produce?

Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:11-12). The aim is unity in the faith and maturity, so we are no longer infants tossed about (4:13-14). We grow by speaking the truth in love (4:15).

3. Where is God asking you to grow up into maturity, and what would it look like to use your gift to build others up rather than yourself?

Leader's note: There are two parts here. One is growth, and the other is using a gift for others rather than for ourselves. Ask what one area of maturity God seems to be pressing on, and where a gift you already have could serve someone this week. Keep Ephesians 4:16 in view, that each part does its work.

SESSION 8 · EPHESIANS 4:17-5:2

Put Off, Put On

Paul describes the old self and the new, and calls his readers to speak truth, work honestly, forgive as they were forgiven, and imitate God.

1. What specific old habits does Paul tell his readers to put off, and what new ones does he tell them to put on?

Paul tells them to put off falsehood and speak truthfully (Ephesians 4:25), not to let anger turn into sin (4:26), to stop stealing and work honestly (4:28), and to leave behind unwholesome talk (4:29). They are to get rid of bitterness, rage, and anger (4:31), and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (4:24). Paul then calls them to be kind and compassionate (4:32).

2. Ephesians 4:32 ties forgiving others to how God forgave you. Why does Paul ground forgiveness in what God has already done?

Because forgiveness is not something we have to invent. We forgive out of what we have first received, as Paul says, "just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). When we remember how large our own debt was, it becomes possible to release someone else's. It is not that the wrong was small, but that the mercy we received was greater.

3. Is there someone you are finding hard to forgive, and how does remembering your own forgiveness change the way you see it?

Leader's note: This is a tender question, so do not press anyone to name a person. Forgiveness is not the same as saying it did not hurt. Point gently to Ephesians 4:32 and ask what it might look like to start by asking God for the willingness to forgive, even before the feeling arrives.

SESSION 9 · EPHESIANS 5:3-21

Children of Light

Paul calls his readers out of darkness and into light, to live wisely, to give thanks, and to be filled with the Spirit rather than numbed by anything else.

1. What does Paul contrast in this passage, and how does he describe living as children of light?

Paul sets darkness against light: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). He also sets unwise against wise (5:15) and drunkenness against being filled with the Spirit (5:18). Children of light live in what is good, right, and true (5:9), and they find out what pleases the Lord (5:10).

2. Why might Paul connect being filled with the Spirit to thankfulness and singing rather than to spiritual performance?

Paul ties the Spirit's filling to what a grateful heart does: speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs, singing and making music to the Lord, and always giving thanks (Ephesians 5:19-20). The picture is of ordinary, joyful, shared worship, not of striving for a spiritual high. A thankful heart is what a Spirit-filled life sounds like.

3. What in your life tends to numb you or pull you back toward the dark, and what would walking in the light look like instead?

Leader's note: Paul names drunkenness as one example of what can numb us, but the question is wider. It could be screens, work, worry, or old habits. Invite each person to name their own quietly, and point to Ephesians 5:14, where Christ calls sleepers to wake and promises to shine on them.

SESSION 10 · EPHESIANS 5:22-6:9

Gospel-Shaped Homes

Paul brings the gospel into the household, addressing wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters, all under one call to mutual submission in Christ.

1. How does Paul frame these household relationships, and what does he ask of each person in them?

Paul begins with a call for all of us to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21). Then he speaks to each person in the home. Wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (5:22), husbands are to love their wives (5:25), children are to obey and honor their parents (6:1-2), fathers are not to exasperate their children (6:4), and masters and servants are to treat each other with respect before God (6:5-9).

2. Husbands are told to love as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). What does it cost to love the way Christ did?

It costs everything. Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25), so a husband is called to lay down his comfort, his pride, and his own way for the good of his wife. Faithful readers differ on some details of how headship and submission work out, but they agree that Paul is describing a love that gives, not a love that takes.

3. Which relationship in your own home does this passage press on most, and what is one way you could love or serve differently?

Leader's note: Let each person answer for themselves and not for anyone else in the home. Ephesians 5:21 sets the tone, that all of us submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ask for one small, concrete way to love or serve, and pray for it together.

SESSION 11 · EPHESIANS 6:10-24

Stand Firm

The letter closes with the armor of God, the call to stand against the real spiritual battle, to pray at all times, and a final word of grace and peace.

1. What pieces of the armor does Paul list (Ephesians 6:10-11), and what is each one for?

Paul names the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17). Each piece protects or equips us for a different part of the fight. Truth holds us together, righteousness guards the heart, and faith puts out the flaming arrows of the evil one (6:16).

2. Why do you think Paul tells his readers to stand rather than to attack, and where does the strength to stand come from?

The word stand comes up again and again (Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14). Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces (6:12), and Christ has already won the ground. The strength does not come from us. Paul says to be strong "in the Lord and in his mighty power" (6:10).

3. Where do you feel most under pressure right now, and which piece of God's armor do you most need to put on and pray over today?

Leader's note: The question asks where the pressure is and which piece of armor you most need. Ephesians 6:18 adds that we are to pray on all occasions, so the armor is worn in prayer. Invite each person to name one pressure and one piece, then close by praying for each other by name.