



We first read of Ephesus and the founding of the church there in Acts 18:24-28 with Apollos (“an eloquent man powerful in the Scriptures”). Paul had been there shortly before Apollos (Acts 18:18-23) but for a very short time, leaving behind his friends, Priscilla and Aquila. These two heard Apollos later teaching accurately/carefully, but he only knew “the baptism of John”. He was “taken aside” and had “the way of God” more accurately explained. When Paul came to spend time in Ephesus (teaching), he came across “disciples” (Acts 19:1-10) needing to be taught fully of Christ and His finished work, and then be “baptized in the name of Christ”. In Acts 19 we also learn of he countering of “magic arts” and demon possession, all of which led to the Word of the Lord increasing, though resistance came from those desiring to promote the God of Ephesus.

We see throughout this letter to the Ephesians clear and absolute teaching regarding their salvation (God’s predetermination and His grace at work in them through faith), the “Mystery” now revealed of how Gentiles would be “fellow heirs” and “fellow members of the body” in receiving the promise of Christ. All of this bringing them into true/genuine unity around the singular faith, versus others who would be as children switching between teachings. Such teaching would keep them from becoming as all other “Gentiles.. in the futility of their mind”, living in darkness/ignorance who have a “hard heart” (stubborn in their ways/conclusions), being calloused in their conscience and so given over to sins. They, on the contrary were to be “imitators of God” in all ways, and to live as such in the family relationships and kept protected/shielded by the “armor of God”.

The two words “in Christ” are used 13 times in throughout this letter, demonstrating it as a predominate idea for these believers to know and live in light of (faithful in Christ, hope in Christ, God’s work in Christ, being created in Christ, in Christ being brought into the body of Christ and the “eternal purpose” in Christ). Such teaching, such truth would be infinitely more than a “religion”; it would be an identification, purpose, and so the way of life.

I. Blessed With Every Spiritual Blessing - 1:1-14

A. To be “blessed” (Εὐλογητός) is to be well-spoken of (praised), and our “blessing” of God is in response to His blessing (εὐλογία - benefiting, prospering) us - vs. 1-2

1. As we will soon see, this “blessing” is one of great depth - these first several verses of Ephesians are some of the most profound and in-depth words/phrases in all of Scripture in regards to what we actually have “in Christ”

The words “in Him” are used 9 times in this letter, stressing not only the means of our salvation, redemption, but also our identity

Many if those who initially consider the true Gospel, are lured away because they fail to see the magnitude of what they would have in Christ

- a. Though words such as “predestination” and “election” often cause a stir when discussed, their context is one of profound blessing and awe when considering what has been planned, determined, and accomplished on our behalf
- b. We have “spiritual blessing” in the form of “adoption”, “redemption”, “salvation”, “inheritance”, “forgiveness”, and all of this “sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit”
- c. These are the core words of our eternal hope, all being beyond a ritualistic idea, by use of other terms such as “holy and blameless”, “love”, “glorious grace”, “riches of His grace” and “lavished”
- d. Coming to an understanding of what it is to truly be “blessed” will guard us from the temptation to seek out spiritual pursuits of our own making, founded/focused upon self-glory and self-security

2. “Grace to you and peace...” - vs. 1-2

Exclusive use of Apostles was necessary in preserving the Gospel from alteration and adulteration

Doubts/fears come when self becomes a controlling factor in the idea and security of our salvation

- a. The use of “grace” and “peace” in these first couple verses are not a generic use, for these are only to be had by those who are “saints” (and so) who are “faithful in Jesus Christ”
- b. This was not a letter (and all its contents) of a mere man, but were written by one personally sent out by Christ Himself (Paul being an Apostle, which was also not used here as a general messenger sent out, but one given particular authority in the bearing of the message)
- c. True peace cannot be found/obtained apart from the true grace of God as applied by means of the work of Christ on those purposed to receive such by God - any other reaction to such truths demonstrates a misunderstanding of salvation being God’s work alone

Faithfulness is not to be looked upon as a periodic option, but something that is the byproduct of who /what we are - unfaithfulness stems from being unconvinced

This is more than a standard greeting of Paul - it is founded upon solid truths

## B. Praise God for what He has done and given us! - vs. 3-14

### 1. It is interesting to realize that to praise God is to declare His attributes, His character, His qualities and what He has actually done! - vs. 3

“Blessed” is an adjective and not a verb - we are not instructed here to “bless” God, just that He already is “blessed”

God the Father is again called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” in 1:17

Those who live for the earthly/physical “blessings” can never secure them even if they get them, and live in the fear of when they enter the spiritual/heavenly realm with none of these blessings as their own

- d. This grace and peace is for the “saints” who are also “faithful in Christ Jesus” - they are set apart for a special purpose (and so are not seen as common as to their calling and purpose in this world) - this is seen in that they are “faithful” (fully persuaded, and in their confident belief they are fully reliable)
  - e. Being “set apart ones” for God, they will look for and find **true peace** from God, and at the core of this is God’s grace/favor - true peace comes from knowing we are at peace with God, for all other “peaces” are not genuine if they have their source elsewhere (for they cannot last, being founded upon what is limited, impotent and temporary)
- a. God is to be “blessed” (praised, literally “well spoken of”) by us, because He has “blessed” us, and this profoundly (as the upcoming verses will make very clear!)
  - b. He in particular is blessed/praised as not only the Father, but also as “the God” of “our Lord Jesus Christ” - this in no way takes away from the deity of Christ, but when dealing with our salvation, Jesus was sent as the Promised One (Christ), He was sent to “save His people from their sins” (Jesus), and in all this, He too was Lord
  - c. And, the only way we, being who we were (by birth) could be ever truly “blessed” ourselves, would be by being “in Christ” - God blessed us “in Christ” (not just through Christ, but **IN** Him!)
  - d. These “blessings” are now far above all other blessings of this world/age - these are “spiritual” in that they transcend this creation into the “heavenly places” - they are the benefits that come in our relationship to the spiritual, the eternal
  - e. These blessings are what are described in the following verses - they show “the whole package” of what we have received in our salvation

### 2. God the Father chose us, predestined us, and lavished grace upon us - vs. 4-8

Notice all the persons of the Godhead at work in these verses - here we have the Father, in Christ we have redemption and are then sealed by the Holy Spirit

It has been attempted by some also to determine God’s choosing as being based upon His foreknowledge of us choosing Him, and so He chooses us based upon I Pet. 1:1-2; though the reference to “foreknowledge” does not indicate what about us He foreknew

Many look to make the case that Romans 9 describes the choosing/electing of nations and not individuals, but this disregards that Jacob and Esau and even Pharaoh and Moses were individuals

The attempts to make the “doctrine of predestination” a means to live a life of wanton sin is in contradiction to this verse

- a. These profound words lay out the foundation of the eternal plan/purpose of God which included us - such transcends time and only known as He has “made known to us the mystery of His will” (1:9), all of which explain the source/means/permanence of our salvation
- b. These spiritual blessings are for certain ours (those in Christ) “Just as He chose us in Him - the underlying word for “chose” (ἐξελέξατο, from ἐκλεκτός clearly indicating a selection), and this in the middle voice in Greek, indicating a choosing for Himself - all in this group are referred throughout the New Testament as “the elect” (as in Mt. 24:24, Lu. 18:7; Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:33) and also referenced as the “chosen” in I Thes. 1:4 and Col. 3:12
- c. Some have attempted to work into this verse the idea of **why** God “chose” us, though the “why” is only indicated in this context as being His love and “the purpose of His will” (vs. 5)
- d. Many have felt threatened by the idea that God would choose some and not others, as though He had some obligation outside Himself to essentially choose everyone and then leave it up to them to choose Him - but, in an attempt to make God appear more “just” (or “fair” in their estimation), they take away from the absoluteness of salvation being God’s work solely - this must assume though that man, left to his own choice, would **ever** choose God (which is made clear that none ever would in Rom. 3:9-19)
- e. In properly understanding the idea of the “choosing” described here, we must also consider Paul’s explanation of it by means of illustration in Rom. 9:6-16 - in using the situation of Esau and Jacob Paul wrote in 9:11, “...in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls...” to make it clear that this was making a case that it is based upon God and His “call” and in no way the will/works of men
- f. This choosing was not in the realm of time, being “before the foundation of the world” and so is not dependent on what happens after the world was founded, **though it does dictate what happens** - Christ was “foreknown” before the world was created (I Pet. 1:20-21) and we in Him (we being “believers in God” through Him)
- g. This choosing of us (individually) had to be “in Him” (in Christ) with the purpose that we be “holy and blameless before Him” (God), for these two qualities would be absolutely impossible for us on our own (especially before God where all is known for what it really is) - so wherever we are at, we are chosen in Him to be holy (set apart) and that, even now!

These two words are also used in Eph. 5:27 when describing the end result and purpose of Christ "loving the Church and giving Himself for her"

The choosing and the predestining is done out of His love and there is no indication whatsoever of His love being motivated by any merit in the recipient

"It is lit. "to define, mark out, set apart, beforehand." All ideas of blind destiny must be excluded; the "pre-ordination" is the act of the Living and Holy God... And it is a cause, not an effect, of good desires and holiness in the saints." Cambridge Bible Notes

As sons, we no longer are obligated to obey our previous "father"

So, plainly put, God "made us sons" by means of His son

John made this distinction also in John 1:12

There is also the sense in εὐδοκίαν that God's will is good in all it is/does

The will of God is not a "will" like ours, since we can only "intend" - God's will is determinative, and so will not and cannot be disrupted or stopped

The entire concept of God's choosing, His predetermining, His adoption is to glorify His grace - all other responses demonstrate either a misunderstanding or that something has infected/influenced the one who sees this in a "bad light"

see also Eph. 2:1-9

This reiterating us being "chosen in Him" for without Christ we could not be chosen

- h. This verse also makes it clear that the "chosen" were not chosen because they were holy, but in order **that they be holy and blameless** (and this could only be so "in Him"), because we were chosen to also be "before Him" (before God) - God's holiness is in no way compromised by His love - His love fulfilled the means because His holiness could not be compromised
- i. Both words are key since they "go to purpose" (in order that) - the conclusion being "ἁγίουσ" (holiness being "otherness", differentness, not alike what is common) and "ἀμώμουσ" (literally being "without blemish" and so without flaw)
- j. It was "in love" we are made "holy and blameless" and it was His love that "predestined" us - this core word for the pinnacle idea of **what love truly is** (ἀγάπη), is distinct from common ideas of "love" amongst mankind - describing the nature of this word Harold Hoehner wrote in his commentary of Ephesians, "... it is a love given irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give... is based on God's love in that he extends it to the undeserving and unloving as seen in his continuing love for the sinner and the wayward believer. Love, then, is seeking the highest good in the one loved... the highest good is the will of God for him or her."
- k. This new word "predestined" is not synonymous with "chosen" for it is what is ultimately done/set up for the "chosen" - these are they "προορίσας" (literally having been "limited in advanced", having had boundaries set beforehand to limit one for the purpose to something) and, in this case, "predestined" to "adoption" - this in reference to the legal adoption of their day, where one not born into a family (so without the "nature" (genetics) of that family, is brought into the family, taking on the relation and an heir to the possessions, and takes on the name of the Father) - the nature (new) is miraculously applied to us in text such as John 3:3, II Cor. 5:17 and Eph. 2:10 - so the legal and the "natural" are both considered and accomplished in full in our salvation - we are "as sons" - notice also verse 11
- l. This would be done (in total) "through Jesus Christ" (and this alone is the means to make this happen) in order to bring them/us to Himself (God the Father) that this "adoption" occurs (υιοθεσίαν, literally "to place as a son") - "Jesus" being His earthly/man name, and "Christ," His role (as the anointed one) sent for this purpose (thus "anointed") - see also Gal. 4:1-7
- m. All of this done for the purpose of (after, in accordance with) His "well-pleased, delighted" (εὐδοκίαν) will (His choice out of His "desire," and so "willed" it) - we might put it something like "He did all this because He desired to do it, and so made it happen" - so far we've seen God choosing and in so doing, lovingly adopting us ahead of time (preordained/predetermined) that we would be His, and this by means of Christ, because His all-knowing will is completely "good" - compare this to Rom. 8:28-30 - remember also that God has **always willed what He has willed**, for to have changed His mind on these would have indicated He was either wrong or that He was unsure of what would happen (neither are an acceptable conclusion when considering God is omniscient)
- n. This "good will" of God is not just focused upon our future destiny, but is in effect now as seen in Php. 2:12-15 - we are to live every day with the realization who we are, what we are, and why/how this became reality
- o. He has willed all of this to be so with the purpose "to the praise of the glory of His grace" - the word for "praise" (ἔπαινον) carries also the idea of proper/fitting praise - this is not a flattering praise but one fully deserved when seen for what it is, and its magnitude in how it was applied (and to whom it was applied)
- p. The key word in verse 6 is "χάριτος" ("of grace"), and grace being favor that freely gives to the one favored (since the one favored is completely undeserving of it) - any line of thinking that finds a way to calculate any merit or deservedness in mankind **must be disqualified** as a contradiction to "grace" - see this truth demonstrated in Rom. 11:1-6 - so there is glorious praise of His glorious grace, and though such a gift is priceless (it exceeds our ability to begin to measure its actual value), it was freely given (ἐχαρίτωσεν - graciously given without charge (and to those who could not have paid anyway))
- q. The translation of "freely given" is correct, but the core/root of the underlying word is "grace" and so some translate it "in which He did make us accepted" (YLT) to ensure not just the freeness, but the **result** of being freely favored - this all was only possible "in the Beloved" and this being Jesus Christ (as identified as such in Mt. 3:17 and 17:5)



We were by nature/birth, the enemies of God. slaves to sin and fully deserving eternal condemnation (see Eph. 2:1-3) - yet this debt was paid in full by the Lord Jesus Christ taking the full judgment upon Himself on the cross

Our enslavement (captivity) was because of sin, so sin had to be fully addressed (paid for) to purchase/obtain our ransom (payment for freedom from it)

see Rom. 5:15-21

To come to know and understand what we do as those "in Christ" would not be possible without this grace - none of this is intuitive to us!

Such discerning understanding is one evidence of actual regeneration - spiritual blindness is the natural state of us all

The word is "γνωρισας; (to make known) and so is not "to make knowable" - it is not just revealed, it is understood/comprehended by us because of His grace

With such (prophets and angels) being so intrigued as to what was coming, it should impress upon us the value of what we have/know

He not only saved us, He revealed his plan/purpose, how He did and would do it and its complete result

This is the same idea described also in Gal. 4:1-7

- r. This was no compromise of God's Holiness in allowing sin to be left unanswered, or that God just overlooked His own Law and righteousness - the significant part of this "glorious grace" is his "redemption" and "forgiveness" to us by means of Christ - forgiveness was not simply a "letting go" of our sins; instead they were lawfully paid for in full; thus "redemption"!
- s. For in Him (Christ) "ἐχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν" we have the redemption (paying the ransom price), buying something back, and in this case it is paying the price to release from judgment (e.g. "execution") - it is the paying the debt of sin, and so freeing the recipient
- t. This is the same concept dealt with also in Rom. 3:21-26, how "righteousness" is obtained and applied to someone "apart from the Law" and this by a gift given through "redemption" in Christ Jesus, where God set Jesus as literally the "mercy seat" (the "ἰλαστήριον" used also in Heb. 9:5) by means of His blood offered to pay for the sins of the people - this is the word for "propitiation" in Rom. 3:25)) - and so in our text the "redemption is through His blood" and as a result of the price being paid, sins are rightfully and completely (eternally) forgiven
- u. "This "remission," being the explanation of "redemption," includes not only deliverance from sin's penalty, but from its pollution and enslaving power, negatively; and the reconciliation of an offended God, and a satisfaction unto a just God, positively." RWP
- v. All of this (dealing with our "side-steppings" (παραπτώματων)) in accordance with (it was in direct correlation to) "the riches of His grace" (the abundance of his loving favor, a favor which was undeserved, yet given generously)
- w. Since His grace was plenteous, it was not given "in measure" to our sin; it was "lavished upon us", showing that His grace super-abounded (far more than enough) over our sin - this not only indicates the extravagance of God's grace, but also demonstrates the abundance of grace required in dealing with our sin - this was no small expense/investment!
- x. This excessive grace given to us is evidenced also "in all wisdom and understanding" that comes as a part of our redemption and forgiveness of sins - this clarity of insight (wisdom) and the application of it to life (understanding), is directly related to God's grace - we would have neither (***we would be without discernment and insight***) if not for God's "lavished grace"
- y. Having such special insight/understanding must never become a cause of pride in any of us, realizing we can only know what we are able to know because God has graciously graced us with the ability to see and come to know the Truth

### 3. God's will, God's purpose, revealed in Christ - vs. 9-10

- a. The "will of God" (as it was accomplished in "adoption to Himself"), by means of His grace to redeem us through the blood of Christ, could not be known and understood (and believed/accepted) by means of the "unaided mind" - to the "natural man" it was a mystery (and still is, until it is revealed ("made known"))
- b. This "mystery" (μυστήριον, a secret, something not previously known and only known when the contents are specially revealed (brought to light)) was "made known" to us, and this was only done because of (according to) His kindness (His kind purpose)
- c. This is not in particular the "mystery" of the Gospel as much as it is the secrets revealed of "His Will" in general/overall, and so not only the outcome (planned purpose) but its process - how God would do this was not previously seen/understood - compare with I Pet. 1:9-12
- d. Part of what this involved is also seen in Eph. 3:1-11 (that this would involve the Gentiles coming to be presented "the unsearchable riches of Christ") - this mystery also included "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:24-29) - see also II Tim. 1:8-12
- e. So this "mystery" of His will involved His choosing us "in Him" (and this before the world was created), His predestining for adoption, and because of His "glorious grace" we would have redemption and so the forgiveness of sins
- f. He did not have to reveal this "mystery" but He did - these concepts, though, are often controversial to some, yet are only known because He specially revealed them, and so should be seen as spectacular, precious and wonderful!
- g. The "administration suitable to the fullness of times" and the "summing up of all things in Christ" looks to be a confusing, complicated concept at first glance, yet describes the fact that all things have been "administered" (organized) to find their purpose/focus in the completed work of Christ (everything united by means of Him)

Not just everyone but everything (all of creation will be united under Him)

- h. God would administer (oversee with organizational purposes) the “completion” (fullness/ fulfillment) of the times by bringing everything together (“summing everything up”) in Christ - everything in the universe (heavens and earth) would be united together in Christ
- i. As it stands now, nothing is united under a singular “head” and power struggles are constant - but in the time to come, everything will be unified under Him - it is assuredly to end this way because it is God’s administering ( decreeing and accomplishing)

#### 4. Predestined to an inheritance - vs. 11

“The literal sense is we were designated as a heritage.” Vincent’s Word Studies

This “casting lots” idea is not as “luck of the draw,” but does picture being fortunate in the lot we have been given, for we are totally dependent on God’s grace

This phrase describes God predetermining what He laid out beforehand before Himself to do

The picture being God thinking it through thoroughly within the Godhead, determining His determinative will - this is not seen as a quick decision or one made without being thorough in the consideration of every detail

Compare to Rom. 11:29-36

If we look on anything as by “chance”, having waited in time to occur to determine what would actually happen, is to be in opposition with what is being so clearly emphasized in this verse

- a. It is essential everything be united under Christ, for it is only “in Him” that we are “taken into an inheritance” - this phrase is typically translated “obtained an inheritance” but is a passive, in either we were **made to inherit**, or **became an inheritance** (in this case, God’s inheritance in His work in Christ) - either way we gain an inheritance
- b. The underlying word for “obtained and inheritance” is ἐκληρώθημεν, which had a common use of “casting lots” and here pictures the receiving of a “lot” (as in getting our “lot” as if by chance, yet discovering that it was all pre-planned)
- c. This inheritance was predetermined (from προορίζω - to mark out, decide, determine beforehand) and so was pre-established for we who were “predetermined” (as in 1:5) - yet now, clarifying more about this “predetermination,” we are told it was done “according to His purpose” (πρόθεσιν - “set forth” and was used in reference to the “shewbread” set before the presence of God in the tabernacle) - it was what was before God’s focus (to do)
- d. This predetermined “lot” was in accordance with His purpose of Him who “makes it happen” to everything (“τὰ πάντα” literally “the everything”) in exact accordance to the “counsel of His will”, providing an interesting picture of God taking counsel (deliberating within Himself) in not only deciding (as it were) His will, but in making it happen
- e. If any one of us thinks hard in planning out our will and how we will make it happen (being finite as we are), how much more profound a way could what is being said be said - omniscient God “thinking through every detail” of His will, and how He will do it (He being omnipotent, so He doing it all without any possible failure) - see also Isa. 46:8-11
- f. “Could the imagination of man picture a situation before any creative act of God was wrought, when God, as it were, had before Him an infinite variety of possible plans and blueprints from which to choose - each and every one of which represented a possible program of divine action as far reaching and elaborate as the one now being executed - it would be reasonable and honoring to God to conclude that the present plan as ordained and as it is being achieved is, and in the end will prove to be, the best plan and purpose that could have been devised by infinity wisdom... the present plan is as perfect as the Author.” L.S. Chafer
- g. Such a concept is an unshakable anchor of the soul because it is absolute! Life then is lived (by those in Christ) with this assurance that everything is in harmony with His purposed will

#### 5. The purpose for doing all this, this way (predetermined), was for His glory - vs. 12

Some hold to the first view because Paul discusses the initial distinction between Jew and Gentile starting in 2:11

This purpose statement identifies why God has saved the way He has saved - for His/Christ’s praise exclusively - this will be our glory in Heaven.. the glory of His praise!

- a. The first phrase “we who were the first to hope in Christ” has been interpreted to mean either those who were Jews who had hope (expected the Messiah/Christ) before He came, or that it simply references the fact that all believers hope in Christ before we are with Him (our lives being characterized by our expectation of what we know is coming)
- b. It seems unnecessary to restrict the usage of the root word for “first to hope” (προελπίζω) to just be those Jews who looked for Christ before He came - it seems more natural to the initial context to see it including all those in Christ before His coming or our going to Him in death
- c. This anticipation throughout life, all escalating to the “praise of His glory”, the glory that is magnified/intensified by the fully met expectation (as in Rom. 5:5 “hope that does not disappoint”) - imagine the magnitude of the praise of lifetimes of all those saved by His grace expressing it unanimously, all (not one dissenting or holding back) the reality of all that was promised being now seen/experienced, and that, from that moment on, without end!

#### 6. The guaranteed “inheritance” sealed in the Holy Spirit to this end - vs. 13-14

- a. Just as Paul, and all those with him (and any other that was already in Christ) had hoped, so also “you” (now personally, as the Church in Ephesus), saw how this was started and worked in your lives - it is not just theoretical, it is personal - not just the hope/trust in what someone else says or experiences, but what one comes to know firsthand (experientially)

See also Rom. 10:14-17 where the tools and even the order of how this is worked out

And so the “we” and the “you” referenced in these few verses demonstrates all types of people united in Christ - no distinction in Him

The idea that there are many “truths” is absurd, because it is preceded by “the” (proper article) and there cannot be more than one “reality” - God’s truth reveals how things really are so all others are misdirection

Genuineness of the “sealer” and of the object sealed - see Eph. 4:30

It is also translated “down payment”, “earnest” and “deposit guaranteeing” - the inheritance is ours and the fullness of it is guaranteed

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” I Pet. 2:9

This same concept is dealt with in Rom. 8:18-23

- b. Notice the order of how this is worked out - With a focus on Christ (“In Him”), these heard “the Word of Truth” (which isn’t truth in general, but is the “good news of their deliverance”) - this (exclusively) being what is heard is then believed (trusted) and so, contemporaneously they are “sealed” by the Holy Spirit (the one and the same that was promised by Christ in John 16)
- c. There being one way to salvation, these too (“you also”) responded to hearing the Word of Truth - there are not “many ways to God” as the world might define it - God may bring us to the Truth (and so to Christ) using a variety of circumstances, but they all will focus on the Gospel, as provided in the Word of Truth and will all involve “believing” followed by genuine security in Him because of/by means of the Holy Spirit
- d. Notice also that all this takes place “in Him” (not, at first, independent of Him so as to get “in Him”) - hearing the Word is because of and by means of Him, and it is not any (subjective) truth, but “τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας” (the word of the truth) - the “hearing” is inclusive of the understanding, not just physical hearing, and is evidenced it is God’s work in them because it is believed (versus some other “truth” that is actually false because it does not deal with and communicate reality)
- e. The result of this work being “believing” (persuaded, trusting and so entrusting) on our part and then “sealed” by the Holy Spirit - “sealed” carrying with it the idea/result of (1). Enclosing securely with a seal of authority to distinguish between the real/genuine and imposters (2). Authenticating ownership and approval and so identification (which is now in Christ and not in ourselves or any other entity/group/organization)
- f. The promised Holy Spirit is the “pledge,” the assurance of our inheritance - the word for “pledge” being “ἄραβων” (“... money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid.” Thayer) - also in II Cor. 5:1-10
- g. And this inheritance is brought to us by the choosing and adopting of us by the Father, the redeeming of us by the Son, and the sealing of us by the Holy Spirit - in the meantime (throughout life this side of eternity), the Holy Spirit is the means, the down payment we “live off of” to get us through to the full inheritance
- h. “The Spirit’s illumination is an earnest of everlasting light; sanctification is an earnest of perfect holiness; and his comforts are earnest of everlasting joys.” MH
- i. Stressed again is the purpose of all of this, namely “the praise of His glory”, occurring “to the redemption of the acquired possession” (YLT) - this phrase is difficult to translate but describes a releasing (redemption) of the purchased inheritance (God’s inheritance of us and so for us) - as in English, to “redeem” is also to obtain something

## II. A Prayer for Enlightenment and Understanding - 1:15-23

A. Grateful prayer to God for genuine faith - Paul had not been at Ephesus for a long time, and now indicates his response in hearing news of them and it being positive - vs. 15

1. There is reason to give thanks, not because of just a profession of faith (though this is good, it still has not been outwardly proven as being inwardly genuine)

There is good reason to give thanks in prayer for evidences of genuine faith and growth, but prayers should always contain praying for each other’s growth and understanding of the Truth

Our prayers (and prayer requests) can reveal our highest priorities - Paul’s are clearly seen and set an example for us

- a. Paul is grateful to hear of not just their faith, but that their faith is established/directed toward and in Christ - all that has been written so far demonstrates why this is more encouraging than any other news - notice his prayer is not for their physical protection, their good health, nor their success in this life - but for their wisdom and insight
- b. The underlying phrase translated “of the faith” is actually “τὴν καθ’ ὑμᾶς πίστιν” (literally, “the among you faith” - so “the faith among you”) and not the standard “your faith” - there are varying explanations, though it seems possible it is stated this way because it was not necessarily unanimous in all of them (thus the prayer to follow)

2. There is also gratefulness expressed in his prayer to God for their love expressed “to all the saints”

- a. This gratefulness is not just for “love” being shown and demonstrated, but that it is non-discriminatory among the “saints” - there is no preferring one above another (just as a parent is heartened to see their children loving each other equally and not neglecting some)

It is not our distinctions that unite us, but our common likeness (in Christ) and our unified calling - we have the same purpose and so find our love for each other understandable

- b. Knowing what we already know (of what God has done on our behalf) and the uniting us together into one purpose as family (and as a “team”), our understanding of this will draw us toward each other as fellow beneficiaries of God’s grace, called to a special purpose together



Such love is a mark of maturity as well - it shows the motive to give and concern for another above themselves

- c. It is a true "love" for all the saints (particularly) because it desire the actual best for them (for each other) - it is encouraging and comforting for anyone in spiritual leadership to see genuine love in action with those they care for (not fearing that those among them would be neglected without them (personally) showing the love)

## B. Grateful praying for good news of growth and of the anticipated work of God in them - vs. 16-18a

### 1. Because of what Paul had heard, his expression of gratitude to God was constant - vs. 16

There are times when these qualities can be frowned upon - when one's faith seems irresponsible and unpopular, or when genuine love/concern is looked upon as being strictly "critical"

- a. When Paul writes that he does "not cease giving thanks," it was based upon something specific - thankfulness is not a generic presence of mind that gives thanks just to give thanks, but is motivated by something real that deserves thankfulness
- b. Their genuine expressions of two key Christian qualities (faith and love) outrank other characteristics or circumstances that might normally cause one to express thanks
- c. The result of such gratefulness is what prompts him to "make mention" of them in his prayers - prayer not being a type of "transcendental state of feeling," but a time of verbal expression of thoughts and desires to God - the evidence of God's working in them prompts Paul to request more growth and insight in/for them

This also demonstrates another aspect of mature prayer - its focus is for the betterment of others over self

### 2. "Wisdom" and "revelation" (special insight) by means of an "enlightened heart" - vs. 17-18a

Jesus Christ was the God-man (and here, the "man" part demonstrates the exclusivity of God as God - if Jesus served Him (obedient to His will), we must certainly expect to do the same)

- a. As referenced in 1:3, Paul again refers to God as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" - though Jesus Christ was God incarnate, He was also submissive/obedient to "the Father" making it absolutely clear that none of us could consider it legitimate to seek to act independent (self-willed) apart from what God has instructed and given
- b. This God (the only true God) is truly "glorious" - He is actually "glorious" (spectacularly bright/shining above all else), but is also the "Father of glory" in that all that is genuinely glorious *is of Him* - all other "glories" are illusions and/or impostors (artificial "glory" that only appears to be bright because it is compared to (held up to) something duller (by design))
- c. This "glorious Father" is asked to give them "a spirit of wisdom and revelation" - much is discussed regarding whether or not this is "the Spirit," but taken plainly, it seems best to take it (since it has no proper article and no other wording close to it) to be one's personal spirit - clearly this will happen by means of *the Spirit*, but Paul's focus is on what He will do to and in their "spirit" - He developed them into what they truly are in what was predetermined
- d. The spirit in a person is the core of who/what they are - it is the "inner us" and so what is in us (who we are) needs such installments internally - compare to II Cor. 4:1-6
- e. Having already "made known to us the mystery of His will", these (and we) need to continue growing in the understanding of what is most important/valuable; wisdom, revelation, knowledge all lending to an enlightened heart (also a reference to the inner man), all to *truly know the essentials* (actual hope, an inheritance "glorious" because it is beyond this earth/age, all while living/experiencing first-hand the "surpassing greatness of His power")
- f. The first quality/installment Paul requests in their spirit is "wisdom," which is more than just knowing (knowledge) - some have tried to explain it as the ability to use what is learned/known, which involves a proper prioritization and organization of what is learned/discovered (which makes sense why it is placed first) - many come to be "smart" in their intelligence, but lack the wisdom to use it or discern it properly (if at all)
- g. "Revelation" is well translated since the word (ἀποκαλύψεως) means to unveil/reveal something that would not have been known had it not been specially revealed - it is especially the "spirit" of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of God - the word for knowledge (ἐπιγνώσει) is a word used to indicate something much stronger than knowing about/of, but truly knowing (discerning, understanding through firsthand interaction, so as to discern something more instinctively)
- h. This by means (how God would do this) of "enlightenment" (φωτίζω - to illuminate) of the heart (the true self (mind, will) - this presupposes, that in these essentials, the heart is naturally darkened, "cloudy" and so, not clear - the opposite to being enlightened is to be lost, confused, and without direction/priority)
- i. Paul personifies the heart with "eyes" as if it (the core of who each of us really is) seeks to "see" and discern what is around it - if left to itself, it cannot see (or cannot see correctly, for enlightenment is needed to reveal the *natural blindness* we had that we did not know we had)

This is why the true glory of God is denied and sought to be obscured and blocked from sight (distracted away from) because when His glory is actually seen (even a little), all else truly pales in comparison!

Then, even under pressure, the real self is seen versus the superficial "Christians" who are revealed as fake when pressed

Understanding, seeing, learning, discerning all focused upon in Paul's prayer for them for insight and an unshakable focus

Being prepared to learn is more important than just learning - the following words describe a process of wisdom (what is involved in true wisdom)

In this case, it is getting to know Him (the Father of glory) so well, it is more intuitive because of the closeness to Him - it is actually *getting to know Him!*

It is alike to the idea of "understanding" in that some may see and perceive something, but may misread it (such as life in general) because its purpose and place before God is not understood

### C. Grateful praying for their knowledge of what is had now and what is coming - vs. 18-23

1. Their “illuminated eyes of the heart” needed to “know (the word is “εἰδέναι” which is more picturesque of coming to “see” (with their heart)) the essentials - 1). The hope of His calling 2). The riches of His inheritance 3). The surpassing greatness of His power - vs. 18-19

Notice the resolve of the Hebrew Christians after being “enlightened” in Heb. 10:32-39

“In the epistles noun, verb, and verbal are always used with reference to the successful “call” of God, and not as in Matt. 22:14 also with reference to the rejected call” Lenski

The “natural man” is repulsed by the thought that he “belongs” to anyone/anything (yet he does belong to sin) - those in Christ find their hope in belonging to God by means of Him, and so find our life’s definition

Yet, what we would consider extreme wealth will be ours, though not with the same appeal (we will walk on it... streets of gold) - we will have (always) what could never be attained in this age (so, why live for this age?)

The word “omnipotence” is spoken of regularly but rarely does one live and think in light of its reality

“But such is the nature of God’s power in action, that it is perfectly inconceivable to us; and even these astonishingly strong words of the apostle are to be understood as used in condescension to human weakness.” Clarke

No physical (natural) power, no authoritative power, and no spiritual (supernatural) power comes even remotely close to His power/ability/greatness

“We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds.” Thomas Watson

read Col. 1:14-19

- a. These three are crucial, for to “see” these, any of these things, as finding their fulfillment elsewhere, they would be lured away - each age offers its “hopes”, its ideal “inheritance/wealth” and demonstrations of “power” and, if not seen in their futility (comparing them to God’s), they would be “taken in” by them
- b. The “hope of His calling” has also been phrased “the hope to which He has called you” (ESV)- “hope” (ἐλπίς) is the **anticipation of expectation** (confident trust) - everyone lives by means of some “hope,” yet Paul prays that these Ephesian believers would see the “calling” of God as the best and most assured object/direction of hope by which to face life - there is a need to realize the benefits of being “chosen”, “adopted” and so then “called” - compare the hope that we have now to all other “hopes” (that prove to be hopeless - see Eph. 2:12 versus Rom. 5:1-5)
- c. This hope/anticipation looks to the “riches of His glorious inheritance” and is often taken as “an inheritance of wealth that is ours to be had,” yet the wording is more “the saints being His glorious inheritance” (these being His inheritance which He **chose, adopted and fully paid-for (redeemed)**)
- d. We being God’s “wealth” (items of value, purchased at a high price) should level-set our value now - regardless the value the world places upon us, we know what we are valued to be
- e. There is also the idea of the inheritance (in general) we (as the “saints”) will receive in all that comes - true wealth is guaranteed - the desire for wealth is typically brought on by the desire for security and luxury (which is “more than enough” in all areas) - seen also in 1:11
- f. The third reality he prayed for them to “know” was the “exceeding greatness of His power” - it is “ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως” (“over and beyond” (excelling above) in greatness the power/might (to perform)) - such power supersedes and so overcomes all other powers that would oppose Him - this is why our hope of the inheritance is so certain, and why Paul prayed for them to know it (for ignorance of this, is at the core of misdirected hope/expectations)
- g. Such power is “toward” those of us who believe, “in accordance with the strength of His might” and since He is omnipotent (He can do all that can be done, and as such, defines all that is doable (and cannot be thwarted or effectively resisted)) it is unstoppable

### 2. The historical proof of God’s power on display, and the revealed (heavenly) result - vs. 20-23

“But such is the nature of God’s power in action, that it is perfectly inconceivable to us; and even these astonishingly strong words of the apostle are to be understood as used in condescension to human weakness.” Clarke

No physical (natural) power, no authoritative power, and no spiritual (supernatural) power comes even remotely close to His power/ability/greatness

“We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds.” Thomas Watson

read Col. 1:14-19

- a. Some might speculate that what Paul has written are “only words” - where is the historical demonstration of such power? Paul references an example which demonstrates it - “Why this attempt to exhaust the resources of language to convey something of the greatness of God’s power? Because he is thinking of one supreme occasion when that power was exerted.” F.F. Bruce - the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
- b. Raising Christ (God’s power worked-out in Christ) from the dead, was just the beginning of this display of limitless power - for it was not just the power over death (the **physical** aspects, causing life again in what was lifeless, and the **spiritual** power over death which is the cause of death), but His limitless power of authority over all other powers/authorities by seating Him at His right hand (the seat of power, as in sharing the throne of God)
- c. This is very significant to grasp! He (Christ) is resurrected, ascended (in His body) to the right hand of the throne of God, and as such is our representative before Almighty God
- d. This “locality” of power (in comparison to all other authoritative powers we know) is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” - all types and degrees are included
- King-makers • “ἀρχῆς” - “Chief” (as in most important, and also, where authority begins/comes from)
- Assigned governmental authorities • “ἐξουσίας” - Delegated/assigned power - all those appointed by greater authorities
- Temporal/strategic power • “δυνάμεως” - Actual physical power/might - maybe not authority but strength
- Kings/Lords (inherited power) • “κυριότητος” - “Lordship” (one with dominion over a realm, likely by right)
- Fame/popularity/influence • “ὀνόματος” - Power of “name” and reputation, and so powerfully influential
- e. And His (God’s power of ability and authority) has placed Jesus Christ “far above” all of these other powers - and the power of His name, is of infinite greatness (infinitely above all other names in our age, and in any other age to come)



No power on earth has power over sin - sin (and death) is their master in one form or another

Again, this is part of that "enlightenment" Paul prays that these Ephesian Christians have - no other power (in the heavens or on earth) can and will ever compare! Knowing this, how could they ever be "lured astray"

And so, we have the instructions of putting on the armor in Eph. 6:10-18

Under the deceitfulness of sin, mankind looks to other "heads" or even to their own head for direction and purpose

And so we exist (here) to fulfill His work here (now) and forever (as God has designed) - we were "called out" (chosen) for this purpose

- f. It is key to realize that Christ is now above (over) all things now - many would question the reality of this because they "just don't see it" (though this "sight" is based on the externals, not considering the actual scope of the Lord's authority, and it being best seen for what it is (first) in His victory over sin and so also death)
- g. Adding to the picture, Paul also clarifies that God has placed "all things under His (Jesus Christ) feet" - The Lord not only has positional authority, He has **actual**, controlling power over all things/everything - this is in reference to Psalm 8:6, which some might argue is in reference to mankind (in general) having the creation under his jurisdiction - yet, it is necessary to realize that the Lord became a man (the second Adam) to reclaim this authority for man - see also Heb. 2:5-15 and I Cor. 15:22-28, Col. 1:15-17
- h. The concept of something being "under foot" is a picture of victory in battle - the victor places their foot on the neck of the conquered - this has happened, and yet the final fullness of its impact is still being worked out (without any point of failure) now - the conquered enemy has not yielded yet, but is nonetheless defeated
- i. And literally, "to top it all off" God has given Him (Christ) as "Head over all things" to the Church (to be, in particular, "Head" over it, it being His "body") - the "church" being those **particularly** His (as contrasted from the rest of the world/age)
- j. The Church then, being His body and He the Head (just as the head has preeminence, not because it is "on top," but because it controls the body (the body exists/lives because of the Head, and exists to be controlled by the Head)) - see Eph. 4:15-16
- k. Being His "body," the Church is then revealed to be also "the fullness of Him" (it is, for Jesus the God-man, Mediator, Savior and Son of God, the fulfillment of God's purpose in Him) - this pictures more than just Jesus Christ as our Savior, but our part in His powerful rule and ultimate (overriding) influence (and purpose)
- l. What an amazing paradox! The One who "fills all in all" utilizes us in His fulfillment (He who "fills all in all" **having this fulfillment in us**) - this does not picture any dependence on the part of God/Christ, just our fortunate calling (and participation in it)

### III. The Ultimate Resurrection Through Grace - 2:1-10

A. The last section ended with the prayer for these believers to know the "surpassing greatness of His power" as was demonstrated in Christ being raised from the dead - this power is now demonstrated in what is actually done at our salvation (and why it was needed)- vs. 1

1. What is the actual condition before belief (faith) begins? How helpless/hopeless is the condition?

The saving work of God is not a combined effort of God and us to save us... it is His work completely!

This is the **true** diagnosis of us - we are "dead" (in the fullest sense, lifeless in that we are separated from God)

The words "hath He quickened" in the KJV were added and were not in the original Greek text

"The state here described is not one of suppressed life, but of absence of life." CBN

- a. The beginning of this section, combined with all that was clarified in chapter 1 makes it indisputably clear that each of us is completely dependent upon God for our salvation - this does not contain any of the language that would be expected if this process was "synergistic"
- b. What was their original condition (what did God begin with)? The first phrase is "Καὶ ὑμεῖς ὄντας νεκροὺς" ("And you being dead/lifeless" (a corpse)) is very deliberate (and should not be looked on as an exaggeration or just as if an analogy)
- c. This diagnosis is resisted in its literal form since many (actually) view mankind as being more "sick" in sin, with enough "life" in and of themselves to exercise some measure of "free will" to participate in determining their final destination - see also Col. 2:13
- d. Just as a corpse is not aware of what is happening around it and cannot interact with this world any longer, neither can these (as they are without Christ) realize what is really going on, and so **cannot act to resolve/correct/cure their condition**

2. Their true "deadness" was seen in their "trespasses and sins"

Dead in sin is not always evidenced in being as bad as one can be, but is more seen in our lack of being perfect (the sin of imperfection) - such a description shows how widespread the state of "deadness in sin" really is

- a. These two words for "sin" are the two key words for sin in the New Testament, and when understood, "box us in" completely in our sin, and our helplessness
- b. The first word is "παράπτωμα," which is used of one that "falls away" or (possibly better) "trespasses" (goes where they should not go, as in crossing over a boundary line that has been set); and the second word is "ἁμαρτία," normally defined as "missing the mark," which generally refers to any lack of perfection/righteousness (because one has not lived-up to the set standard) - sin is a deliberate or even accidental stepping over "the mark" while also being the failure to "hit the mark"

- c. A clear understanding of what “sin” actually is, is needed, because many are likely to compare themselves with others who are looked on as morally “worse” and so convince themselves of a “saving righteousness” - getting to the point of realizing “deadness” in sin is crucial in the acceptance of the Gospel (that details life over death)

B. How you “once walked” (before the grace of God “saved”) - vs. 2-3

- 1. We are seeing in a more aggressive way (today) where the grace of God is being redefined and misapplied to make a seemingly Biblical defense for one living in their sin (it is their “walk”) - vs. 2

- a. The word “formally” (or “once”) describes a way of life (lifestyle) one previously had, but no longer is the case (in this case, because God in His mercy intervened, making us His “workmanship”)
- b. “Yea, “the dead,” unconscious of their spiritual mortality, often place up, as their motto of lower life - “*Dum vivimus vivamus*”. But this sad period of death walking was past” Eadie
- c. These WERE characterized “according to the course of this world” in their “περιπατέω” (how they lived, their “walk of life”) - this does not describe occasional sinning, but a life defined by such, “a course” 1). In harmony with the “age” (κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου - after the age/time frame of the world order), which could also be referenced as the particular sins of the time in which they were living, and they were defined by 2). “according to the prince of the power of the air,” the same “spirit now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- d. Every generation throughout history has had its identifying “sins of choice” (those which uniquely distinguish/define them, sins of commission (determined evil) and those of omission (self-made righteousness/morals to live by, to replace God’s Truth))
- e. In contrast to the Lordship of God, they used to follow after the “prince” whose jurisdiction/ power was limited to the “air” (the spiritual powers that influenced all that is in this atmosphere, so of this earth, for this world’s temporal priorities and pursuits/objectives)
- f. This “prince” is the one and the same that is operating/working in the “sons of disobedience” (ἀπειθεία - literally those unconvinced/not persuaded and so they act in opposition to what is right/true) - this is an early picture of what will be detailed more in chapter 6 regarding the actual spiritual warfare that is at work - these “sons” are in reality “inconvincible”
- g. This was who and what they used to be - now they are “... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...” (vs. 19) and will no longer be characterized (in their walk) by what the age prioritizes, believes, yields to and obeys/follows
- h. This “prince” is Satan, who himself is a liar, deceiver, hater, and self-absorbed - those who follow after him will be used by him and will **end in bitter despair** - see also Php. 3:18-21

- 2. Old companions and life philosophies are now behind - vs. 3

- a. Among these “sons of disobedience” we ALL lived (not just “with”, but “as”) - the term for “lived” is from the word “ἀναστρέφω” which at its plain meaning indicates a “turning around/ back to something again” (because it is where one naturally belongs and is inclined)
- b. This is the “lot” of us all at birth (no exceptions) - left to ourselves, this is what we all would be in one form or another - along this thought Charles Hodge wrote, “All men, Jews and Gentiles, are by nature in the same state. Whatever differences of individual character, whatever superiority of one age or nation over another may exist, these are but subordinate diversities.”
- c. Two phrases describe all of mankind (no matter their social, economical, ethnic or educational background) - the first is “ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς” (the desires/impulses/lusts of the flesh), which could be summarized as “sensual” (of the senses) living and, along with, also second, “ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν” (doing (carrying out) the will/desires of the flesh and the mind/thinking (natural thinking))
- d. Note that no political philosophy or religious philosophy of man will save him - all are infected with sin/self, and in **need of merciful grace** to be saved from its own delusional (not based upon reality/truth (the whole truth)) thinking/philosophies
- e. Paul is using these descriptions of what used to be to contrast them now, and to explain what actually made the difference (so as not to be distracted with supposed competing solutions)
- f. All of us at some point were slaves to the inclinations of the flesh and mind - this is often defined as “freedom” though, in that one sees true freedom to do what they feel inclined to do, because they “feel” like doing it (not realizing it is futile, temporal, unfulfilling, addictive and contributing to a microscopic purpose in comparison to God’s will (which will be contradictory to the desires of the flesh and of the natural mind))

Translated “While we live, let us live”

Being previously “dead” their lives were formed after their era and the temporal values of the age and were also living like the others under the influential guidance of the “prince of power” of the “air”

These also once were “death walkers” just like the others

Satan is a leader and does have power over his minions, but he is limited, and as a defeated foe, his power is found mostly in his lies, for his authority is illegitimate, and he must still live under the jurisdiction of God

Notice too that they were “sons” of disobedience - this is their nature

see I John 2:1-6

The end of Satan and his followers can be seen in Rev. 20:7-15

It is deceitful to entertain the idea that one is superior in their nature to another in and of themselves - all (without Christ) have the same essential nature and are subject to it in varying ways

This is all of mankind summarized: slaves to natural desires (physical instincts) and natural thinking (pride, selfishness), and any semblance of righteousness/religion is to appease one or both of these inclinations/objectives

This will be clarified more in Eph. 4:17-24

Even the mind of a person, because of their nature, though it seemingly conquers the desires of the body, still “becomes futile in their thinking” - Rom. 1:21

What a hopeless condition! — One’s nature is disposed against God, and their thought processes subject to limited, enslaved thinking - when all seems right to the “natural man” it still leads to death - Pr. 16:25

God’s “wealth” of mercy has not nor will it be exhausted on those to whom it was applied- notice the use of the term “vessels of mercy” in contrast to the “vessels of wrath” in Rom. 9:22-23

To the unregenerate “mercy” is unwelcome because it indicates a helpless, pitiful situation they do not wish to acknowledge, and “love” (as God applies it) — contradicts their ideal, not desiring to be freed from their sin, only from its consequences

Notice the pronoun “we” (as this is the original condition of all, Jew/Gentile, even the Apostles) - there is “none righteous” and “no one does good, not even one” - Rom. 3:10-12

We can also see this described in Col. 2:6-15 - we are “made alive with Him” and this also dealing with our “trespasses”

“Salvation” is just that - we are saved from God’s rightful wrath and secured for eternity in His goodness, because He chose to favor us

One is chosen, predetermined and adopted by God’s grace alone and is secured in it being His grace alone and not a mixture of our will and His grace

g. The core diagnosis of what they were was “dead in sin”, so they lived according to what felt good and what seemed (what they were able to reason) best - all the natural faculties, even when pulled together to work and determine a correct course/purpose for living, all reach the wrong one because of the fundamental nature - the mind, because of sin, left to fully “reason” apart from God’s intervention, becomes “debased” (reprobate, unable to reason to the **best** conclusion about anything) - Rom. 1:24-28

h. This is inescapable because it is one’s nature (φύσει - what is inherited and is made-up of the same as its ancestors) - this is what is dealt with also in Rom. 5:12 - and because of this instinct, these were the “children of wrath” (this was their expected “lot,” God’s wrath) - and such is the state of everyone (“even as the rest”) - to live for the senses and the “sensible” is normal and popular, but will end in futility and finally face God’s judgment

### C. The immeasurable riches of His grace “toward us” - vs. 4-7

1. In light of the preceding verses, some of the most encouraging/uplifting words to first hear (or read) are “Ο δὲ Θεὸς” (“But the God...”) - “But” being an adversative (contrasting, antithesis) conjunction - vs. 4

It is this needed, stark contrast that is often found missing in modern presentations of their own version of the “Gospel”

a. This same “God”, the one whose wrath is directed at these “sons of disobedience” is now shown as being “rich in mercy” and demonstrating “love” in particular to the “us” and “we” in verses 5-7 - “mercy” contrasts the sin and is the direct result of His love  
b. Their original condition was deplorable (by nature) but now, because of God’s loving mercy they are no longer the same (the “were” by nature children of wrath, and all that had characterized such children **no longer characterized them because of God’s mercy**)

c. God is described as being “rich in mercy” (ἔλεος - pity, compassion) and this in contrast to their undeserving state - there is no indication (or even hint) that God showed mercy/pity **because** they sought it or even because they realized their pitiful condition

d. The “because” is not based on anything in the recipients of the mercy as much as it is in “the great love with which He loved us” - this “great love” (πολλὴν ἀγάπην) is truly “great” (literally “much” in amount and quality) when seen how it was applied, and its profound result (applied to the “dead” in their rebellious nature deserving God’s righteous wrath) making them alive (love exhibited in a powerful result - resurrection from spiritual death (separation))

e. God’s magnanimous mercy was applied because of His great love, and this love being the desire (resulting in success) for the true best/good for us (the “dead” not knowing for themselves what is good/best, and so are at His mercy totally)

2. The overwhelming, extreme “case” in which they were, was overwhelmingly overcome - vs. 5-6

a. “Even we, the ones dead in our trespassing of God’s law” - this is one of the phrases that helps us see death for what it really is (versus the normal ideas of non-existence, non-consciousness) - it is separation from God and His goodness/fellowship

—b. And, as dealt with in 2:1, “dead” also carries with it an unconsciousness of reality and one’s actual condition and situation (and so utterly helpless to obtain life) - and this “deadness” is evidenced in sins/sinners - one sins because they are spiritually dead and are enslaved to sin in all its aspects - so not only was God lovingly merciful to ones “dead,” but to ones (by nature) that were defiant of Him and His holiness

c. God (still the acting subject in verse 5) “made us alive together” (σὺζωποιέω - not just made alive, but made alive **together** with Christ, He being the only source/means to true life) - every aspect of our salvation is tied to Christ - if He is not the focus and the sole means, there can be no salvation (no resurrection to spiritual/eternal life)

d. This is so, not because of our good intentions or aspirations for “quickenings” or release from the deadness of sin, but because of (by means of) His grace - this undeserved favor (in all actuality, a “favoritism”) directed at us resulting in being “saved” (literally, delivered from danger and placed into true/lasting/eternal safety)

e. It is absolutely essential that it be understood in its simplicity - salvation is by grace alone (by means of **God’s favor bestowed actually and particularly**) - there is no hint/indication (especially in light of the entire context back into chapter 1) of a picture of what is called “prevenient grace” (a concept of grace where God shows favor for a time, but it does not ensure the salvation of the recipient - this is the possibility and not the certainty of salvation)

f. This is at the core of “salvation” - it must not be adulterated! - see also I Pet. 1:3-5 - many, seeking to make this palatable to the unregenerate, add self-will (but at the cost of true security)



We were not raised from the dead with Christ so as to live as those still dead in their trespasses and sins - see also Col. 2:12-15

Notice the Lord's wording in John 17:14-16

This is not just a formal position, it is personal

"God's grace is manifested through his kindness towards us, and that kindness is exercised through Christ and for his sake. The ground of this goodness is not in us but in Christ, and hence its character as grace, or unmerited favour." Charles Hodge

Those deserving wrath are treated gently/lovingly - because of Christ

Because of our helpless deadness in sin, His grace is magnified/glorified/powerfully displayed forever

True saving faith (by God's grace) does provide a lasting contentment in life, though it (life) may remain or become "broken" as to its temporal connections in this age

God's grace is seen at work (evidenced) through genuine faith (not the pseudo-faith often seen that fizzles-out after time or under pressure)

Faith cannot be a "work" (since verse 9 clarifies it is not "of works"), so then, if it is not a "gift", what is it? - the reason why this is such a concern needs to be discussed first

"We are saved by grace, not by faith, which is the channel through (dia) which flows to us the Divine stream of saving grace. Both alike God's gifts." Bullinger

- g. Also, "with Christ" these (and we) were "raised" with Him - this is in reference to His resurrection from the dead (sin fully conquered), but it is more than just coming back to life - this being "raised" is to a life of a different kind (not being what one was before, instead we were "made alive") - this being "raised" follows being "made alive" for, as one raised from the dead, the tomb and death clothes are left behind once new life has come
- h. This resurrection is to a new life because, also along with Him, we are "seated with Him in heavenly places" (the word being "ἐπουρανίως" indicating more an associated seating, not being in "Heaven" now, but positionally we live above the world; *in it but not of it*) - our position is "seated with Him" in the highest of privileged positions - compare to Col. 3:1-10
- i. Notice also the personal use of the Lord's title and name - it's not "the Christ Jesus" but "Christ Jesus" (as one would reference someone they know personally) - also, once again, the preposition "in" is used - this union is all-encompassing of us and defines us) - our citizenship is in Heaven, so our focus and loyalties are changed - see Php. 3:17-21
- j. Note also that there is a sense where being seated in "heavenly places" also pictures the **perspective** we have of this world/age - it is from above as in assessing from a heavenly perspective

### 3. Made alive with Christ to openly show His generous grace "toward us" that are in Christ - vs. 7

- a. This demonstration of the enormity of His grace was done with the purpose to fully evidence it to the "ages to come" (literally, the ages coming, including the years since, and on and forever into eternity) - each generation will have this demonstration of kindness to those "dead in their sins", and it will be on display forever
- b. This grace is described as immeasurable riches (a wealth/value that cannot be fully calculated)
- c. For when seen for what it actually is, such a demonstration of graciousness to those utterly hopeless in the determined defiance of their sin, and its result being new life (eternal), with an association with the highest levels in the universe - such an undeserved rescue, ending in such a promotion is a phenomenal display that is only missed by the blindness of sin/self
- d. This display is shown "in kindness" (χρηστότητι - a word which describes the meeting of a righteous need/essential (and so it's "useful") and doing so gently)
- e. The constant point stressed is "made alive together **with Christ**," "raised up **with Him**," seated **with Him**," and "kindness toward us **in Christ**" - the focused significance in all this is Him, not us... not even our need as much as it is His grace!

### D. "Saved" by grace through faith - vs. 8-9

1. Verse 8 is one of the most quoted and memorized verses in the Bible, and rightfully so, though without the preceding context, the grace is often not seen for what it truly is

- a. The Gospel is often presented as a means to restore a "broken life" and is limited in the scope of this life and the pursuit of happiness in it (a narrow, temporal focus)
- b. Yet the true Gospel unveils the hopeless dilemma of our dead condition in sin and the "salvation" from sin and its rightful condemnation before God (regardless the condition of our life's situation this side of eternity)

2. For it is strictly by grace one is "saved" - vs. 8

- a. Why is God's grace so impressive and "on display" for all ages to come? Because it is by this grace that we are saved (rescued from eternal ruination, condemnation, judgment), and since it is completely by this grace, it is subjectively seen/implemented through "faith" (reliant trust, and this trust solely focused on His work, His righteousness, His faithfulness as the means to fulfill all requirements in dealing with our sin)
- b. There is a long-standing debate as to whether this "faith" is what is referenced in the following phrase "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" - the "safest" answer is usually to take this "and that" as referring to all that has been discussed in this chapter, but this would then also (still) necessitate that faith is a gift of God also
- c. As to the longevity of this salvation, the words "ἐστε σεσωσμένοι" (are (present tense) saved (perfect tense (as in "were saved and will always be saved"))) demonstrate **the permanence of actual salvation by grace** - all other perceived "salvations" are not actual and do not consist of true faith (and are often seen for what they are because of the stressed "works" dependence for its cause and maintaining (versus works being the unavoidable resulting evidence of the grace of God and its resulting faith)

“God justifies the believing man, not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him in whom he believes”  
Hooker

The goal is not to examine opposing positions on this verse, but to see it in its context for what it is; magnifying the grace of God and its results

This might seem harsh or incorrect, but this is what is done when anything other than God's undeserved favor is looked to for salvation

“Willingly” receiving is often added to make the concept seem more “fair” and reasonable, but the receiving is (at best) assumed by the text

It does not do us any good to entertain some “good” in us that is “of us” - there is no boasting in self in our salvation, not after it

This is the clear meaning in Rom. 4:1-7 - “faith” is counted as righteousness (and faith is a result/channel of God's grace)

We cannot make anyone come to accept the truth of this text, and many find its plain meaning offensive, but we are not at liberty to compromise or reinterpret it to make it more acceptable - it is divisive because it is true

The word for “workmanship” (ποίημα) is where we get our word “poem”

see also Heb. 13:20-21; Php. 1:6 and John 3:19-21

He not only foreordained to save us, but how He would use us in/as His work

- d. This “saved” does not describe being made “savable” or saved for a time, but **actually saved** now - one is not rescued from former sins and their consequences, but from eternal wrath due for all our sin, so this being “saved” is not subject to time or even our behavior - it is subject only to grace
- e. The text is clear and simple as regards why/how we are saved - it is NOTHING on our part as so many try to interject into this passage and context - for instance, the Pulpit Commentary reads, “... *faith indicates that attitude of men towards Christ in which it pleases God to save them, transferring to him all their guilt, imputing to them all his merit.*” - even though this sounds good and right, it takes the focus of God's favoring us (who are without any merit/deserving of it) and works in the idea that God is motivated by something He sees in us (our “attitude”)
- f. Faith is trust in His goodness/favor as being the means to our salvation - those who try to interject works/intentions of any type or degree into this, infect it (possibly fatally) with error/misdirection (simply because they cannot/will not fundamentally and completely trust Him apart from having Him acquire at least a little debt to us for our good (even though it be calculated to be very small))
- g. So as to be precise, Paul clarifies that it is “not of yourselves” - its source is not of self, but is “a gift from God” (and there is no indication of this “gift” having the qualification of it being (of necessity) being voluntarily (of the will) received/taken
- h. This is the only instance of the word for “gift” (δῶρον) used of God giving a gift - all other usages are gifts of people to each other or to God

### 3. Nothing of this is a result of “works” - vs. 9

- a. The order and logic used in this verse and into the next is very important to understand and get right - works are a predetermined, foreordained part of a true believer, but works come **after** regeneration (at least the ones of genuine saving grace), not before
- b. We are saved by God's grace and by His grace we are productive
- c. The phrase “οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων” (not out of (as a result of) effort/accomplishment) is absolute - being “of grace” our efforts cannot have any part in saving us - see Rom. 11:6 - if “works” are in any way the basis for salvation, then grace cannot be (is not truly) “grace” (for then the self-merit would be the basis (even though we might calculate His “merit” as so far above our own))
- d. The purpose of this (in harmony with verse 7) was that no one would have anything of themselves from which to “boast” (literally, be able to hold their head up high (above others) - all heads (as it were) will look upward to God and His work in Christ)
- e. The eternal souls of those around us do not have their salvation determined by us (our determination), but it ought to be concerning to us when other professing believers actually do claim, in some way, that they had an active part in their salvation - it is looked on as if motivated to be argumentative, but it deals with the core of this text; salvation by grace alone

### E. We are His “workmanship” - vs. 10

1. Often, with so much focus/attention placed on verses 8-9, verse 10 is overlooked or under-emphasized (yet this is the conclusion to this part of the discussion)
  - a. The first word “For” (γάρ) could be (in this context) translated “because” (or even “actually” or “indeed” or “since”) all indicating the reason for what has just been described
  - b. The reason being (why it cannot be a result of our “working”) **because we are the result of His working** (His “ποίημα” His work) having been “κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ” (created in Christ Jesus), and the actual results being (for) “good works”
  - c. So “good works” have a definite part in our salvation, they being the result - but these are not generic “good works” (as anyone might define “good” to their own estimation) - these are a specific set of works that God predefined (foreordained) that we would “walk in them” (that they would be our “walk” (what characterizes us)) - these likely defined for each individually also
2. We must see the clear (unobstructed) flow of thought as to not only that the “dead” were raised, but **how** they were raised, **why** they were raised and to **what** were they raised
  - a. In their deadness, God had mercy on them, and in His mercy favored them and delivered them (resurrected them out of their sinful deadness/blindness)
  - b. All this done to showcase His great grace for all time, it ALL being His work, resulting in truly “good works” that God also predetermined that we would “walk in them”

“The law says - “Do this and live;” but the gospel says - “Live and do this.” Eadie

We do not want to settle for “good works” of our own making/definition, but the real ones of God, by His design/deed- there are so many counterfeit works, it becomes distracting and confusing to many seeking what is “real”

Such truth keeps our focus more on His work in us than on our work for Him

- c. Where then could there be any boasting? - see Rom. 3:21-27; I Cor. 1:26-31
- d. Our responsibility (and the fulfillment/contentment that comes from it) is focused on submission to what He brings us to do or brings to us to do, while realizing He graces us with the ability to do it - we are HIS work
- e. “Notice, please, that the “good works” assigned to us are not our good works but His. These gifts our ascended Lord distributes to His own, and through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit we are able to use them. We are His *workmanship* doing His *works*.” Strauss
- f. Being His creation (physically/spiritually), and He having predestined us to be His children, we may also take comfort in the fact that these works were also prepared beforehand for us - His sovereign grace ensures His work in us, if we are truly “created in Christ Jesus” - these “works” are of the sort that **only by God’s grace and by being in Christ can they be done** - these excel and are fundamentally different than the standard “good works” of our age
- g. Notice also that in this verse, it is the “good works” that have been “performed” and not us - these were destined/designed in God’s eternal plan, so even they have been and will be done by God’s omnipotent grace (all by His “all power”)

#### IV. Formerly “Far Off” Now “Brought Near” Being “Fellow Citizens with the Saints” - 2:11-22

##### A. Remember what you were and what/who you are now - vs. 11-13

##### 1. The “identity crisis” of believers has been an issue to deal with in every generation - vs. 11-12

There are many “physical” characteristics (such as ethnicity) that are focused upon for distinction - so there are also philosophical differences (still uniting and dividing, to no lasting affect) - apart from Christ there is no true peace, for all other “peace’s” are grounded upon the temporal, the physical (of this world only)

- a. It is common to learn of and accept the Gospel message, but then to underestimate its actual impact (and so to have an expectation of change versus a remaining of who/what we once were)
- b. Even before the conversion of the Gentiles and Jews among them, there were identifiers which made and kept them distinct, and caused some (in this case, the Jews) to make a significant point of the lack of the “covenant sign” with the Gentiles
- c. These verses will deal with the alienation with God as well as that between the Jews and the Gentiles, both of which are resolved (made at “peace”) in Christ
- d. The present imperative to “remember” begins this section since it will be important for them to **always be remembering where they came from and how they became what they are**

##### 2. Their original “state” was even worse than that of the Jews (who also had to be brought to Christ)

- a. The comparisons used in verses 11-12 are comparisons “in the flesh”, which at its best is still “dead in trespasses and sins” regardless the ethnicity of “the flesh”
- b. But the Jews did have an advantage, since they had the “covenants of promise” and were, as a people, specially chosen of God - yet even with all these advantages, they had, by their own ingenuity and traditions upon that, drifted apart from God and His truth, so as to miss (as a majority) their promised Messiah
- c. The Jews (in their supposed moral superiority) nicknamed the Gentiles “the uncircumcision” to make the key point of their differences be on the physical sign of the covenant (made with Abraham (their father and not that of the Gentiles))

compare to Gal. 6:11-15

It does appear that signs are often deemed most important over that of actual substance- for instance, one must look Christian and the actuality of it is not as stressed

- d. Paul makes the point to clarify that circumcision is “made with hands” (the sign itself) - yet even this covenantal sign was mostly personal to its possessor and was (apparently by design) not seen/known to all but to the possessor - it was a covenantal sign required by God with the purpose to stress and remind of the covenant (and its promises) itself

So many are more interested in the practices and ceremonies of “religion” than they are of the underlying faith it is supposed to represent and display

##### 3. Also remember that you (as Gentiles) were even farther off than the Jews - vs. 12

- a. The demonstration of grace is now being stressed even greater! - their condition was (practically) separated from Christ (the Messiah promised to the Jews), excluded from the “commonwealth of Israel” (the core idea being that of exclusion from the rights of a citizen with God’s chosen people)
- b. Just as chapter 2 began, so we see again the hopelessness of their original situation - they were truly, from all estimations, without any hope, without God (the true God) in the world
- c. The grace of God is not only seen in its application to their condition (being dead in their sin), but also magnified in its application on them, while they were without any “rights” to it
- d. This does not mean that they did not long for something worthy to place their hopes in, just that there were no “legitimate” grounds for them to place their hope in/on - many “hope” to have “hope” and when it cannot be attained, they settle for something “close”

Looking on their natural situation, they lacked any seeable opportunity to be exposed to the redemptive truth

This is one proof text making the point that salvation is by no means a “right” to mankind - it is all by God’s grace (loving, merciful favor bestowed on those totally/completely undeserving)



This is one way to ward-off ungratefulness - don't forget where you came from and all that has been given - this keeps us level-headed throughout upcoming struggles

e. Notice the breakdown of their condition - 1). They were separated from Israel (God's "normal/expected" way to salvation (path to the relationship with God)) 2). And so separated from Christ the actual answer 3). Strangers to the covenants (and so unaware of them) 4). Having no hope (no true expectation of confidence, no absolutes) and so no expectation of their future 5). Without God (ἄθεοι - atheists not having the true God) and that in the world He created - these were "godless" people

#### 4. "Brought near" by the blood of Christ - vs. 13

- a. Paul now uses distance to picture the separation from God being solutioned - the original state (not being in Christ) was one of not just separation, but "far off" (we could say "not anywhere near God")
- b. This is similar to what is seen in the use of the Tabernacle with Israel, God was "near" (and so approachable) by means of a blood sacrifice - so also, through the blood of Christ "we have been brought near" (in the passive, so it's not that we come "near" but are brought near)
- c. Their (and our) being "in Christ" is in contrast to their having been "in the world"
- d. Our relationship is now one of "closeness" with our creator and it came at a high cost (the blood of Christ), dealing with the cause of separation... sin

This pictures a once unapproachable relationship (being shunned and left-out) becoming one of welcome and closeness

This close relationship with God is key to understand so as to understand then the closeness we have with all others that are also in Christ

#### B. Christ, our "peace" with God, reconciling us with God and so then with each other - vs. 14-18

##### 1. "He Himself is our peace" - "peace" as in the absence of conflict, no division - vs. 14-16

There are many ideas of "peace" and mankind constantly seeks for it, but never able to attain lasting peace - peace is often fought for at high costs and yet not lasting - there is no (cannot be) peace on earth *because of no peace with God*

To truly unite two warring factions, there must be something stronger to pull them together, and if it is to last, the point of unity must be unbreakable

The peace that is in Christ is inside its recipients, so it is not superficial or forced like the enforced peace that history sometimes describes

compare to Col. 1:21-22

Two types of people, totally opposite, are united as one for one purpose

The goal of self-expression (and so self-glory and showcased individuality) is not characteristic of those in Christ - we do have uniqueness, but *what unites us dominates differences*

With a world obsessed with the pursuit of unity, it is important for us to stay focused on what actually unites us, and not to place any other category ahead of it

- a. This approach to peace in this context is very unique - the emphasis at times can look to be peace between God and sinner, and then peace between Jew and Gentile - this text deals with both, yet focusing first on our restoration/reconciliation with God, and then the process also resulting in a union between Jew and Gentile
- b. The beginning phrase makes it clear that He is not our "peacemaker" but is Himself the "peace" (quiet, calm, peace of mind stemming from a "wholeness" of separated parts rejoined)
- c. Paul identifies the resulting peace ("made us both one"), unifying Jew and Gentile (previously an impossible task) and still the goal of so many throughout the ages - the source/cause must be known for what it is to obtain such a peace - once known, though, mankind will move-on, seeking any other answer other than this - though, this is only Jew/Gentile in Christ
- d. Christ made peace "in His flesh" - His death and resurrection not only made peace with God, but created the strongest uniting bond beyond all other abilities/ingenuities of man - it pictures (the result) as the tearing down "the dividing wall of hostility" (the "barrier of the dividing wall") - this was possibly a reference to the dividing wall near the Temple that kept the Gentiles off at a distance and there was no way for Gentiles ever to come over
- e. This amazing result was through His body, creating in Himself "one new man" and that man being reconciled to God - it is, at its most basic explanation, God sending Christ in a body, using that body as a "place" to put regenerated Jew and Gentiles together (in Christ), and so reconciling them (as one in Christ) to God
- f. The term "abolishing" may seem like a harsh term to use in conjunction with the "Law and Commandments," but this is a very specific reference (τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας - "the law of the commandments in (expressed in) the ordinances, abolished" referencing the aspects of the Law that forbade them to associate closely with non-Jews - because of what Jesus did in His body (created in Himself))
- g. This unity is not like that of what society dreams of now, a unity/peace that somehow incorporates all of our individual expressions of self/individuality - this unity/peace in Christ conforms us to Him, we losing what once characterized us and now finding ourselves "one new man"
- h. The end result being "reconciliation" (a restoration, though the underlying word is prefixed with "ἀπο" making the point of complete restoration/reconciliation to God, and once the "hostility" has been "killed," there is only left what eternally unifies - this is an underlying result of true salvation that is often missed - so either there are idiocentric (focus upon individuality) divisions, or attempts at false unity (around temporal/earthly characteristics)
- i. There is hostility between peoples for seemingly unending reasons, yet the underlying reason being the hostility with our creator and the lack of anything lasting to unite around

##### 2. Access to the Father "in one Spirit" - vs. 17-18

- a. The Lord came "preaching peace" to Jews (nigh) and Gentiles (those "far off")

God's grace is the great unifier for what do we have that we were not already given? - I Cor. 4:7

For with this relationship re-stored (and set), what else could compete as a "greater peace"?

- b. This looks to be in reference to Isaiah 57:19 - see Isa. 57:15-21 where "peace" will be communicated to those "far and near," yet no peace for the wicked
- c. The "good news" (εὐαγγελίζω - heralding-out "glad tidings") was preached/declared just as foretold by Isaiah and would be one of peace - in light of the context, it is peace that comes from knowing we are saved by God's grace - the undeservedness of it makes it clear we cannot then look upon others and treat them as to how they "deserve"
- d. Through Christ "we both" (Jews and Gentiles) "have access" to the Father and this by "one Spirit" - this is the same concept described in Rom. 5:1-2 (our "introduction" to the Father, which is the source of our peace) - here again we have the triune God at work - the Son, by Whom we have access to the Father, and this by means of the one "Spirit" (our spirits united as one ("one spirit") in/by His Holy Spirit)

C. Members of the Household of God, a "dwelling place for God" - vs. 19-22

1. There could be no greater and intimate relationship with God than what is described in these verses... we being constructed as a dwelling place for God Himself - not in taking away from His already omnipresence, but the stressing of the closest of fellowship - vs. 19

Being set apart for God's purposes and now a citizen of Heaven, we have (as these Ephesian Christians did) a new identity and association that sets how we view life now and our purpose in it

We should live in light of the full access we have to the God of the universe, and the right that has been given us in Christ to approach Him and talk with Him we being one of the family

- a. Because of God's grace, these Gentile believers are no longer "strangers" (ξένοι - someone from another country passing through and having no rights of a citizen and no home in the area), and no longer "aliens" (πάροικοι - someone who "lives near" (a neighbor) but has limited rights; so someone close to citizens but not actually one)
- b. Instead, these are now (in Christ) "fellow citizens with the saints" - "saints" being those set apart by God, and in so being set apart in His righteousness, are citizens of Heaven (God's domain) and now these formerly "far off" Gentiles are now citizens along with the saints, being saints themselves
- c. And not just citizens of the Heavenly country, but actual (rightful) members of the "household of God" - the word (οἰκεῖοι) indicating one of the family, including all the rights/privileges of the family name and association
- d. "... they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fullness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never fading inheritance." John Gill

2. The "structure," its building, the Temple of God and the building materials being us - vs. 20-22

All of this leading to the explaining of the "mystery of Christ" (in 3:4) and in it, the inclusion of the Gentiles - God planned this all along and Paul explains how He has done it and the part these Ephesian (Gentile) Christians get to play in it

The plan was "laid out" and presented and Christ was the key building ingredient (the cornerstone) in which we all are included in association with Him as more of the "building materials"

Read I Pet. 2:1-12 (being citizens of Heaven, we are now strangers in this world)

- a. The "foundation" upon which this has all been built (its construction process and means) was that of the "apostles and prophets" - though there is much debate as to who the "prophets" referenced here are, it is clear that both groups spoke for God and shared what He said (His Word)
- b. It is true that Christ is referenced as the only "foundation" in I Cor. 3:11, but it must be remembered that these references are analogous (pictures) to illustrate fundamental truths, and here in our text, how everything fit together and how God ordered its process
- c. It is common and too easy to get distracted with a focus on our part in God's work and miss the greatest point of it all being God's work - focus is to remain on what He has done, is doing and will be doing
- d. The "foundation" in this illustration is the truth and ministry of the Apostles and Prophets (spokespeople for God) declaring what God would do and then Christ being the "cornerstone" (upon which all of the edifice rests and depends)
- e. The entire "structure" is fit together in Christ - if He is removed (using this illustration) or compromised, the structure could not stand (which is why "facade" Christianity falters under scrutiny, the challenge by the Truth, or under suffering/attack and the passing of time)
- f. The picture continues to build, growing into a "holy temple in the Lord" - the temple being a place where God would come and be with His people, and now this would be built "of us" (saints in Christ) to serve as it were a "dwelling of God in the Spirit"
- g. All believers are not merely added-in, but have always been a detailed part of this "habitation" of God - the mystery not just being salvation in general, but all the particulars, down to each building stone (each of those in Christ) and the detailed process and order in which it would come together

compare this to II Cor. 6:14-18

This is likely in reference to Isa. 28:16, where it can be translated "testing stone," it being the standard by which all other stones in the structure are to be compared with

This is what the "Church" is - not an eclectic grouping of unique individuals, but a grouping by transforming of individuals into Christlikeness

God included the Gentiles (those of the world that were not of Israel) - the separated diversity made into unity

- h. The significance of Christ being the "cornerstone" (or the "corner") needs to be stressed - the cornerstone was not like it is today (mostly symbolic), it was the original stone laid which set the standard by which all other stones were to be conformed to and to fit together with
- i. This "whole building" is being (present tense) "fitted together," also a construction term used of how the building blocks were being made to fit tightly and uniformly together (they were formed to fit, or chosen for their "fit" by the builders/architects)
- j. This is in tandem with our being "conformed to Christ" (individuality/uniqueness not being the key... conformity/uniformity to Him being the objective)
- k. In their being "fitted together," the structure continues (still present tense) to grow, with each block conformed and added to the structure - it is His workmanship being a place for the dwelling place of God... God with them/ in them
- l. Each believer (building block) is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God (I Cor. 6:19), and each building-block is fit with all the other building blocks for a dwelling of God "in the Spirit" - this is all heading toward the concept of true unity (like the world will never know in its "constructions")

## V. Made Strong in the "Inner Man" "Filled With All the Fullness of God" - 3:1-21

### A. Paul the "prisoner of Christ Jesus" - vs. 1

- 1. This chapter is particularly interesting in how it was written - Paul begins (essentially) to pray for these Ephesian Christians, but then sets off into a very long sentence of clarification (verses 2-13)

Purpose in suffering is needful to not become discouraged by focusing on the apparent bad rather than the high-calling of God in it

- a. The underlying reason looks to be as a clarification as to why he is in prison, all of this being because of his particular "call" to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles
- b. Such clarification is needed, so they not "lose heart" because of his sufferings - such is of the design and calling of God for Paul in the message he was given and to whom he was sent

- 2. Paul references himself as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus," though not in the sense that Christ holds him in prison, but that on the behalf of Christ (His message and what He called Paul to do), he (Paul) is in prison (for at least a few years at this point)

As is common among even "Christian" sects, each having their idea of the Gospel, Christ and God and what life really is about - they formulate a "moral high-ground" and then use their vantage point to write-off those with the genuine message/ministry of Christ

- a. Paul was not in prison because he was a true criminal, but because of those religious leaders who opposed his work to/with the Gentiles (the message of Christ as being God's Promised One was offensive to the Jews, who expected something else (their own idea of what a Messiah ought to be))
- b. We see this particular call for Paul given through Ananias in Acts 9:10-16 and then, much later we see how he was treated when on trial in Acts 22:1-22 - multiple accusations had been made against him, and while on trial he appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11)
- c. It is commonly accepted that Paul was writing this letter from prison in Rome - he was there because of his calling to the Gentiles - Paul knows these Gentile believers in Ephesus know this, and he proceeds to detail this calling of God and the privileged calling it was to be able to share a previously unknown part of God's plan (mystery) that God had given him to reveal
- d. Such a response is in opposition to how popular Christianity defines success

It is interesting to consider that such a genuine honor for Paul cost him his freedom and reputation - but knowing what it truly was (an honor), Paul was bold and encouraged in it

### B. The special assignment of the "stewardship of God's grace" to the Gentiles - vs. 2-13

- 1. The "stewardship of God's grace" (also translated "the dispensation of the grace of God" (KJV)) - vs. 2

We may suffer because of our associations with other believers, but no matter how it comes, such suffering is under the control and purpose/plan of God (primarily) and needs to always be seen in this light

- a. It did end in God's grace being "dispensed" by means of the message of the Gospel, but the basic idea is that Paul was "graced" in the call to do what he was called to do
- b. As if reminding them (some may have not know this), he was called to bring them the Gospel
- c. Again, the intent is to call attention to the call of God and not to what might be construed as unfortunate circumstances caused by his association with them (the persecution he was facing)

- 2. The revealed "mystery" that the Gentiles are "joint-heirs" (co-inheritors) of the "promise in Christ" - vs. 3-6

- a. The phrasing in verse 3 is not just germane to this text, but is another demonstration that what was written by the Apostles was by special revelation and not just their thoughts, opinions and conclusions to turn the Church and God's work into what they thought it should be
- b. Those who had not known, could now come to an understanding of what was taking place and why it was happening the way it was ("and by referring to this... you can understand")
- c. Verse 5 demonstrates the honor/opportunity they all had in coming to know this previously unknown truth/insight into God's plan - the preceding generations had not known that God would do this and why - the scope of His redemptive work was immensely greater than any had known before - ***celebrate this reality and do not grieve or despair over the resistance!***

The needed "understanding" was not what Paul's thoughts were, but what God was doing - this is why our interest is to be in clear understanding of God's Word and not the clever musings of His servants - some are so "clever" the plain meaning gets missed



This is in contrast to the pagan usage of the concept of "mystery" which was typically mystically understood - here, God reveals through His apostle the revelation and it is made understandable by reading it - this does not discount the Holy Spirit's work in guiding us into all truth, but does show how this is practically worked out

It was not known beforehand (in this detail), not because of disbelief, but because it had not been revealed

The "New Testament Church" is distinct from that of the Old Testament in the making joined/equal Jew and Gentile

Some dismiss any earthly kingdom (future) fulfillment while others place Israel on a pedestal dismissing or underestimating our elevation in Christ

see I Jn. 2:24-25 and then Gal. 3:10-14 (showing the promise to be that of redemption and the Spirit)

There will always be those looking to dictate what God's call is on us (even ourselves looking to be the authority), but as seen here, God is the determiner and why we anticipate our need to continue learning His Word over our own or that of others

The phrase is "τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ" (the energy of the strength/ability of Him)- this describes well the grace of God after salvation to do His will

No credential is hinted at - Paul was completely unworthy and (humanly speaking) was the last one that would have been chosen for such an honorable call

It was not that Paul could not forget the guilt of his previous life as many propose, just that he was a prime example of God's grace to the unworthy (which he is seeking to magnify throughout this letter)

- d. And, by "reading this" (what he had written briefly about earlier in this letter), they would come to understand what Paul now understood regarding the "mystery of Christ" - this "reading" is an interesting Greek word (ἀναγινώσκω) typically meaning "to personally discern/know" and in this context, such personal "knowing" comes by reading/studying and so then, understanding - how this is worded is particularly interesting because it reveals a practical means by which one is "empowered" (δύναμαι - made able) to come to an understanding
- e. It often comes down, not to the inability to understand what the Scriptures say, but the inability to believe/accept it (which is at the core of so many varying interpretations which come about when the clear meaning is unacceptable to the reader) - as indicated here, the goal is to perceive the insight that the Apostles and Prophets came to see of what was revealed (revealed by the Holy Spirit... "His Apostles and Prophets")
- f. This needed clarification to ward-off the mystical approach to Scripture as well as the strictly intellectual/scholarly approach - what was written was understandable but had to be trusted/believed (received in faith, which is the great distinguisher) - no matter what, though, even diligent study would not have revealed this "mystery" (of Jews/Gentiles united in Christ)

### 3. The "nations" being heirs, members, and partakers in Christ through the Gospel - vs. 5-6

- a. Note first in these verses the distinctions between Jew and Gentiles (the nations) is still present here, and even to some degree in Christ, but are united in Him though distinct - the prefix used before these descriptive terms is "συν/συσ" means together/joined
- b. Previous generations did not know this - Jews/Israel do not become Gentile in Christ nor do Gentiles become Jews in Christ - this clarification is needed so that O.T. texts are not misused to have "spiritualized" (allegorical) meanings so as to somehow explain this text
- c. All nationalities (in Christ) are "fellow heirs" of the inheritance in Christ - even with the emphasis on the "still yet to be fulfilled" earthly promises to Israel, there is no need to elevate Israel above (at any time) Gentile believers - we are and always will be equal in Christ)
- d. All is equal now that we are "members of one body" each distinct (as differing parts of the body) but united by the will of "the Head"
- e. With such unity, we are all (in Christ) "partakers of the promise" (specifically the promise of Christ, the Savior, Redeemer saving us from the rightful judgment for our sin)

### 4. A servant/slave of "this Gospel" by God's grace - vs. 7-10

- a. Part of this first phrase, "διάκονος κατὰ τὴν δωρεὰν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ" (one doing the bidding of another (with speed ("kicking-up the dust"))) by means of the gift of God's grace/enablement and favor (to assign him as such) explains his calling
- b. The "minister" is one doing the bidding of another (in their particular service) and as such Paul identified his "job" - he was not in the service of the Ephesian Christians, but of the Lord, Who not only called him to this "stewardship" but would continually equip him (grace him) for what was needed - see I Cor. 15:9-10, Heb. 13:20-21 and Col. 1:24-29
- c. We are all called by the same Lord but not to the same responsibilities - none of us have the Apostolic calling of Paul - Paul was called and used by God's grace and so we will also, and what is to be done will be by the "working of His power"
- d. Writing of this grace in Paul's life/call, Lenski wrote, "...it was wholly undeserved by him who until the hour when the gift was made was a bloody persecuter of the gospel and of the church."
- e. Grace seen again in the unworthiness of the recipient - Paul glorifies God in all of this by stressing the magnitude of the demonstration of God's graciousness in not only allowing him to proclaim the Good News, but to one "least than the least of the saints"
- f. This was no false humility.. it was fully intended and realized that he was beneath the least ("ἐλαχιστοτέρω" - less than the least) - the key in any ministry is to seek out the grace of God at work in the "minister" and not natural talent, education, popularity or ambition - this cannot be seen on paper (as in a resume), but must be seen over time - many pursue a calling of their own choice and try to resist God's directing - the pursuit is I Pet. 5:5-6
- g. His privileged calling/service was to proclaim the immeasurable riches of Christ - the abundance that comes with Christ cannot be fully "traced-out" or measured (which will be part of the thrill in eternity never finding an end to the benefits of being in Christ) - this extreme form of comparison is useful when the limited/measurable offerings of this world are considered

Our inability to decipher “what’s going on” is not essential - His inclusion into a plan that looked to be mainly focused on the Jews perplexed the Jews, much like the “Gentiles” will be perplexed when the Jews are restored (as described and revealed in Romans 11)

Christ is the ultimate solution for what is commonly called “racism” - unity is found in Him, our likeness in Him and to Him, rather than our physical/cultural differences

One aspect of God being glorified is His being shown/proven to be right and perfect in all He performs/decrees/allows - we get to be a part of this in being used to demonstrate the rightness of following God and/or the wrongness of disbelieving Him or disobeying Him

Consider what onlooking “heavenly authorities” might or might not learn observing our lives

Angels/demons are not omniscient and are learning of God’s wisdom also (just as we will continue to do throughout eternity to come)

What an amazing display of wisdom and power on God’s part, not just before us, but for all living/thinking creatures that He would do this with fallen mankind! - the extremes of justice/righteousness fully met in the extreme of love in the work of Christ!

But to face fear one must have a greater point of focus that enables them to get past it

Note also Acts 14:19-23

Even in our culture, a soldier’s being wounded or even killed for the cause is also seen as a form of “glory” (for the one who gave their life and the cause for which they gave it)

There is always a glory when God’s servants suffer for His cause (being one outward validation of its value) - some suffer for untruth/error, but those knowing the Truth realize the true glory associated with it

- h. Part of the true Gospel message is not just the redemptive possibilities, but the actual “plan” (administration/dispensation/outworking) of God’s will (how it would be done/accomplished and that it is inclusive of all types of peoples (not just the Jews))
- i. The message also includes the reality that it is from God (His illuminating/revealing His truth and way, versus that which comes from the creative thinking and ingenuity of mankind.. also known as “religion”) - see also Eph. 1:16-21
- j. This plan (outworking) was “hid in God for the ages” (since the beginning), He being the One that created everything (thus everything finds its purpose in Him)
- k. All this was done purposely (in order that) the “manifold wisdom of God” would be made known to spiritual/heavenly powers (“rulers/authorities in heavenly places”) - but it is particularly interesting that this showcasing of God’s multifaceted wisdom will be done “through the Church” (all those in Christ united by Him, in Him, from all nationalities)
- l. That this is “showcased” before “heavenly rulers/authorities” is also very interesting - there is debate as to who this specifically references, but it is clear they are spiritual - it is most likely “good angels” (as seen referenced in I Peter 1:10-12), though it could reference all other spiritual beings in the demonstration of God’s infinite wisdom - it has been seen in human history, that God is questioned regularly, and mankind attempts to elevate himself by means of his estimates of God’s errors or disorganization - no doubt, there is something similar in the demonic realm, and the “Church” (the “called-out ones”) is used to demonstrate the genius of God’s wisdom
- m. Note also that God’s wisdom is described as “manifold” demonstrating it being a variety, and in this case, from our limited perspective, He can (and does) use an *infinite variety* of things to bring about His will (and uses us and our lives as His medium)

#### 5. Don’t lose heart - vs. 11-13

- a. All of what preceded was in accordance with God’s eternal purpose and it being worked out in Christ - this was God’s (αἰώνων - ages, “eternity past”) plan all along, and not in the least was it “reactionary” or even “responsive”
- b. All that had taken place (truly everything) was in God’s preordained plan/schematic, and has been carried out in perfect detail, even in the using of the Church to teach angelic beings of God’s ways also
- c. The actual result of being in Christ (here “in whom”) we have “boldness” (here it is the word “παρρησία” describing a freedom to speak without hesitation because there are no reprisals) and “access” (“προσαγωγή” describing admission, freedom to approach/come near) God
- d. This was a foreign concept to most, having not only the work of the Creator to bring His own back to Himself, and that (even to those who were truly “far off” and having no hope) these would have **full access to God** once again, and that **being in His mighty and holy presence there would be no hesitation!!**
- e. Seeing such a magnificent plan worked-out/performed by God Himself (and that it was His perfect design from eternity past), “I ask you not to lose heart” - to “lose heart” pictures one fainting from fear, even to the point of responding as a coward unwilling to face his fear/trouble - courage is not the absence of fear but the facing/confronting it
- f. Paul asks them not to yield to thoughts of turning and running, but in this case, because of what he was suffering - it would be reasonable to see how others would rethink their faith when their friends, those they love, are suffering because of the Faith and might not see it as “worth it” - see the response in Php. 1:12-14
- g. Many are prepared to suffer for the cause of Christ, but are not as prepared (as they might think) to have those they love suffer for Him
- h. The reason they are told they should not “lose heart” is the realization that his suffering on their behalf is in actuality “your glory” - he was suffering persecution because (specifically) he brought to them (Gentiles) the Gospel message of Christ
- i. Realizing all was a result of God eternal plan, then even the suffering of a messenger sent to bring them this message is glorious in multiple ways: one of which is that God Himself deemed it good to demonstrate the value of His message and the recipients in the facing suffering and death to bring it - there is honor with such sacrifice for the highest of causes!

### C. A Prayer for rooting, grounding, strengthening - vs. 14-21

#### 1. Strength in the “inner man” (core of who one really is) - vs. 14-16

A major part of our lives is made up of (or should be) praying to God, and not just for self, but for others - if fault is seen, pray for them and if good is seen, thank God for it

The boldness we are to approach God in is not flippant and lacking in reverence - boldness is seen in approaching Him at all, but a posture showing highest honor is always to be in place

The verb “named” is in the present tense, showing that this is still ongoing - this family (as it will be and was determined) is still growing

It could also be worded “with might to be strengthened” and this might from His “riches” (indicating far more than enough than would ever be needed) - a focus on fatigue and the amount of time and pressure passing discounts the over-abundant supply we have available

Mankind must either distract the mind or cloud it with drugs or entertainment to help it cope with the surrounding reminders of mortality

This is to be the expected result of Christ being “in us” and we in Him - it’s more than companionship; it is defining purpose, direction and the directing life direction

Our “root” and “footing”/ “foundation” are in selflessness and all things are to work from there in our lives, continually inspired by our growing insight of the love of Christ for us, the Father and for others (and will not be lured away or find attractive other “loves”)

Compare this to Col. 2:6-10

Paul uses spacial words of measurement and sizing - breadth, length, height and depth lending to the idea of its enormity

This is a good prayer example for all of us to pray for all of us

- a. “For this reason” - this (as in verse 1) plays off of what was covered in chapter 2 - since these Ephesian believers were a part of God’s “structure” (building), Paul “bows the knee” before God the Father, since it is His work, **focus** needs to be on Him, not only for what happens (and why it happens), but for the needed strength to face and do what must be done
- b. To “bow the knee” is an act of reverence, an expression of need and an act of deference - Paul does this openly, demonstrating to them where strength/ability will come from - in our day, God seems to be treated as a side-item, while our planning and institutions are looked on as the source/means to “success”
- c. The “Father” is the One from whom every “family” in Heaven and on Earth gets its name - this is the plain meaning of this phrase though it is not precisely certain all of what is meant - it could reference the idea that every “father” that has ever lived was called “father” and the term was derived from God the Father (as in the head, and so other fathers had others “connected” to them in a line of succession) - and/or it is in direct reference to God as “Father” over **His family** in Heaven and on Earth (and so we all being related to/through Him, and not just those alive now on Earth, but those **living** in Heaven now)
- d. The prayer for them was that they be “strengthened with power through His Spirit” - the source of this “power” (ability, enablement) is the “riches of His glory” (see also Eph. 1:18 where the “glorious inheritance” is needed to be seen (the point of focus, versus the achievement goals of this age)) - see also Php. 4:19
- e. It is interesting how Paul worded this prayer, when he used the phrase “riches of His glory” God being so infinitely above all the glorious people and authorities this world has ever known and what they could offer would not be **comparable** (so why seek them out?)
- f. Also, what the world cannot do (in a lasting way), the Father strengthens with His might in the “inner man” (the spirit/psyche) that is above/beyond the physical - the source being His Spirit (all in the preparation (fundamentally) that Christ be “at home” in the heart)
- g. This is the location of the actual battle/war for all of us, and so the prayer is directed here

#### 2. Christ and His love being the controlling factor and core focus of your lives - vs. 17-19

- a. The strengthening (shoring-up) work of God’s Spirit prepares the way for Christ to be the **template** our hearts conform to - Christlikeness comes by means of the working of the Holy Spirit (reminding of why we do not want to resist, grieve or quench His working)
- b. The word for “dwell” is “κατοικέω” which pictures more a settling-in, one making themselves at home as a permanent fixture - this is not a description of Christ “in us” at salvation as much as it is the **ongoing** welcome we have for Him in our hearts
- c. Christ indwells us through (it works it way out (results) as) submissive trust (faith)
- d. This faith causes us to realize that we are (nor aspiring to, but actually are) rooted and grounded in love - this is inclusive of love for God and others (because of His love of us), and “love” simply put, is **seeking the absolute best for another** (because one is not focused on themselves... thus at its core, it is **selflessness** )
- e. And, with Christ at the true center of our lives/being, we are “rooted” (agricultural term of something well enough along that it is firmly fixed and will grow) and “grounded” (architectural term of a foundation laid for the rest of the structure to be built upon)
- f. This prayer of Paul is leading to these Ephesian believers to be fully “taken-with” the love of Christ (more than any other) and so a life focused and fulfilled by it, with the result of being “filled with the fullness of God” (versus all other alternatives - emptiness, disappointment or even nausea of all other competing options)
- g. This love of Christ for us (and it being the standard for us to follow) needs to be “grasped” (comprehended) and this is no ordinary task (as some might think) - the prayer is specifically requesting they be given the strength (so as to decisively lay hold of) by being enabled to see it better, understand its details, and its results and intricacies
- h. This will take the working of Christ in us, since Paul reveals that the love of Christ “surpasses knowledge” - it is this normally impossible goal/objective that Paul prays these Ephesians, along with all the saints “καταλαμβάνω” take hold of



Each will seek out something to love and be loved by, and Paul prays these believers see the incomparably incomprehensible love of Christ and what He did because of God (and so finding "more than conquering fulfillment in God" and all other competitors not even remotely tempting/alluring

- i. The phrasing is very interesting and, even though expressing that the subject to know is beyond comprehension, Paul still prays they "know" it - the point is what they are growing in the learning of (the love of Christ that goes beyond fully knowing), with the wonderment of realizing its details, intricacies and magnitude and that it will never be exhausted
- k. The purpose for this is that they be "filled-up to the fullness of God" - we could look on this for an idea of application as being "fulfilled" and so it's the sense and realization of completeness and contentment - the seeking to be truly loved is instinctive, though the majority seek for it in the wrong sources

### 3. To God be the glory! - vs. 20-21

Paul prays that their imagination is "taken-with" God and His fullness, with the expectation that God is so above us, that our expectations cannot and must not be allowed to act as though we have Him figured out - life will be the continuous discoveries of His defying our imaginations

James 4:2 is not intended to make God dependent on our prayers, but to keep expectations informed as to why we don't have what we think we need (either because we do not ask at all or that we ask selfishly)

- a. Having just referenced the "fullness of God" Paul ends this prayer praising Him and His power ("able to do") and that beyond our imagination - many believe their faith in God should equate to God doing what we ask and as we ask it, failing to realize that we really do not desire to limit Him within the boundaries and even expectations of our requests
- b. For God "δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ" (is able above all things to do over and above excessive), and here, to super-exceed all our expectations of what we ask and even think
- c. Note that it does not say "beyond all we can ask" - God is in no way limited to what we ask and will go beyond what we request - He even gives what we need when we don't know we need it - this is clarified so as not to make the "power of prayer" being prayer itself, but always the "power" being the One to whom we pray
- d. Any perceived absurdity would not be in trusting God, but in doubting/limiting Him to our imagination - total trust in Him in everything would be the most sensible - see Isa. 55:6-11
- e. All glory belongs to Him "in the Church" (since this group is the one that ought to know/realize these facts (this reality)), and it is His Spirit "at work within us"
- f. "In the saint and in the true Church resides already a Divine force capable in itself of the mightiest developments. To attain these, not a new force, but a fuller application of this force, is required." Cambridge Bible Notes
- g. This glory is not in the Church itself, but the Church "in Christ Jesus" (for this is the source of all power, purpose and effectiveness (and authority to do what is done)) - and this glory is His "to all generations, for ever and ever" - this unique combination of words demonstrates the idea of His glory being through all generations (in time), all the way through/into eternity when there are no longer generations
- h. Realize also that this line of thinking was begun by revealing God's foreordained plan to integrate Gentiles into His work (which leads him to this "doxology") - That two groups who were so different could be so closely united provokes praise

compare to Col. 1:24-29

It's a glory inexhaustible and that will not fade, but be glorious forever - no "glory" is comparable

"Unity" is a concept humanity grapples with little lasting success, yet in Christ, it is discovered (around what is everlasting)

## VI. Walk Worthy of the Calling in the True Unity of the Faith - 4:1-16

### A. Theological knowledge/insight put into practice - vs. 1

1. This transitional part of this letter ventures into what many would deem the "practical part", yet the "practical" and the "theological" (doctrinal) must never be separated

compare to James 1:22-25 - we are not to be "hearers only" but also "doers of the Word"

- a. "But doctrine has been expounded ere duty is enforced. Instructions as to change of spiritual relation precede exhortations as to change of life. It is vain to tell the dead man to rise and walk, till the principle of animation be restored. One must be a child of God before he can be a servant of God. Pardon and purity, faith and holiness, are indissolubly united. Ethics therefore follow theology." John Eadie
- b. Paul, based on all that has been taught/revealed, urges/exhorts them regarding their "walk" - many will be able to recite and explain the doctrinal details in the first 3 chapters but will then fail to stress the need to live in light of these truths

2. Live with the respect of your calling that it deserves - vs. 1

Natural thinking leads to creating personal "callings" that wrongly define and unnecessarily divide - Paul exemplified staying focused on God's call even when circumstances were extreme

- a. Using again his situation of being a "prisoner for the Lord" Paul urges them (calls them to himself) as in offering the application (to-do's) of what was taught - Paul had lost his freedom and was being treated as a criminal because of his work for the Lord - these believers should not then magnify their inner differences and allow them to distract from their "calling"
- b. The urging/instructing was characterized using a word that dealt with balancing - "ἀξίως" is defined as balancing the scales (as in counterbalancing, placing equal weight on the other side)

Many will recite the great aspects of God's revealed will but will live as though there are multiple other priorities that outrank them

- c. The picture is one of considering their calling (to salvation before the foundation of the world, and that by the incredible exhibition of God's grace), and His revealed will to unite Jew and Gentile together as "one man" for His eternal purpose - are they living up to what this calling deserves? - see also Col. 1:3-14 and I Thes. 2:11-16
- d. "Walk" (περιπατέω) worthy of the "call to which you have been called" - not to a "call" that you've heard but don't live as though it is your call (individually and as a group) to live-out

## B. Maintaining the "unity of the Spirit" - vs. 2-3

- 1. It appears as though (because of the details of this exhortation), that there was a division in this Church (highly likely between Jews and Gentiles) - though, based on these first words, the issues were really based in pride and self-focus and not their calling - vs. 2

This makes sense in light of our calling being by God's grace - even though it is the highest of callings from the highest of sources, we did not deserve it and cannot elevate ourselves as higher (in our own estimations) than others saved by the grace of God

- a. Church fights/divisions are common to see and hear of, and few are as much of theological substance as they really are of proud wills pitted against one another
- b. The first word Paul uses to direct them back to the worthiness of their calling is "humility" (ταπεινοφροσύνη) is not used often and was a concept looked down upon in human philosophy as a non-virtue, since it was a low inner estimation of self importance (lowliness of mind) - pride is the enemy of unity because its focus is self and self's agendas
- c. The second word (akin categorically to the first) is "gentleness" (πραΰτης), also translated "meek" in other places, and is a word that describes someone with power (or even authority) that utilizes it correctly (often defined as "power under control") - William Barclay in trying to illustrate this word wrote, "The man who is *praus* is the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time."
- d. This humility and gentleness must be the controlling factors "with all", not sporadic
- e. Patience (μακροθυμία, as in greatness of soul, slow to anger because one has plenty of room/space before they reach their anger), is "forbearing" with each other, and is essential to unity, and such interactive patience is only doable as we keep before us our calling (daily)
- f. This patience brings about the "bearing with one another" - one "puts-up" with irritations and differences because of love - impatience is one of the most prominent evidences of a lack of love (not willing to endure another's "issues" or differences because we do not actually care for them) - love/preference of self breeds anger, and impatient resentments!

Meekness is not weakness, but is more exemplified strength in discerning control - responding versus reacting

The opposite would be someone with a "low boiling point" and are quick to be "short" with others

- 2. The urgency to preserve true unity the actual/proper way - vs. 3

It is built into us to desire some form of unity with others though it is often defined by agreements to disagree with others

- a. There have been multiple ideas of unity that do actually unite many, but they are either united around the wrong thing/priority/reality, or their unity is temporal and does not last
- b. The wording here is significant in demonstrating the fact that this "unity" already exists among us, so the goal is not to create it, but to preserve it - this unity is of "the Spirit" (the Holy Spirit of God, not the spirit of man as the context demonstrates)
- c. The word for "unity" is ἐνότης, used only here in Ephesians 4 and describes a oneness and agreeing unanimity - the details of what this unity consists of are outside ourselves, so it is not a unity based on personal opinions being in agreement - see I Cor. 1:10
- d. Paul is instructing them to be diligent ("thoroughly urgent" describes well the underlying word) in preserving/protecting this unity that has been given to us - the danger lies more within us as to what would cause disunity - we need to be alert always to this danger where we are the potential threat
- e. We are united in the Holy Spirit and not in/of ourselves, and this unity is bonded together with "peace" (a tranquility, calmness of assurance versus anxiety of doubts) - so unity of the Spirit is held together by the peace of assurance of our place in Christ, our "eternity past and eternity future" preordained purpose (and that together, not focusing on the individual but the combined unit)

The issue of disunity is not caused by God or His Word- it is either by self-will or by wrongly defining what we unify around (what we have been given and what actually is to unite us)

## C. The substance of this "unity" (what it is made-of) - vs. 4-6

- 1. One body with one Spirit - vs. 4

When individual parts of the body act independent of the rest, it is a sign of something wrong and in need of correction

- a. As will be illustrated again in verses 15-16, the "body" is one (with all its parts united together in purpose and function) energized by one Spirit - see also Col. 3:12-17
- b. This picture is also used in texts such as Rom. 12:3-8
- c. "Two hearts in one body would be monstrous. If there be but one body, all that belong to that body should have one heart." MH

The Church can seem to mimic a “split personality” disorder or “bipolar” disorder when not unified in one Spirit or seeking differing points to unify around

- d. The Spirit that unites us all (that is the life and drive of the unified “body”) is the Holy Spirit - divisions in the Church at large demonstrate either the absence of the Spirit (Who unifies), or aspects of His guidance that are disregarded and replaced with other (temporal) unifiers
- e. I Corinthians 12:12-31 details the unity of all the “members” into one body and one Spirit, each being unique in its usage and gifting, but unified for the purpose of the entire and actual body (following the direction of the Head (Col. 1:18))
- f. Personal agendas are not in keeping with this reality

## 2. One hope - vs. 4

compare to Eph. 1:11-23

There are competing “calls” also but they do not contain with them (offer) true, lasting hope

It is the Holy Spirit of God in us confirming/maintaining/stirring the hope within us, and so uniting us all, in contrast to a world without hope, as these Ephesians once had been - see Eph. 2:12

- a. “Hope” describes the anticipation of what is currently had and what is coming in the “call” - this “call” is yours and this **anticipation** belongs to it (no other calling can offer such a guarantee)
- b. It is this hope that is one of these 7 unifiers that holds us together and what we point each other to when distracted by the attempting “hope-thieves” of this age
- c. Describing one aspect of this hope now, Ellicott wrote, “In this, in spite of all natural and spiritual inequalities, and in spite even of our divisions and strifes upon earth, all Christians are still actually one. Hence the communion of saints is perhaps most clearly realised in the times of high spiritual aspiration, and in the near presence of death.”
- d. The idea of another “hope” should seem absurd, but counterfeit hopes come often in the form of a faith based in self/works, or a replacement “Lord” and “Father” and even “Spirit”

## 3. One Lord, one faith, one baptism - vs. 5

There is no greater unifier than those who come together acknowledging the Lordship of Christ, seeking His actual lead- yet we often see competing “lords” in Christianity looking to lead and direct rather than be led and directed

This is more than one of the ordinances of the Church, which fact is also indicated by the absence of the Lord’s Supper

- a. In verse 4, we being one body have one Spirit and as a result, a hope - the “third person” of the Trinity being the **enlivening** of the Body which is why hope remains, not being of ourselves
- b. The Lord (and there is only one), the “second person” of the Trinity, being the singular “trust” (this usage of “faith” being more “trusting” than it is “one doctrine”) - though a “modified Lord” distorts faith (for there is no safety trusting in one you truly do not know)
- c. Christ being the one “κύριος” (master), and so is the **Head of the body**, directing it where and how it should function, utilizing the life (gifting) of the Spirit to do it - but He is the ONLY master and there can be no other, for then there would not be true unity
- d. He being Lord and the focus of our united trust, is then defining of the one and only “baptism” (though this is not a reference to one particular mode of water baptism as much as it is the actual “baptism into Christ” we see in Romans 6:1-11) - there were other ceremonial baptisms but now there was only one (of which water baptism illustrates) - if we are baptized into Christ then we are all dead, buried, and raised with Him to the same newness of life

## 4. One God and Father - vs. 6

Christ came to do the will of the Father, making it clear what is the top authority in our lives - we do what our Lord commands and as He did, follow and sought after the will of the Father

As we face differences with other believers, we do it with the understanding we are accountable to the Father primarily, and such reverence ought to keep our pride restrained and submissive

This last category of “one’s” blocks any notion of a work-around to being united in these truths - too many seek unity around feeling and/or categorical knowledge

- a. There can then only be one God, one creator and ultimate planner/determiner of all things, and so there is a singular source of purpose for everything - any concept of multiple ideas of God or multiple “gods” unites factions of humanity but without absolute control and authority
- b. Christianity need not “fight” to win nor does it need to condemn, realizing this belongs to God who also is our Father - this unifies us as one family, regardless of our ethnicity, background, family and any other temporal characteristic
- c. He is the “top boss” and there is none above Him so **all He says and purposes must happen, be revered and unchallenged** - He is “over all” and this reality is what develops in us the unifying reverence He deserves, realizing there is no justified and counter-effective questioning of Him - He is not just “over all” in position but in authority and knowledge
- d. He is also “through all” and “in all” - such all-inclusive power and being, would demand unity by His very existence - He is not only overseeing all, but working “through” everything (all), and for us; this is particularly encouraging, realizing His work through us and through others - also then realizing this is so because He is “in all” - such prepositions (ἐπι, διὰ, ἐν) demonstrate His omnipresence

## D. The end result being the “unity of the faith” to maturity, building-up the Body in true love - vs. 7-16

- 1. Each is given precisely what is needed to do the “work of the ministry” (mentioned in verse 12) - vs. 7
  - a. A key word in this verse is “μέτρον” (measure) and is used to indicate that each one has been precisely given an allotment of gifting and responsibility, a gifting not natural to the recipient, but a unique gifting/gracing
  - b. Each gift is by means of and is given in “grace” (favor (undeserved)) and given without cost to the recipient

compare to Rom. 12:3-8



And so any gifting is valued because of the giver, and not just for His gracious generosity, but because of His omniscience (there are no mistakes in His "measuring" to whom He gives what He gives)

In Psalm 68 it was the Ark of the Covenant ascending to Zion that "the LORD God may dwell there" - the "locality" of the presence of God has now changed in relation to man - He indwells them, and His sanctuary is within all His saints - see also Eph. 2:22

There are still factions of the enemy roaming about to attempt to make it appear the victory is not won and that sin still is "winning the day"

There have been attempts to make this reference Christ going to "Hell" and often associated with I Pet. 3:18-10, though this is weak at best - these then attempt to make the "captivity captive" reference taking the "paradise" side of Hell into Heaven, but this too is foreign to the intent and interpretation of this text in its context

Making a side note, Matthew Henry wrote, "Observe, Our Lord humbled himself first, and then he was exalted. He descended first, and then ascended." - such a pattern should be expected in our lives to some degree also

A craftsman would understand gifts such as these - these are enablers, teachers, tool resources to do a work they desire to always do better

Some have tried to make a point that gifts are different from the office, but since the same terms are used (most of them) as offices, even the "office" should be considered a gift from God for His Church

- c. Yet, as is about to be seen, these are not frivolous gifts, but with them comes responsibility (which is shown as a privilege) and the grace-provided gifts are enablements to it
- d. All that are Christ's have been meted-out the gifting needed - there is then no reason for jealousy (jealousy/envy arise when we value one gifting above another, yet all are of equal importance, not because we can estimate their "value and use" amongst ourselves, but because they are in accordance (measure) with "Christ's gift" (what he Himself gives as He determines)

## 2. The overwhelming victory of Christ and His "filling" all things - vs. 8-10

- a. The parallel to Psalm 68 has caused seemingly endless discussions as to how Paul is using it here - it is clearly not a word-for-word translation and Paul's usage of it is somewhat symbolic - it is very similar to 68:18 where God is described/praised as the conquering King and receives the gifts from those conquered - in the Psalm He receives and here He gives
- b. Paul plays off this familiar text to now show, that in a similar way, Christ ascended also as a conquering King, only He does not receive gifts (of victory) from those conquered, He gives gifts (celebratory, and yet still gifts to carry out the results of the "win")
- c. The question regarding the reference to giving gifts versus receiving gifts is not difficult, realizing this is not a quote, but a reference to the concept being addressed (and the conquering King, receiving gifts from the conquered, shared them with his subjects)
- d. The picture of leading "a host of captives" is that of a victor parading the conquered enemy before His people - and so it is with us; all the enemies that would have normally been overpowering and dreaded are now paraded before us in the wake of Christ's complete victory over them - see Col. 2:13-23 where Paul deals with this victory and the freedom from the religious/self-righteous judgment of others, who act as though Christ's victory is not complete
- e. Paul then clarifies how the usage of "ascended" fits with the Lord Jesus Christ - to "ascend" He must have "descended" first (which He did at His incarnation), but the wording of "descended into the lower parts of the earth" is more in reference to His burial - He had to become man (born), live the perfect life to die the perfect sacrifice, be buried confirming the actuality of death, be raised to prove the victory (over sin) and then ascend back to Heaven, and the right hand of the Father (where He makes intercession for us - Heb. 7:22-26)
- f. The purpose for all this (and this reference) was to demonstrate the ultimate victory (and plan) of God fulfilled in what Christ accomplished - He "fills all things" and so "fulfills" all (not only all that God has decreed and prophesied, but all true fulfillment will only be found in and through Him, and all other paths to fulfillment will end in dreadful disappointment!)
- g. Everything (even the extremes of life and death) find their fulfillment in Him - this by Him find fullness of life, and those without/opposing Him find fullness of death (separation)
- h. Part of this fulfillment (contentment and purpose) is found in these gifts that He gives (as in celebration of the victory, and these gifts being immensely practical to our "meted-out" purposes by the Lord Himself)

## 3. Gifts given for the purpose to "equip the saints" - vs. 11-14

- a. It is sad to realize how many in the professing Church look to receive the "gifts" of managers, entertainers, personalities, caterers and self-serving accommodators all making them comfortable in their individual definitions and pursuits of the Lord's work, and so are not impressed with what He actually sent (apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers)
- b. It was He that was now the ultimate conqueror that gave these gifts - it was His right and what was done after being victorious - though these gifts are not ones that many would initially understand as "gifts" - these gifts are "equippers" for not only the "work" to be done (what our purpose now revolves around) but also for maturing/stability
- c. He gave "some as" Apostles - these were the particular ones originally sent out by the Lord with the Truth and authority - it is their teaching (doctrine) we still learn from today and is our theological direction and authority (not just in learning/knowing the truth, but in warding-off error and untruth (as will be dealt with more later))
- d. He gave some as "prophets," those speaking what God gave them to share/speak - having God's Word revealed was clearly a gift! We (as His "body") were not left to guess at what God wills or even who He is - He has provided those to reveal Him (not speak of themselves, but ONLY what God has given)

Philip and Timothy were described this way (Acts 21:8 and Timothy was instructed by Paul to do the “work of an evangelist)

In I Tim. 3:2, one of the requirements for an “overseer” is that they be “apt to teach”

The opposite idea being that of neglecting service or not equipping for this purpose and the body being weaker and disjointed

To lead is to serve - ALL leadership is service and if it is anything else, it is not true leadership - leaders serve the Lord’s directions as well as serve others in being in the “fray” with those they “lead”

It is a unified effort for us all to constantly be serving, challenging/exhorting and helping each other out - “no man left behind!”

None of us should “stand out” - the only one that should stand out is the one disobeying

This idea looks back to Eph. 1:23 where the “body” in having the “full measure of Him” is able to make “all things complete” - it’s in our unity these “completions” are found

The way this verse begins “So that we might no longer be” indicates we start this way (infants), but it is expected there will be growth to maturity

The point is not necessarily to describe “saved vs. unsaved” as much as it is to demonstrate what we are not to be

The question needs to be asked, “How do I know whether or not I have been led astray in my thinking?”

- e. He gave some as “evangelists” (εὐαγγελιστάς - messengers of good news), here those gifted at announcing/sharing the Gospel - it is commonly compared to those we call “missionaries” who go and are used to bring many to Christ, establish a church, and provide fundamental teaching (initial spiritual growth) - we all had someone evangelize us
- f. He gave some “pastors and teachers,” which are grouped into one category in the Greek - these are “shepherds” guiding, protecting and feeding the “flock,” and this by means of teaching (as our Lord Himself shepherded) - no doubt some have entered the “office” of a pastor/teacher but not gifted of God (though “gifted” with what humanity seeks and so many are shepherded away from safe “pastures” and left malnourished and unprotected)
- g. These “gifts” to the Church were given with the clearly indicated purpose to “equip the saints” which involves a “fitness” and **preparation for purpose** - the gifts and equipping are not given for personal or temporal “legacies” - these are not frivolous gifts!
- h. This word is “καταρτισμὸν” often translated “perfecting” and that in the sense (not of being flawless but) of being completed (and here, better seen in light of the following context as “mature”)
- i. And this maturing/completing is for the purpose for the “work of services” all the saints are to be doing - those so gifted are to be focused on developing the saints to serve each other and that for the purpose to “build-up the body of Christ” (the whole is built-up by all the parts being so equipped)
- j. The “body of Christ” is built-up as we faithfully serve/minister to each other (which is what church leadership is to prepare the church for) - we do not fellowship to be served, we learn and are grown to serve - remember, it is a “building-up” and not a tearing down; it is constructive (labor-intensive with clear designs to follow) versus destructive - this might involve some demolition (internally and personally), but with clear objectives to finish all that is needed (not leaving a “mess” but patiently working with each other while being humble and patient to be built-up (constructed) properly)
- k. Three aspects of the intended “destination” (“attain” having the idea of arriving at the intended destination) 1). Unity (oneness) of the faith and firsthand knowledge (personal and expert) of the “Son of God” - this objective is a harmony (commonness) of the faith (actual content of what we believe/trust) and the living it out harmoniously - see Php. 2:1-3- the objective of arriving at the destination is to arrive there together (there is no competition to be more mature than someone else, but to genuinely long that we all be growing together)
- This is us all not only believing the same thing, but believing in the same way (practice)
- l. 2). To a “mature man” essentially describing a person fully grown-up (adult versus a child, so one who has learned and is responsible and not driven by ignorant selfishness) - notice the singular “man” stressing the singularity and not the multiplicity (not one of us seeking to stand-out ahead of each other, but truly being a unified team) - see also Col. 1:24-29
- m. And finally 3). To grow fully (all “staying with it”) till we are complete according to the ideal measurement, and that being the “fullness of Christ” - in other words till we all (as a unit) become like Christ (in our thinking, priorities, character) - there is no self-expression of individuality here!
- n. The final purpose statement of this unified objective/goal results in “we may be no longer children” - the word for “children” is “νήπιοι” and is better translated “infants” (or as other have it “babes”) - these are such that are at the mercy of their surroundings, unstable and unable to sustain themselves (let alone hold-up another!)
- o. Children here are described as being as those “tossed here and there by waves” and “carried about by every wind of doctrine,” so they have no grounding and are vulnerable- many seem to be in this state because they never develop a diet for mature food and responsibility - this is illustrated in Christ’s teaching in Mt. 11:16-17 where He describes the religious leaders more like children who cry because others will not “play pretend” with them
- p. “They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination, and the consequence is, that they yield to every new opinion, and submit to the guidance of every new teacher. The “doctrine” taught here is, that we should have settled religious opinions.” Barnes
- q. This demonstrates the onset of popular/faddish teachings that ebb and flow and carrying along the immature and ungrounded

As those using such “sleight of hand” tactics play off of someone looking to get something for nothing (get rich quick)- it plays off the desire to find the easy way and yet still get everything we think we desire- compare to II Cor. 4:1-6, 11:12-15; II John 1:7-11 and II Tim. 4:1-4

These will create the sense of “winning” while robbing you of what is most valuable leaving the victim robbed (and sometimes not knowing it until is too late)

“Error organizes. It has its systems and its logic.” CBN

There are many “polite deceptions” that are commonly accepted where the truth itself and the truth about ourselves is avoided so as not to be controversial or divisive - this is what is being confronted

True truth and love go together- to exclude the truth would be to be unloving and yet to push the truth without love is to taint it and fundamentally contradict it

Again, this point seems confusing/blurry in our day with so many pushing truth that is not truth and love that is not truly love - both in their genuineness are required to work together (as God has dealt with us)

Review the warning Paul gave the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20:28-35

- r. These “infants” (immature, being uninfluenced by these “gifts” to the Church) are carried along and “tossed about” by means of “trickery of men” - this is a reality so many believers do not consider and seem oblivious to it... that there are those who infiltrate churches (and the lives of believers) using “κυβεία τῶν ἀνθρώπων” the luring scam of getting something special *just for you* (κυβεία being where we get our word “cube” and is in reference to dice) - the idea is not that of a “fair chance” - this is a setup to deceive and take advantage of the simple/naive (using tactics “of men” so not of God (Who does not need trickery))
- s. These deceivers are also described as using “craftiness in deceitful scheming” - these are “πανουργία” (creative, they have a knack for tricking people) by means of their “μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης” (methods of deceit) - as scammers typically do, these play-off of the pride, greed and even the self-righteous good intentions of others, but they use neither truth nor love - note also, these “methods” can even become “denominational” and traditional
- t. These “infants” are often plagued with an overconfidence in their discernment (they trust themselves) - Paul expressed astonishment at the deceit the Galatians yielded to - Gal. 1:6-10

#### 4. Follow the lead of “the Head” and “live in truth in love” - vs. 15-16

- a. The first word of this sentence is “ἀληθεύοντες” which is typically translated “speaking the truth” but it is a general word which could be described more as “truthing” (not just speaking it, but living in light of it as well as living truthfully (versus the deceptive tactics of the deceivers described in the last two verses))
- b. The broader idea is that of loving truth, and (in love) being open (transparent) with each other - the flow of thought is headed toward the necessity of all of us working together (all that are truly of the “Body of Christ”)
- c. The unified focus is to be “growing-up in every aspect in Him” - this described a mutual push for maturity (living in truth) and motivated and controlled in love - “It is not enough that our tongues hold to the truth; the truth must hold our tongues in love.” Lehman Strauss
- d. The truth of God’s Word and the truth about ourselves is handled in love - genuine concern for the best of each other, but never at the exclusion or avoidance of the truth, but not unlovingly harsh (the spirit of rejection versus that of restoration)
- e. Verse 16 describes the interlinking of the body parts in doing the service of the Head - yet in this process, each part needs to be working and that in tandem with those near it - each part not only functions as it was designed, but grows in harmony with the parts (joints/ligaments/muscles/arteries) around it - the whole is designed to work with multiple parts throughout, and it is “in love” we work together for this end
- f. The objective is the growth of the body (and not in the number of “parts”) and genuine love of God and His children being the driving force

## VII. Living The New Life - 4:17-32

### A. Do not live life in the “futility of the mind” - vs. 17-19

#### 1. Paul stresses the seriousness of this topic by “testifying in the Lord” - vs. 17

All the wisdom of the ages can be seen in their futility, even when their core content seems brilliant and wise, fails to find a foundation (beginning) in anything of absolute substance as well as looking forward to an “end” and realizing it is not lasting, and so not eternal

- a. As this section began (4:1), Paul now stresses more the significance of “walking” (living) in a manner worthy of the calling they received - the weight that their calling deserves will not be in association with the “walk of the nations” (it will not be like them)
- b. These MUST NO LONGER walk as the rest of the world - believers’ directives and life priorities will no longer be those of the age/world - because the nations live their lives based upon (as identified here) the futility of the mind (“futility” describing the avoidance of reality (e.g. God as Creator and the source of all purpose) and so their lives are ultimately purposeless, aimless, empty and ultimately frail and disappointing )

#### 2. The futile minds of the nations are futile because they are “alienated from the life of God” - vs. 18-19

Having been enlightened with spiritual vision and enlightenment, do not live/walk with earthly focus/sight (see it all for what it is and see beyond it!)

- a. Their faculty of reasoning and understanding (intellect) has been “darkened” (blinded), but this does not mean there is no intellect and understanding - in man’s “brilliance” there is the inability to see what cannot be seen and to know what they cannot know (apart from the grace of God) - it is, again, a blindness that cannot see that it cannot see
- b. This darkening happened to them because of the fall of man - Paul is stressing that these Ephesian Christians are no longer blind to reality and should not walk as these that are in darkness



Notice the similarities between this text and Rom. 1:20-24 (futility of mind, darkened understanding and yielding to sin)

To the unbeliever (the blind/ignorant/hard-hearted), purpose and morality are rather vague/undefinable concepts, and so they like to leave both "flexible" and subject only to personal interpretation - even those that have sought out self-righteousness are ignorant because their hard, proud heart will only trust itself and how it sees itself above others, as the Pharisees in Mt. 23:13-36

It is the difference between just existing versus living

Believing sin to be inevitable, they yield to it

It is truly divine judgment to allow one to yield to impurity and not stop them

This is a common misunderstanding, that if a little yielding to natural inclinations does not satisfy (or continue to satisfy) that an increase in quantity will suffice (yet quality is at the core of the issue)

## B. Having "learned" Christ will result in some "putting off" and some "putting on" - vs. 20-24

### 1. In contrast to all that was just described, they had not "learned Christ" this way - vs. 20-21

But texts such as Titus 2:11-14 demonstrate the actual result of God's grace on a life

There seems to be a hint of possible doubt here - in other words, if they could actually consider living "as the Gentiles do" they either did not pay close attention to what was taught, or had forgotten or had been swayed with distorted teachings regarding Christ

- c. "... life becomes empty and purposeless. For them there is no longer a creator who has invested the whole of life with meaning and direction. Without such a God, there is no answer to man's persistent question about life: 'What is the point of it all?'" C. Leslie Mitton
- d. Paul makes the point in Rom. 8:18-23 that the creation has been subjected to "futility" (same word as in our text) and this was done to have the awareness of this futility (and so hopelessness) with the purpose to cause us to look to God and not this world
- e. We are not like those whose "understanding" (διάνοια "through the mind") has been darkened (either totally blinded or darkened enough to not be able to make-out differences, making everything blur together (no definitive "right and wrong")) and so it just comes down to personal preference, one's "take" on it
- f. These typical traits are all interrelated - for instance, these are "hard-hearted" (stubborn, calloused (and so insensitive)) and so they are "ignorant" (totally unaware and mainly because they are not even looking, having a sense that they would not like what they might find, and so "suppressing the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18))
- g. The result being they are "excluded from the life of God" which is true life (true living) - this "life" is distinguished as "of God" (His life) and so in contrast to anything else one might call "life" - the be separate from God is to not truly live (see John 17:3 and I John 5:10-12)
- h. These, in their callousness ("ἀπαλγέω" without feeling/sensitivity and so are "past feeling" conviction) have given themselves over to "sensuality" - the idea in the wording is that of self-betrayal (what they do, in what they consider to be their own best interest, is actually the opposite) so they live for what seems good or feels good (they live according to the "senses")
- i. This being "without feeling" also includes the idea of not feeling the pain of the conscience (they, seeking freedom from the feeling/sense of guilt) - doing so (pursuing) for the purpose to wholly give themselves over to sensuality (licentiousness, "freedom" to do whatever seems/feels right at the time)
- j. Note that it is not just "impurity" but it is "every kind", indicating part of their goal is variety; since sin does not satisfy, satisfaction is sought-for in variety of sin, and in all this they are greedy in the pursuit of it (believing that since some sin is not enough, the solution (satisfaction) will be found in the increased amount (or more "freedom" to pursue it))

- a. There is the possibility the way this is worded, that part of the idea was that they were now considering returning to such things that they had learned were not in harmony with anything regarding Christ Himself and His Gospel - Christ-like living is not easy and "normal"
- b. This entire context counters the thinking in some sects of so-called Christianity that sinful lifestyles are not only permissible, but are to be encouraged (in light of the grace of God)
- c. Notice also it does not say "learn about Christ" but "learned Christ" (it is not just informational; it is personal!)

- d. If they might think this is what they heard, then the question needs to be asked "was it really Him you heard (heard of)?" - for in Him is "truth" and anyone truly taught "in Him" would know this (so any other claims would/should be obviously false)
- e. There is also the likelihood they had heard (or were hearing/learning) of a Christ that was not the actual Christ (as we see in our day... so many variations of the true Christ of Scripture)

### 2. They had been taught "in Jesus" to "put off the old self" and to "put on the new self" - vs. 22-24

- a. This initial wording needs to be seen for what it is describing; not a casual difference but more a **radical change** from what they were (and what the "Gentiles" were still)
- b. To "put off" is to lay something aside, to discard/repudiate it, and the tense carries the idea of what was done; but here we could put it "should have put off" and so now (clearly) we **ought** to put it off - it (as the context is stressing) is no longer who/what we really are
- c. The wording put plainly would be "that you put off from yourself behavior and conduct that belongs to (were characteristic of) the old man" - it is important to realize why it would be absurd to "keep on" the "old man" since, (as in Romans 6:1-14) the "old man" was crucified with Christ, if one truly is "risen with Him to newness of life"
- d. This was the "former manner of life" and must not be how we live now

As in taking off clothes that no longer fit to put on ones that do

Compare this to Col. 3:1-10

“corrupt” being “φθείρω”- describing a wasting away- what the “old man” loves all contribute to killing all aspects of himself

The “physical” (sensual) is not to dominate/control/dictate us since we (if we are in Christ) have been “taught differently”

So, much of living from there on out will be “putting off” what no longer fits/belongs and putting on what does

This is more than a “revamping” and rearranging of a life- it is a new way of thinking and so a new “living”

To go against instinct will seem wrong, but time and growth in the renewed mind should be expected to be needed as trust of the “old self” fades and the focus of faith is in what was “learned of Christ”

A true believer cannot be nor return to what they once were

The “new self” was “created” and was actually put on at conversion (conversion being the immediate and lasting result)- note that Paul is not setting a standard of the “exceptional” believer - he is describing the facts as they are (the truth)

This is all “after God” (it is His doing, His work) so we dare not redefine it to a more achievable standard by man on his own for his own glory

### C. What this “change of self” should result in (behavior-wise) - vs. 25-32

#### 1. Having “put off falsehood,” speak the truth - vs. 25

Deceit and lies, no matter the seemingly justified use are not to be excused - one of our core objectives in life is the communication of and standing with the Truth - some may defend themselves saying they do not lie, they just “avoid stating the Truth”

Being “members” the eye should not lie to the hand, or the ear to the head

- e. The “old self” (as those that are still lost in it) is in a continuing state of decay/corruption, and this is more than just physical decay, but describes the affects of its enslavement to “deceitful desires” (lusts of deceit) that allure with some type of promised “fulfillment” yet **cannot deliver on them** - it is addicted to what kills itself and believes the lies
- f. The stressed idea is that it is all a “former manner of life” - the remnants of the old man still cling to us and MUST NOT be believed/trusted - “he” is to be controlled by the enlivened and enlightened spirit within us (enlivened by the Holy Spirit)
- g. These (and now we) are to be “renewed in the spirit of your mind” - this is not describing the Holy Spirit Himself (since He is never anywhere referred to in this way), but describes the “spirit” within us that was made alive in Christ (the “new man”)
- h. This new state of being/thinking is “ἀνανεοῦσθαι” (made new again, as in starting anew (or all over as something else)) - it is worded this way because we do not cease to exist, but are “redone,” and though we still have our bodies, memories and (overall) the same life we had before) we are radically changed from within
- i. In contrast to what we were and **now are not**, these (and we) **are to be** (present tense, so ongoing) renewed (be being renewed (made different to the right way)) ongoing - as long as we live, we are to endeavour to and expect to be redeveloped
- j. This is not a superficial change, seeing it is “in your mind” - the inner self (what we actually think, feel) is not what it used to be - we are to live fully expecting to continue to grow/change in our thinking and so then in our outlook on life - compare to I Peter 1:3
- k. “Everything in believers is transformed. The way they think, talk, dream, plan, work, live, and even die is all changed. What they commit themselves to, what they most value, and what they hope for are wrapped up in this metamorphosis.” - Victor Kuligin
- l. This all deals with **more than just the avoidance of evil**, but the **growing/continued practice** (and thinking) **of what is right** - one does not just look/act differently, they are internally changed
- m. “The change is not in mind psychologically, either in its essence or in its operation; and neither is it in the mind as if it were a superficial change of opinion either on points of doctrine or practice: but it is in the spirit of the mind; in that which gives mind both its bent and its materials of thought. It is not simply in the spirit as if it lay there in dim and mystic quietude; but it is in the spirit of the mind; in the power which, when changed itself, radically alters the entire sphere and business of the inner mechanism” Eadie
- n. And, with this being true, the expectation is that we “put on the new self” - but this is not the pursuit of a “new and improved self” seeing this “new man” is “... created after the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” - this statement is more a statement of fact that they are to live in light of - this is the same idea also explained in Col. 3:10, where after indicating the “new man” being “put on” the “renewing” is related to (in regards to) “knowledge” (learning more and more of who/what one actually is) and so expectation is that of conformity to His image (that of God, in the truest sense of righteousness and holiness)
- p. The descriptive words that reveal what this “image” looks like are “righteousness” (what is “deemed right” by the Lord, He then being the “new self’s” standard/guide to what is right/correct) and “holiness” (what is sanctioned by God as in how to live, think, feel and so what is done/lived) - this is all in accordance with the “truth” (reality that has been revealed and so learned and recognized as exposing the deceitfulness of sin)

- a. It was common (as it still is today) to avoid aspects of the truth of any matter because it would not be well received and potentially could be divisive and offensive
- b. But because all that was just covered is the truth of our situation and identity, we are to live in the truth of how things really are (what the actual priorities are, what truly is right and wrong) and in so doing “speak truth” to those around us, and in particular, those with whom we are “members of one body”
- c. We are intertwined in our purpose and our destination, so there is no room (for whatever reason) for us to divert from the Truth or to reinterpret it (twist it) to bring temporary comfort or acceptance at the potential cost of greater harm

We being "members one of another" would the eye lie to the foot if a serpent is seen?

"Anger, as the mere expression of wounded personality, is sinful; for it means that self is in command. Anger, as the pure expression of repugnance to wrong in loyalty to God, is sinless, where there is true occasion for it." CBN

This command is particularly difficult for us since anger is very personal and addictive to the soul - sadly, we instinctively love to hate

Anger will produce a response (typically) but it must be controlled (properly calculated and not reactionary) and must not be allowed to "stew"

Our anger is often an expression of our frustration in not being able to control things

Compare this to I Cor. 6:8-11

Laziness turns into discipline, and stinginess into generosity

Sin is the end result of what our truest desires are at the time and so it is our desires that need to change - desire needs to be properly informed so what is sought-after is what is best and fulfilling

There are many words that have traditionally been forbidden for Christians, but derivatives or synonyms are often used instead (as though it is more acceptable)

- d. The word for "falsehood" is ψεῦδος (where we get "pseudo") and pictures all types of lying and misrepresentation, and is to be countered by "speaking truth" (truth in general and here not just "the Truth") - live in "reality" with each other ("neighbor", whoever happens to be around us (by God's design)) which negates the avoiding of "speaking truth"
- e. This is likely from Zech. 8:16 add God's command that Israel deal with each other truthfully

## 2. When angered, do not sin in it and deal with it quickly - vs. 26-27

- a. The word for "be angry" is in the imperative, though not necessarily a command to just be angry, but the command being more in line with the idea that ***it must not be sinful anger***
- b. There is righteous anger, where the anger is not for self but more for God and truth when wronged, misrepresented and contradicted - but since anger is emotional, it is easy to become more personal and evolve quickly into self-righteous indignation
- c. **Proper anger is "proper" because of what it is focused upon** - most anger is directed against the dispenser of wrong or untruth and not against the wrong/untruth itself - proper anger is against the sin (and if seen this way (realized) we understand the next exhortation to "not sin" in it) - compare this to Psalm 4, Pro. 14:29, Ecc. 7:9; James 1:19
- d. Deal with **your** anger - the last word for "anger" begins with the preposition "par" (from para indicating what is close beside) - we **MUST** deal with it internally, and properly keep it before God and not ourselves (personally); for ALL true wrongs are against Him and not us - if we do not do this, we harbor it and it quickly sets into bitterness
- e. Such bitter anger is an opportunity for the devil! (μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ - don't even offer/give room/opportunity (a place) for the slanderous accuser) - **don't aid him in his work!**
- f. In these two verses there looks to be the idea that there will be provocations to anger (some even legitimate), but that harboring the anger will never be the correct (righteous) response - consider what it means when anger is harbored - it is either looked upon as a personal affront (which is then self-focused) or that somehow God will be unable to deal with it (and thus anger continues) - a focus on God's sovereignty does not produce stoicism, but it does reign-in anger under the jurisdiction of faith - and so, at times, angry but never bitter
- g. Anger, "freshly" and properly motivated can be a good motivator to action, but left to fester becomes quickly infectious and can spread to others also - see also Prov. 22:24-25

## 3. The "thieving" must no longer steal - vs. 28

- a. The phrase "Ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω" ("the stealing no longer be stealing") may seem like an extreme inference with believers, unless you consider first that lying and theft were normal practices in their time and still are in ours (when considering "little white lies" and various other ways one can steal from someone else)
- b. This deals particularly with stealing, but also demonstrates the truth that, though one may come to Christ with a predisposition to a particular sin(s), they are not to continue in it
- c. Practically (as demonstrated in this verse), the best way to deal with particular sins is to pursue their opposites - here, instead of stealing (gain for little/no work), work hard "with your own hands" and work hard enough to have more than enough so as to share with others in need
- d. Look how, in dealing with this sin, the focus is turned outward versus the common pursuit of self-service (which cannot bring true/lasting contentment anyway) - the same principle applies to other sins as well, such as lust (controlled by **getting**) replaced with love (motivated to **give**) and pride (driven to build self-image) is replaced with edification (building-up/constructing others)

## 4. Do not let "filthy talk" come out of your mouth - instead check our speech for wholesomeness - vs. 29

- a. The word for "corrupt" (unwholesome) is σαπρὸς and pictures something rotting (and so negatively affecting/infecting its surroundings) - this is more than just "curse words" (though those would apply), but also encompasses "dirty talk" (which involves impure/immoral topics or inferences that leave pollution in the minds of the hearers)
- b. "...but only such as is good..." - there is to be a checkpoint for the words/sentences about to exit the mouth (and so the need to "think before you speak") - consider the possible affect of the words used (and the "pictures" formed in the minds of those hearing)
- c. Each Christian is to seek to make their words/sentences profitable to those listening (instructional, encouraging, comforting and positively challenging)



The Greek pictures the idea of “what is good for building” rather than what is useful for destroying and tearing down

compare also Psa. 141:3 and Col. 4:6

We should never talk just to talk - we need to sense the responsibility we have in each conversation and seek to benefit the hearer somehow (not based on how “profoundly” we affect others, just that it is gracious and encourages them toward/in what is right)

It has become so common to presume upon the mercy and grace of God that little consideration is given to God's Spirit and His response to our neglect and willful disregard of what He has given us to do and think

Just as any of us would be grieved when those we love neglect and are not attentive to us, so is the Holy Spirit with us when we disregard Him and His work in us

This verse is a good example of the right response to “assurance of salvation” - it sets direction, guides and defines quality of our life rather than a desire to exploit a perceived “safety” form judgment and live the life He has given for sinful pursuits

“Malice” has the idea of a mean disposition

Since this is inward and it steadily increases, it may not be realized for what it is (for what is going on) - such bitter roots in the heart/mind will come to seem normal and “just a part of who we are”

This is not a case for urgency of speech when stubbornness must be dealt with - but in such cases one must be wary of bitterness taking root and being fed from that moment on

At its core, to be “kind” is to allow self to be used

d. The phrase for building-up could also contain the idea of building-up that which is lacking (versus using critical, destructive words in response to what is seen to be lacking - don't seek to harshly and graphically embellish the flaws/weaknesses in each other, but seek to be constructive and helpful in what is said and in how it is worded)

- e. It must be noted that with the use of the Greek words “πᾶς” and “τις” (every and any) indicates ***each word needs to be accounted for!*** - see also Mt. 12:36 - the use of words (all of them) is to be seen as a serious responsibility and never to be treated lightly (especially when angered or thinking critically against another)
- f. The driving objective when in any conversation is to “give grace to those that hear” - in the most basic sense of “grace” it would involve showing genuine favor to someone in how they are treated (especially when they would seem to deserve worse treatment or destructive words)
- g. This will take focused attention during all conversations, so as to fulfill “according to the need” which we are all to be looking for when talking

5. In all/everything, do not “grieve the Holy Spirit of God” - vs. 30

- a. To “grieve” (sadden/vex) the Holy Spirit of God is included in this list of “do not's,” to drive to the core of ***why*** we do what we do and ***why*** we avoid all else - the Holy Spirit is described as being “grieved” in association with these instructions and commands, so we can safely assume that to neglect and disregard any of these would be to “grieve” Him
- b. What we are to be “putting off” and “putting on” is core to this text and its purpose/meaning- deceitful speech and falsehood of any kind, bitter anger and characteristic sins of the “old self” that are clung to (and identified with to the neglect of our true purposes) all willfully despise and downplay the work of the Holy Spirit and are grievous acts against Him
- c. Unguarded, reactionary, self-focused and downgrading speech contradicts the work of God's Spirit in our lives - to live contradictory to His purpose and work within us is to grieve Him
- d. We are to be living each day with a focus to live in harmony with His work within us and be sensitive to it (rather than calloused against it, being “proficient” in fighting-off conviction)
- e. The reason for this is our being “sealed for the day of redemption” by Him - His seal (of ownership and purpose for what we have been set aside for) is to be realized as defining of our significance and life purpose - He is the “seal” of God upon us and the guarantee of our eternal state because of the redemptive work of Christ on our behalf - to live contradictory to this should be absurd for us to even consider
- f. It would be a mockery of the seal of the Holy Spirit Himself on/in our lives to live opposite to His leading/prompting within us and to the Word He inspired for us to read, learn and follow

6. Follow the example of God in how you deal with each other (in everything) - vs. 31-32

- a. Verse 31 culminates with “malice” summing up the list of negative responses to be “put away from you” - this word describes an inner disposition to evil (indicating it is still present and needs to be acknowledged and then dealt with properly... “put away”)
- b. Once again, this list begins with “πᾶσα” indicating “all, the whole and every kind,” and partly because these are interrelated (one leads to/feeds-off the other)
- c. The first is “bitterness” which is a deep-seated disdain and resentment, and has a word picture of taking root, settling-in and growing from all that feeds it (and it is demanding!)
- d. Harbored bitterness produces (its “produce”) “wrath” (the underlying word “θυμὸς” pictures a passionate heat of inner anger that is allowed to “stew” and so it continues to increase)
- e. Such fostered, bitter, inner anger produces an active anger (expressed outwardly in words or action) - the intensity grows to a point where it becomes unbearable to not take action
- f. Just like a volcano increasing in pressure/stress, these come to explode (reflected in the word “κραυγῆ” which describes vocal outbursts of rage) - there is yelling
- g. Such explosive outbursts will not quench (satisfy) the inward burning of hatred, and will direct its possessor to slander (the word being “βλασφημία”) using as abusive wording as possible
- h. None of this must be kept! It is to be forcefully (aggressively), out of utmost urgency removed from us (our thinking and action) - it is not, in any way, to be considered acceptable
- i. In contrast “be kind” (χρηστοί - useful, usable and gracious for the benefit of another) - this sentence begins with more than just “be kind” but actually means to “become kind” (it may be a process) and it is to be expected to be “to one another” (expected of us all not just the strong)

In this “favor” (preference) it is “preferring” others before ourselves; so we are apt to defer to forgiveness rather than a grudge rooted in bitterness

When tempted to hold a grudge (be unforgiving), remember the magnitude of what was forgiven you

- j. To be kind (χρηστοί) is to also be manageable, pleasant (and so not burdensome to those around us, considering them before ourselves)
- k. To be this way will involve “tenderheartedness” and so a deep (inward) sense of compassion and pity for others (versus an insensitive irritation) - the underlying word for this pictures the “inner organs” of a person, again stressing the inward, realness of the compassion
- l. This will all lead to a truly forgiving spirit - the word “χαριζόμενοι” basically means “favor” though in the popular usage of this type of favor, it is in the context of a graciousness that is not deserved (and so “forgiving”) - compare to Col. 3:13
- m. This list begins with (literally) “Become,” indicating what they need to put-off was what they were currently and these are what they need to transform to - the core reason (authority) for this imperative is the example of God in Christ and His forgiveness (His favor shown to the undeserving) being given to us - how could we justify any other response!? - see Mt. 18:23-35

### VIII. Walk As Children of Light - 5:1-21

#### A. Be imitators of God - vs. 1-2

- 1. Chapter 5 begins also with “love” but is more a love of God (which will be demonstrated in and result in a love for our family in Christ)

Much of what is coming in this chapter deals with what would be called “immorality” - so a love of God must be a driving factor of behavior

- a. In contrast to all that was just covered in chapter 4, each is to now to be “μιμηταί” (following after and emulating) God Himself - this is no mocking imitation but a mimicking of priorities, loves, hates, and overall character (holiness - I Pet. 1:13-16)
- b. This is done as “beloved children,” children so loved (and knowing they are so loved) will imitate their parents because they love them (being cherished children, we cherish Him)

- 2. “Walk in love” just as Christ did (in His love of the Father first and us) - vs. 2

Such love is not a natural walk (like anger and bitterness are, which come naturally) - this is an ongoing, deliberate determination to give of self for others

- a. Love is demonstrated in the giving of self to and for God, which is followed by the giving of self for others - the command is that this be the “walk” (the constant pursuit for the best for another) which involves the giving of self - “Love is not just a warmth of feeling for another; it is the readiness to renounce self and sacrifice self in costly action for the good of another.” Mitton
- b. The supreme example of true love is Christ, who gave Himself for us (first out of a love of the Father (Who loved us) and then, certainly a love of us Himself) - the word for “gave” (παράδιδωμι) is often used for handing someone over to another (Jesus was “betrayed” by the Pharisees for instance (same word)), so here it lends to the idea that His “giving” was a self-forsaking for the sake of another
- c. Christ’s love was demonstrated/proved in His “offering” (giving of Himself not only in death but also life) and in being the “sacrifice” (always implying death)
- d. Such a sacrificial quality (as it was with Christ) is a “sweet fragrant aroma” before God - not a picture of the sacrifice itself smelling good in and of itself, but **what motivated it and the superior quality of “going through it”** - in contrast to the best of noble intentions being shameful later, when seen to have not followed through (so then, a bad smell) - to live as such (sacrificially lovingly) is to imitate God

As the upcoming context will demonstrate, this is now primarily a loving of God (and so an offering of ourselves to Him, living for Him (a living sacrifice) and so not living for self (self-indulgence))

A sacrifice such as this by one such as this was staggering in its magnitude!

#### B. Do not “partner” with those characterized as the “sons of disobedience” - vs. 3-7

- 1. Live as is “fitting for a saint” with a heart of thanksgiving - vs. 3-4

There are plenty of topics that ought to not be discussed, and certainly not in much detail (even when looking to demonstrate its evils)

Any such relationships or practices outside the marriage covenant between husband and wife (one for the other, not self) is sexual immorality

- a. What should not even be “named among you” - there are certain sinful practices that demonstrate an acceptance of sin as normal (and so likely not a “sin” at all) - yet, not only should they not exist among you (and openly embraced), but they should not be “named” as in speaking of them as if in a normal manner - Paul clearly did not mean that they could not be referenced/identified (as he himself does here), just that they not become acceptable topics of discussion (which could cater to immoral thoughts/thinking), nor acceptable behavior
- b. “Sexual immorality” (πορνεία - illicit physical relations, also referenced as “fornication”) - at the time of Paul such practices were accepted as normal (and some even “religious”) yet to those in Christ, such is forbidden since it is not characteristic **at all** of the “ἅγιος” (saints, holy ones) - see also I Cor. 6:15-20
- c. “Impurity”/uncleanness (ἀκαθαρσία - literally not clean, infected and infectious, dirty) - this includes more than just immoral practices but also involves impure thinking

Notice it is “all/any” impurity

John Gill described filthiness as, "... all filthy gestures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite lust..."

Shallow conversations can be motivated by an age that looks to avoid the "serious" and spends more time jesting than conversing

Do not jest/joke about others to make fun of them openly to tear them down and posture self as above them - this is often characteristic of children with each other, and just as it is wrong with them, so it is with us)

There is to be more of a celebratory gratefulness that permeates our fellowship - competitive positioning in our conduct and speech as well as conversations dominated by triviality are not to characterize us

Knowing what we know, being who/what we are, how could we yield over to such thinking and behavior (unless we are not truly in Christ and so are still "in sin" and so are really more identified with it?)

"The lust of greed overreaches itself; it loses all that is truly worth having; it may have this and that—lands, houses, and goods—but it has not one scrap in the kingdom." CBN

Living by faith is an oddity amongst many since monetary and physical wealth has been equated by many with God's blessing (and so the opposite is God's disregard or punishment

"No man, whether pagan or nominal Christian: the pagan defending a life of pleasure as the only thing to be had with even a smack of good in it; the Christian mitigating pleasant sins, saying that the young must have an outlet for their warm feelings, that men in business must put all their soul into it, and that life must be brightened by a little mirth and jollity." Pulpit Commentary

- d. "Covetousness" (πλεονεξία - greedy desire for more and the drive to get it) - this fits well with the first two words, for sexual sins do not satisfy; instead the impure thoughts and the acting on them grows the addictive desire for more by becoming less satisfying in its practice
- e. "Filthiness" (αἰσχρότης - obscenity, shameful, used of gross sexual/sensual acts and speech) so all such activities related to obscene speech/gestures and perversions
- f. "Silly talk" (μωρολογία - literally the talk of morons, and so stupid/senseless, and since this is the only time this word is used, in context carries the idea/association with indecent joking (dirty jokes)) - we are not to ever truly find sin as being funny (do not "make light" of sin) - there can also be a sense where this is in reference to mindless chatter, conversations lacking in any useful content - compare to Jude 1:10
- g. "Crude joking" - (εὐτραπεία - literally a "good turning" and in this case, a "good turning" of words; and in this context it is a turning of words in the use of "double entendres" making impure references more subtly/cleverly) - this also carries the idea of using wit to demoralize another (verbally bully them) with intent to mock, humiliate and tear them down) - humor can be useful and edifying, but it must be kept in check so as to edify and not defile or discourage its hearers
- h. None of these that have been discussed is "fitting" and so not proper and not appropriate to the conduct of those who are citizens of Heaven (inheritors of the kingdom) - such should be shameful and certainly not common, accepted and justified in Christian fellowship
- i. Instead, all of this is to be overcome and opposed with thanksgiving - rather than flirting with base and sinful ideas and topics, we should be more characterized with grateful accounting of what we have been given in Christ and what is coming as our inheritance - see Col. 3:15-17

## 2. We **are not like** those who will not inherit the "kingdom of Christ and God" - vs. 5-7

- a. The overall point in these verses is the reality that we do not have the essentials in common with the rest of the world (who are not in Christ), so we should not think it normal or acceptable to live like those who are doomed (why mimic and follow after them?)
- b. These (and we) knew "with certainty" that those whose life is characterized by such sinfulness have **no inheritance in God's kingdom** - even a criminal (a thief for instance) can do a good deed periodically, but it does not make them "good" since the majority of their life is into theft (thus they are known as "thieves")
- c. There are likely some in professing Christianity that seek to normalize sins (in Christianity) to justify their own hypocrisy (often done under the banner of "love" and acceptance)
- d. Those described in verse 3 (sexually immoral, impure and covetous (greedy)) will for certain not inherit the Kingdom of Christ - compare to I Cor. 6:9-11 and Gal. 5:16-21
- e. Covetousness (as in Col. 3:5) is associated with "idolatry" (for it is a pursuit (worshipful) of gain (often related to money/wealth) because of its assumed power/ability, and is looked to as the "power to get things done" (sadly not just with professing Christians but with "Christian" organizations/ministries)
- f. "To worship money is as real idolatry as to worship a block of stone. If this be so, what an idolatrous world is this! How many idolatrous are there in professedly Christian lands! How many, it is to be feared, in the church itself! And since every covetous man is certainly to be excluded from the kingdom of God, how anxious should we be to examine our hearts, and to know whether this sin may not lie at our door!" Barnes
- g. It is important to remember that all drives for sexual immorality and impurity are directly related to covetousness -as the last of the Ten Commandments warned against coveting your "neighbor's wife" along with their possessions - Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21
- h. Coveting is a unique sin in that it permeates the soul, and even the rich and poor alike can suffer with it and it is often a sin no one would admit to suffering with
- i. Do not let (allow) any one to deceive you by leading you into error by explaining it as something else by use of "empty words" (devoid of truth, and though intellectual sounding and though they have a majority following their "words" these "apologists for freedom" sell and spell out only fiction) - see also Gal. 6:7-8
- j. These looking to deceive/convince are identified as "sons of disobedience" - as if they are the offspring of disobedience, and so it is their nature (their genetics)



“Empty words” can come from an empty salvation (one professed yet not possessed)

Deceivers are such because they are deceived - their understanding is “darkened” so even though “brilliant” in facts, their ability to understand/discern them correctly is missing - See Eph. 4:17-18

In light of their coming punishment, “Your natural instincts recoil from partnership in punishment; let your spiritual instincts recoil from partnership in sin.” Pulpit Commentary

“Children of light” in contrast to “children of disobedience” - keep it clear which “family” you belong - see Jn. 12:35-36 where “believing in the light is what it is to be “sons of light”

Darkness cannot harmonize with light - true light repels the darkness so there cannot be “fellowship between light and darkness” - II Cor. 6:14-18

This is to be the “walk” (how one lives out their life day to day and what they are living for), so living is to be characterized by kindness, moral accountability before God’s omniscience, and the pursuit and clinging to the truth

The same word is used in Rom. 12:2 in the direction to “prove” (test) everything in comparison to the will of God

To “expose” them is to convict and refute them for what they really are in “the light”

“ἐλέγχω” is to expose so as to show it for its faults and wrongs with the purpose (here) to correct and redirect

Realizing the truth, why would we want to expend our energies, resources and time on what can only end up being fruitless?

k. “Believers can be influenced by their culture so that what is acceptable in the world becomes acceptable in the church. The text has described those in the world as immoral, impure and greedy. Because it appears that the unbelievers were not presently suffering the consequences of this lifestyle, believers might easily slide into a similar mode of life. Thus, Paul warns against being deceived by the world or by those so-called believers who have bought into the world system.” Hoehner

—l. This type of deceit is more than being tricked; it involves a change in thinking and so a change in the course/direction of life - it results in actions and inactions

m. It is possible some had been exposed to “Gnostic-type” teaching which promoted the idea that the spirit of a person was important but that the satisfaction of physical appetites was not important or not that consequential (at least as far as their eternal destiny) - this demonstrates one way that such “religifying” of immoral thinking and practice was made acceptable to even professing Christians - compare to II Tim. 2:19-22

—n. Since all of this is the way it really is (and in light of the reality of where such (who live instinctively) are headed), do not partner with them (literally do not “partake,” so do not take what they take, do not choose what they choose)

### C. Be careful (look carefully) how you “walk” (live) - vs. 8-16

1. You used to be “darkness” now you are “light in the Lord,” so live-out who/what you are - vs. 8-10

a. Notice first of all that “darkness” and “light” are not adjectives but nouns - it’s not saying you once were “darkened” but were “darkness” itself and now, you are not “enlightened” but “light itself” (in the Lord) - phrasing it as “being darkness” demonstrates one is not a victim of darkness but a participant, just as then being “light in the Lord” is to not just be a recipient of enlightenment (illumination), but to be a light bearer (participant)

b. Contrasting “darkness” to the “fruit of light” in verse 9, darkness would be: “badness” (unkind, unpleasant), unrighteous (and so immoral, indecent) and in “obscurity” (and so in error, untruth (pseudo truth), uninformed and ignorant)

c. This what they WERE, ONCE, and so not what the ARE NOW - therefore, just as a fruit tree bears the type of fruit that it is, so the actual “produce” (fruit) of light is that which is truly “good” (ἀγαθωσύνη, in this context describes a benevolence, kindness), and “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη, “the state of him who is such as he ought to be” (Thayer) and so one who realizes inwardly accountability before God and lives in accordance with it), and then “truth” (ἀληθεία, opposite to lying (so truthful/honest) and inwardly, a pursuit of the truth versus those who settle for error (fiction) because it is popular and widely acceptable (the norm)

d. With the aim/goal of walking as “children of light” the daily walk needs to be driven to scrutinize (δοκιμάζω) everything we do or are to do as to whether or not it is pleasing to the Lord (and not “my take” as the authority of what should please God, but setting out to come to know it and then hold up daily life decisions and actions to its revealing light (insight))

2. Knowing all of this, do not participate in “the unfruitful works of darkness” - vs. 11-14

a. The underlying idea is to have not active fellowship and so partnership in the “ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάργοις” labors/efforts that are fruitless (so barren, and nothing of use to offer) that are so because they are of the “darkness,” and here, not just in blindness (undiscerning of what is what) but also including the idea of secrecy (as the next verse points out)

b. Instead of the typical mutual excusing and avoidance of substantive discussions regarding accountable morals (right and wrong before our Creator), these (and we) are to seek to “expose them” for what they really are and where they lead - this is in harmony with the idea of our “discerning” what pleases the Lord and so then disapproving of what doesn’t

c. Even though society will demand it and make it a “moral” to approve and celebrate their approved “morals,” we are obligated to stand in opposition to them (amongst ourselves, for we do not have the authority or place to do so as those in Christ over an unbelieving world) - read I Cor. 5:1-13

d. Our lives are to stand as a public testimony against the sins (works of darkness, that are “works” and not “fruits” because without light they are only futile efforts missing the necessary ingredient to bear true, beneficial, life-giving/sustaining fruit)

e. Because, in reality, it is “shameful” (embarrassing, disgraceful) to speak of the things that are done in secret (not just for those doing them, but it is wrong for us to talk of them (describe them))

f. The idea of “do not participate” (συγκοινωνέω) doesn’t deal again with “no fellowship/participation” with such, but now (also) the fellowship with what they do (whether or not they are around us/present) - we can “be partakers” with them when alone or even when with other professing Christians

g. Dealing with the wording “expose them” Lenski writes, “But withdrawal is not enough. This is the idea of monks and nuns. The light is not to be placed under a bushel, the salt is to bite into the world’s corruption... the obligation of administering reproof is not to be reluctantly added to that of avoiding fellowship but to be added with zest. That is what the light is for: not just to shine for itself but “rather” also to blaze out into the darkness and to expose what that darkness covers up.”

This “exposing them” is not just the Church looking out from itself, but also inwardly- see Titus 2:11-15, II Tim. 2:1-4, Pro. 13:18, 15:12; 29:1

Exposing sin is done by “shining light” (the contrasting standard of righteousness, which by its very definition, reveals sins for what they are) to deal openly with sexual sins but to offer details is to defile the hearers and to detail what angers one about another may turn others unnecessarily against the “accused”

h. It is possible this is peripherally related to verse 3 (“... not even be named among you...”), but the basic idea is clear - it is disgraceful, shameful to speak of the things “they do in secret” - sins sometimes must be dealt with publicly, but they need not be detailed in the church - note also these are done in “secret” with an initial inference that they know these are embarrassing and seek to conceal them so as to keep another “front” before others (shame conceals)

i. The first part of verse 13 is clear, but the second part looks to be more challenging in understanding Paul’s intent - The literal rendering of the first half is simply, “Everything exposed by the light is made visible” (it is revealed/seen for what it truly is), which is why not just what we say/teach is enlightening, but also what is done (how we live day-to-day is a light also (“fruit of light” in verse 9 being “good, right and true”)) - the second half, literally word for word is “for everything becoming visible, the light is”

Without light (if the light of believers is hidden/concealed) darkness is unchallenged and nothing is known/seen for what it really is (what it hides)

j. The plain idea is that of light revealing things for what they are, and so when light is shown upon them, they are “lit-up” (either showing sin for what it is, or in a sense “enlightened” with the result of confession and then repentance)

Compare this to Rom. 13:11-14, I Cor. 15:33-34; I Thes. 5:1-8

k. The first part of verse 14 “For this reason it says...” is likely a summarization of Isaiah 60:1 and 26:19 (though we are not certain) - but the challenge given is clear - the “sleeper” is to wake-up out of sleep (and here, the sleep is death (spiritual death and so not genuine sight as to what is really going on)) - believers/Christians (who are the “light of the world”) are the ones “awake” and alive, so if they/we are not living and speaking the light and fruit (product/outcome) of light, by what practical means will the “sleeping dead” arise and “become light” themselves?

In a broad (overall) sense, we as being Christians should “shine as lights” resulting in either being repulsive to the “darkness” or being used of God by “Christ shining in/on us” to bring others out of darkness and into the light

—l. The “becoming light” of verse 13 occurs because “Christ will shine on you” (and so a true believer is one no longer “in darkness,” no longer “sleeping” and having come to Christ (revealed/enlightened by His light) will obviously (naturally (of the new nature)) shine (be outstanding just as light is in a dark environment) - see also II Cor. 4:1-7

m We as believers must not, in any way, come to be like the world in darkness, becoming like it by thinking, prioritizing and then doing what it does - pursuing “what is pleasing to the Lord” (vs. 10) is what we live to do (it is our life principle and purpose as to why we are still here)

### 3. Watch your step! - vs. 15-16

a. With careful, precise accuracy (ἀκριβῶς), look how you walk (live) - this is a demand for detailed scrutinizing of not only direction in life, but the steps we take to follow it, for if the destination is determined and daily steps go a different direction, though the map was correct the goal/destination (what we were to be headed toward) is not achieved

So don’t aspire to be like and so live like a “fool,” for even the desire to do so is foolish (to those knowing the truth)- so those pursuing (longingly) after a fool’s way of living, demonstrate a blindness and the absence of the true light

b. The contrasting concepts of “wise” versus “unwise” point out the “it’s one or the other” reality (and so it’s not a “both/and,” as in you cannot “walk” as someone who is wise and as one who is unwise at the same time (the attempt to do so would place one solidly in the “unwise” category anyway)

c. Some translations translate “ἄσοφοι” (“not wise”) as “fools” which is how those that live by instinct and by popular (godless or self-righteous) philosophies are described

Without such a ransoming of time, the days will be spent for evil, so it is an active effort to re-purpose the time we’ve been given for the “fruits of righteousness” and discerning what is pleasing to the Lord

d. In contrast, “make the most of your time” (the word “ἐξαγοράζω” is used of a ransoming (buying back (and so “redeem), rescuing from loss) the time given (and this is individualized to each of us (how much time we have been given), because “the days are evil” - the days in which we live in “time” are already evil and tend toward “badness” (baseness, uselessness and moral depravity)

There is a need to stay focused on day to day living and decisions, since instinctive living (by feelings) will yield to the temptation of convenience over the discipline needed to best use the time/opportunity

Not as “opportunities” for self to cater to self, but to invest our time in/for eternity

#### D. Live daily with the objective to recognize/discern the will of God - vs. 17-21

1. “So then” (because of all that has just been written), do not be unwise (senseless, with the idea of not having the inner insight into what is what (what is REALLY going on around us)) - vs. 17-18

As is Rom. 12:2, with a mind being renewed the result being the “proving” (discerning through “tests” (experimenting in obedient trust to see firsthand that God’s will is always good, acceptable and perfect)- His will is being accomplished whether we realize it or not, so the “wise” look for it

This demonstrates the danger of such sins; they are enslaving and destructive, ruining the lives of those ensnared in them

Both are controlling (Spirit and excessive wine/drunkenness)

The drive to find contentment is strong and many will sing the praises of various “intoxicants” because they provide a temporary escape from pain/sadness, but they do not last and must be yielded to more

One of the clear results of the filling work of the Spirit in us will be that of sincere communication of praise, joy and thanksgiving about and to God together

These words are not describing a “performance” mentality and motivation - public “praise” needs to be practiced with all seriousness

If music is seen as a way to stir-up true worship it is backward - music can affect almost anyone though the result might be “inspired emotion” alone with no wonderment because of the lofty truths/realities we have been exposed to

There may be some who seek to offer praise to God based upon the authority of their own sincerity alone, but none of us even has the right and authority to praise God apart from the intervening work of Christ

- e. The reason to walk “exactly” (precisely, carefully paying close attention) is to seize (take full advantage of) the opportunities (possibilities for investing the time you have now, and “invest” is a good term for us to think of since it also carries the wisdom of living in the present with a focus also on the future)
  - f. There is a sense similar to the term “*carpe diem*” (seize the day/moment), only the origin of that phrase also included the idea to do so with little thought to the future (consequences) - our use of the idea is more motivated **because** we are thinking of the future - life is full of opportunities to redeem the time and those that are “wise” are so, because they realize this
- a. The best way to understand, practically, what it is to be “unwise” is the lack of a focus to pursue “what the will of the Lord is” - there are at least two ways discerning it is practiced; pursuing the revealed will of God and growing in the understanding of it and in doing so, coming to discern/see that God’s will actually is being accomplished all around us
  - b. The “foolish” are those in the pursuit and accomplishment of their own will and are truly foolish (ἄφρονες - without insight, literally unable to see the connection of things (as in cause and effect)) and so here, a “fool” is one who does not seek to recognize/acknowledge God at work
  - c. Do not “be getting drunk with wine” - this specific type of intoxication is an opposite to the idea of a “careful/alert walk” - it is a clouding of the senses and sensibilities, and a removal of normal “guards” of thinking and so then, behavior (such as one cannot see how they can stop)
  - d. The reason why this is so foolish is that to give one’s self over to such intoxication is synonymous to “dissipation” (ἀσωτία, which literally could be translated “unsavedness” and pictured one surrendered to their vices to a point of no apparent recovery/rescue)
  - e. In contrast to those that have given themselves up/over to intoxication, believers are to be “filled with the Spirit” as those that are “saved” from such addictive/controlling influences (and their assured end) - the contrast is not so much the substance (Spirit versus wine) as much as it is the result - fulfillment is sought in/by God’s Holy Spirit rather than any of life’s intoxicants
  - f. The filling of the Spirit is commanded here, “Be being filled with the Spirit...” so the pursuit of His fulfilling by full pursuit of His control and so His “fruits” (see Gal. 5:17-25) - all true contentment/fulfillment will only be found in Him
2. Communicating and edifying each other (to and with) with songs/singing and thanksgiving - vs. 19-21
    - a. The singing and music in this context must be qualified as being of “the heart,” as this is no ritualistic formality to “work-into” our times of corporate, public “worship” - this text (and Col. 3:16) ought to make us be alert to the status of our hearts when singing and speaking to each other of things which should be influenced by the filling of the Holy Spirit
    - b. “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” look to be three types of music and poetry and are clearly of such that is honoring to God, and expressions that are verbal and musical - we know it is “music” that is meant because of “singing and making melody” and is a practice that ought to be common among us, not out of necessity but mainly out of desire (personally and ministry (motivation) for to each other
    - c. There must be more personal preparation for such times so that it be genuine and encouraging to each other - true praise should be a response to the truth; the goal is to genuinely be struck with (affected by and stirred) with the truth and that when expressed in music, it stirs us more and points us to it even further (it is a reinforcement)
    - d. The focus need not be on style and “tastes” but there should be some discernment as to whether or not the message (restatement) of truth is what is most stirring - note also that “making melody” is a word that means “to pull, twitch, twang, play” and is in reference to playing an instrument (typically one with strings)
    - e. As mentioned previously, the key criteria is that it be “with your heart to the Lord” - directly put, this is a sincere expression of the heart directed to the Lord (so if done verbally with others around us, we need to be careful not to do so for their hearing or to draw attention to ourselves)
    - f. The content should also include (at some point) giving thanks to God the Father by means of (the right given to express such praise) because of (by means of) “our Lord Jesus Christ”



That music is the venue for such “communication” here and in Colossians 3 is interesting - the ministry of informative music is more important than is often considered - it needs to be delivered with all seriousness and sincerity as well as listened to with the same

There is no doubt that music can make us “feel” and be stirred, but we need to seek to utilize it (in our gatherings as Paul is using it here) as a means to minister, challenge and not in any way to manipulate

The thankfulness is expressed to “God the Father” because it is His will that controls “all things at all times” which is the source of our thanks (and not our optimistic read on circumstances) - we know He directs everything and that is the reason for our thanking Him for everything

Mutual submission is the result of submission to Christ since part of our responsibility to Him is subservience to His structure/order especially in His rule and organization

It is true that a husband is not told to make his wife submit, but it should be seen as a point of disobedience to the Lord when she refuses to do so (as any other point of disobedience before God)

The qualifier “as to the Lord” also ensures a wife is not required to go against the clear will of God if told to by her husband (though she must remember much of her faith/obedience to the Lord is demonstrated in her submission to her husband)

Every husband ought to be serious about his responsibility and accountability

- g. The purpose for the musical ministry and interaction is in response to the instruction to “speaking to one another” as in Col. 3:16, where its purpose is “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing...” and, again, all of this with “thankfulness in your hearts to God”
- h. All of this is a result of the filling work of the Holy Spirit in contrast to “dissipation” (“unsaved behavior and actions of those given over to being filled with intoxications”)
- i. Music is a major focus in societies throughout history and was either meant to influence or was a response to being influenced - the second appears to be the use here (in contrast to the results of being intoxicated) - Paul’s usage of “πνευματικαῖς” (spiritual) narrows all of the music to be considered ministerial (as is instructed here) to be “of the spirit” rather than “of the flesh” (just meant to “feel good” (which has its place) just not in this situation)
- j. Notice also, these references to music/songs is more for the purpose of communicating spiritual concepts and instruction to each rather than a “religious experience of worship”
- k. Core to the purpose of doing this is a heart of thanksgiving (and this together in our singing and music) with heartfelt thanks “πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων” (at all times for all things) - such was the purpose of songs like “Count Your Blessings” versus the opposite where we count and focus on our perceived or confirmed troubles
- l. Again, the absence of gratefulness is at the heart of so many sins and sinful thinking (including lust and covetousness), but the result of the filling work of the Holy Spirit is gratefulness without which we are left only with other “intoxicants” to temporarily calm our inner disappointments, fears and frustrations
- m. The last result of the filling work of the Spirit is mutual submission, which is generally a deferring to each other and that out of reverence to Christ - we are all (in Christ) answerable and subject to Him as “the Head” - this is not a command to enforce (police) submission on each other since this is to be a personal responsibility and is a personal accountability - the exception to this is in I Tim. 3:4 where one desiring to be an “overseer” is required to keep his children in subjection (submissive obedience), for if he cannot do this, how can he manage “God’s church”?
- n. This is not meant to disqualify the next verse (wives *submitting* as to the Lord) since their submission to their husbands is core to their submission to Christ - see I Peter 5:1-7 where it deals with “subjection” and “humility toward each other”

## IX. Family Structure, Submission, Love and Required Obedience - 5:22-6:9

### A. The submission of wives to their husbands - vs. 22-24

- 1. Paul, having just dealt with the concept of submission (mutual humility and deference to each other, that each of us is to pursue for ourselves (to live by) and that as being subject to Christ in reverential fear), moves on to a wife’s submission to her husband - vs. 22

- a. This verse (along with Col. 3:18, Titus 2:3-5 and I Pet. 3:1-6) are either disqualified as being impractical, “just cultural” or outdated or disregarded altogether - it has become a concept that is mocked and considered absurd to promote in a society that prides itself in an idea of “equality” that is used to ignore verses like these
- b. Wives are not told to submit to their husbands because the husband deserves it - the motivation is given as “to the Lord” (Who also obeys the will of the Father)
- c. We would not say Christ is any less God in His subservience to the will of the Father, just as we would not say that a woman is less than a man in her subservience to her husband or in her role as “helpmeet” in the family structure
- d. It is important also for us to keep the distinctions between the family and the Church separate - the husband is the “head” of his wife and the family, but the men of the church are not the “head” of the women of the church (there are separate roles and responsibilities in each)
- e. “... they cannot be disobedient to their husbands except by also resisting God, who is the author of this subjection.” Geneva Bible Notes

- 2. The organizational structure of the family is compared to that of Christ and the Church - vs. 23-24

- a. As far as the family unit is concerned the husband is the “head” (the greater authority rests upon him and he is to be deferred to (submitted to) because of this God-give role)
- b. The husband is compare to Christ here as well as in verse 25

This verse deals with “headship” and is a structural/organizational usage here (for order) - see also I Cor. 11:3 (where the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband and the head of Christ is God (the Father))

Compare this to I Peter 3:1-6 where the same command is given, only the possible result is that a disobedient husband might be “won” - the “gentle and quiet” spirit of a submissive wife is described as “very precious” before God’s sight

Lenski —

The marriage relationship is given a very reverential comparison in these verses (Christ and His Church) - no doubt many broken marriages find their roots in the disregard for the weighty obligation given the couple (before God and others) in their marriage

- c. Keeping this in context, these next admonitions are in keeping with “be careful how you walk,” “be filled with the Spirit,” “making best use of your time,” and “giving thanks always and for everything to God...”
- d. The wife submits to her husband (as to the Lord) because the husband is the “head of the wife” even as Christ is the “Head of the Church” - to **downplay** the need for submission (and the responsible (structural/organizational subordination) of the wife to her husband) is to downplay the Church’s submissive state to the Lord
- e. The same command is given in Col. 3:18 where the wives are told to “submit to your husbands” and there the reason is that it is “fitting in the Lord” which is the same idea here in Eph. 5 (“as to the Lord”) **as in doing it for Him** (not that the Husband is treated with equal reverence for Christ) - so if she does not submit (ὑποτάσσω - place under the authority of another) to her husband, her wrong is not against him, but against the Lord
- f. “God made marriage so ideal, lovely, blessed, perfect. Sin entered and disturbed this relation. Eve fell, Adam followed, God’s order was subverted. In the state of sin the divine and blessed order is disturbed in two directions: wives seek to rule their husbands and refuse loving subjection; husbands tyrannize their wives often to the point of enslaving them. Endless woe results.”
- g. As the “head” of his wife/family he is its guide (director), and following the example of Christ he (the husband) is the family protector and “savior” (deliverer, preserver) - as the Church submits to the Lord (in faith), so she does to her husband (not basing her “obedience” upon the degree of **rightness** she can discern in the direction given to the family)
- h. Making the point clear, Paul restates it in verse 23, the wives are supposed to submit to their husbands “in everything” (as in all areas) - this reiterates the vital importance of young ladies’ considerations of someone they might marry

## B. The love of a husband for his wife - vs. 25-33

### 1. The wife is told to submit (as to the Lord) and here the husband is told to “love” as the Lord loved - vs. 25-27

And this is why, so often, couples are urgent to define who wronged who first

This word does not describe a vulnerable emotion (as in “falling in or out of love”) but a determined choice, obligating itself as the core to its definition

The parallel verse to this is Col. 3:19, where in addition to the command to love his wife, the husband is told not to be “embittered” or “harsh” against them

A loving husband lives for his wife more than himself, thinks about her **with** himself and seeks out opportunities to sacrifice of himself for her

A man who wears himself in the pursuit to love, cherish, provide and protect his wife will be far more satisfied than the man who lives for himself

One of the reasons for marital vows is to keep us focused (and even “reigned-in”) when circumstances would have us break our vows or seemingly justify backing-out of the covenant

- a. It is very common for husbands to focus on the “submission verses” of the wife and for wives to focus on the “love verses” for the husband (as though an infraction on either “side” releases the “offended party” from their personal obligations)
- b. Yet the wrong of a wife does not free him from his obligation to love - the underlying word for “love” (ἀγαπάω) carries with it the idea of “preference” (willful/determined) and was also defined as “discriminating affection which involves choice and selection” - his love for her is not **dependent** on her submission to him
- c. The defining illustration of this “love” is profound - the husband is to love his wife in the same way “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” - Christ was the initiator of this relationship (as the husband is the “covenant initiator” of the marriage and so bears a greater responsibility in his comparison to the role of Christ) - at the very beginning, his relationship was described as “leaving” (his family) to “hold fast” (cleave) to his wife (and so “forsaking all others keep thee only unto her so long as you both shall live”)
- d. Another related text to this instruction is given in I Pet. 3:7, where his love is lived out in the pursuit to live with his wife “in an understanding way” (“learning” her so studying her and getting to truly know her) and this so that his prayers not be hindered - note that the husband is not **commanded** to be the “head” of his wife, just that **as** the “head” he is to love her
- e. Christ “gave Himself up for her” and in so doing He not only died for her, He lived for her! Her need, her happiness, her life was more important to Him than His own - this is at the heart of what love actually is and how it will be demonstrated as such - **love gives!**
- f. This verse (and even the ones dealing with the submission of a wife) demonstrate that normal (instinctive) pursuits of fulfillment are not ways to **true** fulfillment - there has been a confusion in our day of the distinction between contentment and gratification... they are not synonymous and living for gratification will **block** -out true contentment
- g. The husband’s love and the wife’s submission is not based on (finds its source in) emotion - these “obligations” given here are to “box us in” as to our will so that when the emotions are not supportive (or even contradictory to what we ought to do) we still think and act as we should - children (the immature) base their action on emotion - it should be considered that a consistently loving husband lends to (typically) a consistently submissive (respectful) wife

The "washing of water" is in reference to actual cleansing and was also a ritual before marriage- see an example of this in Eze. 16:1-14 (note that later in this chapter Israel is unfaithful but in vs. 60 He is still faithful)

The wife is a child of God (in Christ) and He has sanctified her and cleanses her regardless of the husband - but since this is used of demonstrating the Lord's love, it can best demonstrate the love of a husband

Notice God's use of the marriage example and His love of Israel even in her adultery - Hosea 2:1-23

His (the Lord's) love of His bride leads to her striking beauty and not to her being worn-down under the rule of "an iron fist" - instead, He having given Himself for her has given Himself to her

His exemplary love leading to this end achieved by His sacrificial love for His bride- such love the husband is to emulate

Men and women often enter the marriage covenant/union with either selfish expectations (the opposite to love) or with low expectations, yielded to the thought that it will degrade over time in its quality and will ultimately become a necessary, tolerated "burden"

This is far more than the physical union, for the body is enlivened by the soul, which they strive to be united in as well

It needs to be clear, that a man is to love his wife because he is told to do so- his direct accountability is to the Lord and not to his wife

No man (in his right mind) hates his own flesh - even some of the most hateful ungracious people we meet take care of their basic (physical) needs

- h. Notice also that the husband is told to love "your wife" (so the focus is to remain on his wife) and also note that the husband is not told to love his children (though that can be assumed he should) his primary obligation in His love (in the family) is his wife
- i. Christ's love for the Church was lived-out/demonstrated in His giving Himself for her for the purpose to "sanctify her" having "cleansed her by the washing of water by the word" - He gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice with the purpose not just to "save" us but to "sanctify" (set apart to God, and in our case this is the restoration of what was lost at Eden, restoring the most important relationship we will ever have)
- j. This is an act of total love (for the good of the other) and was not done out of reciprocation - "Christ loved the Church not because it was perfectly lovable, but in order to make it such."
- k. The cleansing agent here is the "word" (the Word of God), the Truth - this may be illustrative of what a husband should strive to do; in a sense "wash his wife" with the Word of God - this would not involve a dictatorial approach in "preaching" to his wife or policing her, but as the Holy Spirit does with us, leading us into "all truth" - see also Titus 3:1-8
- l. His love for us is not "ritualistic" in its ongoing work and so it should be with a husband and his wife - he loves her all the time and it is proven throughout the day, everyday, in not only his sacrificial giving of himself, but his joy in doing so - any portrayals of Christ's insistence on our "holding up our end of the deal" are a misrepresentation of Scripture (and the Truth) - sanctification is His work and the cleansing process that comes with it and from it is His work (which will assuredly be done - Php. 1:6, I Thes. 5:23-24)
- m. He (Christ) does/did all this to "present to Himself the church, glorious" and this, not by superimposing a set of strict laws and restrictions upon her, but by being the loving standard-bearer and standard-fulfiller Himself - this "glory" (shining brightness, and as a bride, beautiful) being so because she is presented without flaw (no spots on her person or clothing, no wrinkles (as with age, haggard by time) so she being (in this analogy) with flawless skin and attire) - it will be His work to present the Church (His bride) to Himself
- n. "That love which led Him to die, in order to bestow pardon and to secure holiness, is not contented till its object be robed in unsullied and unchanging purity... As He originally loved her in her impurity, how deep and ardent must be His attachment now to her when He sees in her the realization of His own gracious and eternal purpose." Eadie
2. "In the same way husbands should love their wives..." - vs. 28-31
- a. This entire context demonstrates an incredible picture and explanation (by analogy) of the significance and closeness of the marriage union - once seen in light of what it truly is supposed to be, not only is divorce not considered, neither is the allowance or expectation for a "bad marriage" anticipated - husband and wife are the closest relationship possible (and that by design and why it is used of Christ and His bride (the Church))
- b. The husband is to love his wife in the same way Christ loves the Church (sacrificing for her, endeavoring for her welfare (eternal welfare included)) - it should be as natural as his love for his own body, for the way this verse is worded, his wife is his body (as reiterated in verse 31)
- c. Just as the husband would, without thought, care for his own body so he is with his wife (her hurts are his, her loves are his, her needs are his) and he lives to care for her - they are inseparable (until death "do us part") and this is to be seen for what it is... a marvelous thing!
- d. Simply put, a man that loves his wife is loving himself (in a positive sense) and the opposite then being true also, that a man that does not love (as Christ does) his wife, does not and is not loving himself (and answers at least partly why so many husbands feel discontent... not actively pursuing and loving their wives)
- e. A husband is to treat his wife as his own body, sensitive to her needs constantly seeking care for her (as he would his own body), "nourishing and cherishing" her (ἐκτρέφω- care for and the feeding to maturity/strength and good health) and (θάλπω- to keep warm /close and so to cherish, holding close to one's self) - again, all this just as Christ does with the Church
- f. Paul again reiterates our (the Church) being "members of His body" and so the wife is with her husband (and he ought to see it this way throughout life) - if ever the statement "I lost part of myself" fit (at a death) it fits most in the marriage union
- g. So being "one" it is the closest relationship on earth - no other is described in such terms



There is likely a connection to the reality that “woman was taken from man” (Adam’s rib) and Adam recognized her as such, “... bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23)

The word for “cleave” (or “hold fast”) is προσκολλάω describing a being “glued together” (a permanent bonding of two parts to make one unit)

It should be remembered that when we come into a marriage we bring our own issues/flaws with us and that we, in many ways, compound our flaws; but it should be absurd that the union should be divided over them; instead we now have a partner “in the work” to grow out of them, maturing together with our friend

One of the reasons we should work to not only maintain a “good” marriage but a “close” one is to portray the best representation of the eternal union of Christ and His church - we have come to look on marriage as “ours,” but it is God’s which is why it is to be “entered into reverently, in the fear of God”

“Not as much as he loves himself, but as being his very self.” Vincent’s Word Studies

It should seem obvious that the time for lists and “standards of qualifications” should come before the marriage covenant is solemnized

The context is that of a Christian family, though a child that is a Christian in a non-Christian family should not see themselves as exempt from this - there is a need to trust the omniscient purpose of God for them in their specific life situation

- h. Being a “member of His body” we (each in the Church) are cherished - in the same way a husband is tender and caring with his wife (as he would be with anything he cherishes) - notice also that the use of “members” is used elsewhere also of being a part of an organism and not an organization (it is inseparably connected (as a limb of the body))
- i. This is all undeniably true “Therefore and man will leave his father and mother... the two will become one flesh” - vs. 31 - Paul quotes from Genesis 2:24 (as the Lord also did in Mat. 19 when stressing the original purpose/result in marriage) - the two become one (and are to regard themselves as such)
- j. They join together to become a new family, and as the Lord clarified, “What God has joined together...” (in His institution for His purposes) “...let not man divide”
- k. Trying to describe the reality of the two retaining their individuality and yet then being combined, Richard Batey (quoted by Harold Hoehner) wrote “Each personality is enlarged by the inclusion of the other, ideally effecting the perfect blending of two separate lives into one. Continuity with the old personality is not broken, but the radical transformation resulting from the intimate personal encounter creates a new self.”
- l. There is then a breaking off of two other “fleshes” (families) to make a new one (there is a separation from the one to be permanently integrated into the new) - the man and woman now become a different unit - many are apt to continue to define themselves (in a marriage) by their individuality, failing to see the incredible purpose and result of God in their identity being identified from that point on as “one” together
- m. Seeing the high divorce rates (even in Christianity) it is clear that this reality before God is not seriously recognized as such; two who are joined in marriage, and realize the truth/reality of what is described here, also realize the permanence of it and live in light of it (and as we must live with our bodies even in times of pain, so the husband and wife will live together and work to resolve issues rather than seek to justify separation)

3. The reference to “Christ and the church” is a profound “mystery” (a revealed truth that would not have been known had it not been revealed) - vs. 32-33

- a. The “mystery” is not the marriage of a man and woman but that of the closeness/oneness the Lord has with us as His “bride,” and so then His “body” - His love and care for us was not a fact we would have anticipated, for even a merciful forgiving God may be such out of pity, but Christ loved and gave Himself for us and has a closer relationship with us, so close that the only other parallel to be used in human relationships is that of a husband and wife
- b. So, even though he has used a “great mystery” in explaining the love a husband should have for his wife and the submissive spirit the wife is to have with her husband, it is not so “high and lofty” so as to be disregarded as not “practical” or not applicable
- c. Instead, because of its profundity, “let each individual among you” love his wife (even as himself) and the wife “φοβῆται” (reverence, highly respect above all other men) her husband
- d. Verse 33 summarizes the core “focused responsibilities” in the marriage, the husband cherishing and tenderly caring for his wife (above all others in this life), and the wife to respect her husband (first and primarily because he is her husband/head and she does so “as to the Lord” and not out her estimate of his achieving some list of qualifications she has determined of her own authority)

C. The obedience of children to their parents (with special instruction to Fathers) - 6:1-4

- 1. “Children obey your parents” - this is addressed directly to children as their specific point of duty in this family structure (of God) and also in accordance with their responsibility to “be careful how you walk” (5:15) ... so it is something they will give account before God themselves - vs. 1
- a. The word for “obey” (ὕπακούω) literally means to “hear under” so naturally includes the first idea of actual listening/hearing then heeding
- b. It is the directing attention to the proper authority (the parents) for direction and day to day living so as to get overall direction for life - such direction will come from somewhere (either other sources (illegitimate when in contradiction with the parents) or when the voice they hear and heed the most is their own (ultimately) and not their parents)
- c. There is an inclination in children to push back against obedience to their parents (early on) as they encounter the early battles of their will versus that of their parents

The focused obligation of the child is first “in the Lord” (which would exclude any command of a parent to disobey the Lord), but even in this, there is to be an “honoring” them as their parents

So for a child not to obey (listen to and heed) their parents would be a disregard of the Lord and would be the opposite of “righteous” (and so immoral)

This “promise” (declaration) is a general principle of life - this is one of many factors in life that practically define life direction, so exceptions ought not be sought out (as if, for some nefarious reason to disregard it)

It is likely not considered, but one of the benefits of long life is the learning more of God’s Word, ways and instruction/ commandments

Children, when they can come to know of and understand this text, should also come to realize in their learning the “fear of the Lord” to reverence His use of their parents (another underlying reason to honor them)

Fathers must be disciplinarians but this is more than “punishing” and correcting children - it is consistently, lovingly and firmly dispensing chastening with the intent to grow them by enabling them some successes and a path to pleasing the parents

A synonymous term would be “browbeat” (to bully and badger)

Of all the possible investments given to a man in life, his children ought to be one of the highest on his list!

- d. Contrary to popular thought (that the youth of our age have a natural, greater intelligence in life), Proverbs presents them as having “foolishness bound” in their heart and having the need of the “rod of discipline” to “drive it far” from them (as all beginning as “children of wrath” in Eph. 2:3) - see also Pro. 13:24, 22:6,15; 23:13-14, **22-26**; 29:15,17
- e. This obedience (again) is not because the parents deserve it (which determination would not belong to the child anyway) but is “in the Lord” (notice it is not “children obey your parents *who are in the Lord*”), but the **obedience** of the children is “in the Lord” so it is to/for Him
- f. This is an excellent text to demonstrate children as also “being in the Lord” and their individual responsibility to Him (not providing for an “excuse” for their neglect of their duty to the Lord in **first** obeying (submitting to) their parents - this is where they begin
- g. The overriding reason is that it is “right” (δικαιον - righteous as it is “approved by God”) - it is right because it is God’s design and structure/organization

## 2. Honor your parents - vs. 2-3 (“honor” being “Τίμα” describing the placement of a high value upon)

- a. This quotation from the Law shows that the honor due a parent is not something the parent is to “earn” (for, again, who would determine when it was finally deserved?) - even the honoring of the parents is “in the Lord” for it was the Lord that gave them their parents
- b. This commandment includes a “promise” (ἐπαγγελία - essentially something openly announced/declared) which includes “that it may go well with you” and is also associated with long life - this doesn’t necessarily promise each obedient child long life and a “happy, easy” life, just that if one is not obedient and honoring of their parents, it will not “go well” for them and they will not live as long
- c. There is much to read regarding responses to this being the “first commandment with promise” (Deut. 5:16) and that the second commandment also looks to have a promise attached to it - the basic answer would be to realize the word for “first” (πρῶτος) could deal more with the idea that this is the first/primary commandment (which also contains a promise) that children must first learn and obey (since the other commandments will typically be communicated and stressed by the parents) and it comes with a promise (one commandment of many to come and many promises to come with them)
- d. In our current text and the one back in Deut. 5, both have interactions with their own contexts, for Deut. 5 is followed by the instructions to parents in teaching their children in Deut. 6:1-9, teaching them “diligently” with the intended result to be “... that your days may be long...” - as parents should be focused on teaching “... these words that I command you today...” so children need to be focused on obeying/honoring their parents
- e. It should also be noted that honoring goes beyond our childhood as demonstrated in Christ’s rebuke of those that used a religious “loophole” to avoid support of their parents (see Mark 7:6-13) and this the Lord equates with “reviling” their parents

## 3. Fathers do not exasperate your children - vs. 4

- a. This command to fathers (in particular, but would likely apply to mothers also) is a prohibition to their provoking their children (the words “to wrath” or “to anger” are implied by translators with the idea of being “provoked”)
- b. The word for “provoke” has a variety of applications and in this usage is often associated with inconsistency in dealing with the children, frustration and bitterness when constantly berated with no encouragement (so they are “picked-on” versus the “nurturing” that is to be given) - some frustration may come also when fathers treat their position as a position without responsibility (failing to allow their children to see to that they (the fathers) have the God-given responsibility to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”)
- c. The parallel text to this is Col. 3:21 where the same command is given to fathers, as the reason that they do not “discourage” their children (cause them to “lose heart”) - it is not uncommon for fathers to become so self-focused that they lose sight of the priceless souls/hearts within their children and so lose compassion and understanding for their children’s needs above their own
- d. Instead, fathers are to be focused on their responsibility to “bring them up” (ἐκτρέφω - to bring to maturity by nourishing) - this is the core focus of the father with his children and yet, so often, fathers delegate this to the mothers alone, not investing themselves into their children

The word is rightfully translated as “discipline” but many narrow this down just to times of correction when children disobey - it is the idea of always being in a state of teaching/educating, yet qualified as being based on all that with is “of the Lord”

This is in line with the instruction to Israel in Deut. 6:10-15 which demonstrates the practice and method of training children in the Lord and how it becomes the “normalcy of life practice” (day-to-day and not just “special times” of training)

Note the significance of Pro. 22:6 in the “training up” of their children and the need to discover “the way he should go” and assist/direct them in it

#### D. The obedience of “slaves” to their “earthly masters” (with special instruction to the masters) - vs. 5-9

##### 1. Those “obligated in service” obey those over you as you would Christ - vs. 5-8

That Paul is addressing the slaves demonstrates their elevated value as Christians - though their earthly position was “low” compared to others, it was now being described with a purpose before God - none of us is above the other in Christ, so **anything** we do in His service (for Him) is of eternal value

This “obedience” is not just to the “good bosses” but to the “unjust” ones as well according to I Pet. 2:18-23 - this, of course, does not mean we obey them over God, but we obey them as we ought, knowing we are answerable to the Lord

The opposite idea of “sincerity” (singleness) of heart would be to have ulterior motive or to harbor resentment/bitterness

Much has been written regarding this text in dealing with the concept of slavery and the need for social reform- dealing with this concept Lehman Strauss wrote, “Reforming the world and improving social conditions is nowhere included in the Biblical definitions of the gospel. We are not to preach social reform to the unsaved. Here is the message for Christians”

- e. The substance of this “nourishing” (what they are “bringing them up” with/in) is with the training/education/discipline (all three are included in the underlying word “παιδεῖα”) - they teach their children the fundamentals of life yet it is to be “of the Lord” - many dads teach life skills and wisdom to their children but fail to truly teach them what would be characterized as the **training** “of the Lord”
- f. According to Hebrews 12:5-10, as the Lord, loving fathers will discipline their children because they love them (and such discipline is ongoing and not just in response to some infraction of the household rules and is to be looked on as “building” the children and not “repairing” them)
- g. The other half of this “nourishing” of the father is “instruction” (νοθεσία which comes from two words the first “νοῦς” (mind) and the second “τίθημι” which is the placing/fixing/establishing something; so here it is embedding something in the mind)
- h. This word is also translated as “admonish” which provides another idea of what is involved- putting both ideas together we get **an ongoing training with the focus to make permanent** (solidifying the essentials) in the minds of their children - we might call these embedded concepts “life principles” to direct how they **see** things and their thinking throughout life all focused and founded on that which is “of the Lord”
- i. The role of the father is one that is very involved in the bringing-up of their children and is to include far more than just providing the physical/monetary needs of the family - to fulfill their responsibilities they will need to **truly communicate with their children**, be involved in their lives and discover the **unique** needs and God-given purposes of their children

- a. “Slaves” is the best (accurate) translation of “δοῦλοι” and carries with it not just the idea of being “owned” by another but “obligated to the service of another” (for many possible reasons)
- b. In the time this was written there were “slaves” and “freemen,” just as there were upper and lower classes of people (based on rank, wealth, family); and as the wife with her husband and children with their parents, there is an **organizational** structure (ordained of God) that is to be followed/honored
- c. This is why the wording “according to the flesh” or “earthly” is used, denoting that in Christ we are equal but “in the flesh” there is an orderly design to be followed - this does not mean there are no “aspirations,” just that they are directed to a **higher focus** than those of this age regardless who we are “under” here, we are (primarily) **directly under the Lord of the universe**
- d. These are to be “obeyed” (listened to, heard as one who knows they “under” another and so what is said is expected to be followed) - it (obedience) is done with “fear and trembling” (as if in the dread of going against them, not just because of the consequences they can afflict, but because God has set them over us, and negative **consequences** for neglect of responsibilities or an actual infraction are warranted)
- e. Adding further, this obedience is not “faked” but is to be “ἐν ἀπλότητι τῆς καρδίας” (in singleness/purity (and so sincerity) of the heart) - the key is to be genuine in the respect and effort of what has been assigned in the same way we would to Christ - just as the wife submits “as to the Lord”, and the children obey “in the Lord,” so those placed under the leadership/oversight of another heed their “bosses” as they would the Lord (since it is ultimately Him we are serving in all we do) - see Col. 3:17-24
- f. To define our service even more (to be what it should be), he goes on to say it must not be done with “eyeservice” (service rendered only while the “master” watches); in short, it is to be doing our best-quality work whether or not it is seen or ever recognized - “wrong serving” is also characterized as being done as “men-pleasers” (which would seem odd to the casual observer not recognizing all we do is to be **motivated** to be pleasing God)
- g. The highest of qualifiers (the one that is to rule all other motives) is that we do what we do as the “slaves of Christ,” and in being so, we follow His example in “doing the will of God from the heart” (for it is His will that controls all, so it is the highest of honors to be part of those privileged to be any part of the outworking of His revealed will, even in the smallest ways)
- h. And since He sees the heart, we must be focused on doing His will “from the heart” (ψυχή - the soul, our innermost self/being) - it (the heart) is how we actually think “on the inside”



It has been suggested that if we “freely serve” we are freed from slavery (bondage) - it is our internal resistance (of the will) that makes so much seem like “slavery”

“for he who is in the Lord—having been called a servant—is the Lord’s freedman: in like manner also he the freeman, having been called, is servant of Christ...” I Cor. 7:22 (YLT)

There will no doubt be bad bosses and employers throughout life, but our focus is never to be on them but the Lord (the One we actually serve) and so we are not complainers nor characterized as “rights claimers”

We can look on this now as those being “bosses” or managers, or anyone responsible to direct the labor and even lives of others

The worst of “masters” are those that see themselves in a situation as having absolute authority and not as answerable themselves

There are those in authority than can get much done with “threats” motivating their employees with fear - this is a good example that just because a methodology produces results doesn’t mean that it’s the best - “building a team” takes more work and patience which is why it is often not an approach chosen to follow

There is often a controlling influence of “partiality” based upon the standards of “prominence” of the age in which we live - truth and true wisdom should be respected no matter what, rather than allowing undue respect to drift to the person used to dispense it - once loyalties are transferred to them we become vulnerable to wrong influences

Oswald Chambers defined discouragement as being “disappointed self-love”

- i. It is “μετ’ εὐνοίας” (with kind/gracious enthusiasm - “good will”) we are to serve “as to the Lord and not to men” - vs. 7 - this makes it clear that the service we render to our “masters” (employers, authorities) is NOT to be done for them but “as serving the Lord” (not because we are to “act” as though this is the case, but because IT IS the case)
  - j. Think, if we take this verse as it is meant, all our services/work is to be done to/for the Lord which results in greatly increasing our scope of “the Lord’s work!”
  - k. Its texts like this, when compared to others texts such as I Cor. 7:17-24, that “make more sense” when seen in light of our placement, wherever we are at, as service to the Lord - Joesph was a good example of one not seeking promotion yet who was diligent in everything he did (even in prison) and was profoundly used of God
  - l. But what if we serve one that is thankless and inconsiderate? We know (or are to know) that “whatever good thing each one does” (this is a precise accounting of each “good” (done as what is right and for the Lord and His eyes)) will truly receive back from the Lord Himself - nothing is missed! Not only will it “all” be worth it, each part of it will be worth it also!
  - m. These rewards are equally the same whether one is a slave or is free - each is to give of themselves to what God has given them to do, where He has placed them, using what He has given them to do it with - seen in this true light there are not situations when one is unfairly advantaged in the work for the Lord - each position and provision is provided to do what should be done (as our Lord knows best)
2. Those overseeing others in their service, “do the same to them” and don’t “threaten” - vs. 9
- a. “Masters” is accurately translated and (at that time) would have referred to those who “owned” the slaves in their service - we do not have such “masters” today but there is a similar sense in being “owned” in our employment (if we desire to be paid)
  - b. Those with such “power” and authority (that are in Christ) are instructed to “do the same things to them” - what (generally) does this involve? They also handle their responsibility as to the Lord and, in a sense as the Lord would/does oversee... He is patient, forgiving, demonstrates constructive grace in the improvement of those under Him, and much more
  - c. There is to be (for the Christian “boss”) a realization that “leadership is servitude” - this thinking lends to following the exhortation in this verse - in light of how this verse ends, “masters” are to do what they do with a sense of “fear and trembling” before the One they answer to
  - d. They, in doing “the same thing to them” should also do what they do as “doing the will of God from the heart” - when in any level of authority, believers should see it as from God and for His overseeing purposes (and not as some ego-booster for themselves)
  - e. These are to “give up threatening” - the word here (for “give-up”) is from “ἀνίημι” and includes the idea of “loosening-up” - we might put it like “ease-up on those under your care” as far as “the threatening” is concerned - plainly put, it is leadership without motivating by imposing some form of fear and intimidation
  - f. The reason for this is the realization that both are accountable (and so will answer to) the same Master “in Heaven” - notice how, for believers, the “social class distinction” fades
  - g. Notice (by example) the relationship between a believing “slave” and a believing “master” in how Paul appeals to Philemon for the cause of his runaway slave Onesimus (Phm. 1:4-22)
  - h. “This is practicing the lordship of Christ. The wife submits to her own husband “as unto the Lord”, and the husband loves the wife “as Christ also loved the church”. Children obey their parents “in the Lord”, and parents raise their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”. Servants are obedient “as unto Christ”, and masters treat their servants as their “Master in heaven” would have them do. Each person, in submission to the Lord, has no problems submitting to those over him. Jesus said the way to be a ruler is first to be a servant (Mt. 25:21). The person who is not under authority has no right to exercise authority. Warren Wiersbe
  - i. For with God there is not “partiality” - the underlying Greek word is “προσωποληψία” and has a word picture of “accepting/receiving a face” (as in one being recognized as prominent or socially significant and because of this are shown special treatment)
  - j. Each has their “position” from God and must not lose sight of it - there is no such thing as a “self-made man” and if we lose sight of our position in life, at any time of life (as being from Him), we may either yield to pride or succumb to discouragement/self-pity

## X. Be Strong in The Lord So You Can Stand Against the Accuser - 6:10-24

### A. "Strength in His might" - vs. 10 (in contrast to any other sources of "power/strength")

1. Power (or empowerment) includes several areas such as the power of authority and influence, or the power of one's physical strength and abilities, the power of philosophy - all of which have followings and, typically, one prevails over another

"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. - II Cor. 12:10

The key to distinguishing what is what, will be found in the pieces of armor (faith, righteousness, salvation)

- a. This is partly why Paul states this the way he does, since if he had just written "be strong" there would have been a variety of options from which to choose - Paul had come to realize that his own **personal** weakness (against outside influences that had proven to be stronger than he was (and even his personal resolve)) and so could write, "when I am weak I am strong"
- b. We may find ourselves, when feeling weak in ourselves or when other "objects of faith" have failed us, considering yielding to one of the various "schemes of the devil" and yielding the "fight" (not necessarily turning on God, but by **offering no more direct resistance against the enemy**)
- c. Writing in response to the spiritual armor and the needed strength, John Eadie wrote, "And the valour is spiritual, as is the armour; for physical courage and intellectual prowess are often alas! allied to spiritual **cowardice**."

2. In conclusion to all that has been written, "Be strong in the Lord" - vs. 10

Clearly, God gives us natural strengths and intelligence to use for Him, but we must not **trust** in them - we need to see ourselves (even at our "strongest") as utterly dependent

It is a trusting in His ability and purposes in situations we find ourselves sensing our helplessness

- a. "Be strong" is "ἐνδυναμοῦσθε" picturing an "empowerment" (in, most likely, the passive so it would be a submissive posture toward God's work in empowering us with His "might" (versus that of ourselves or of this world)) - so, don't resist His empowering work with misdirected dependencies
- b. It may seem like an unnecessary detail, but this verb ("be strong" in the Lord) is in the imperative, as if knowing the tendency to find strength in something else - this is as commanding officer trying to make it clear that we are headed into a battle against an enemy that is far more intelligent/strategic and powerful than we are - we **MUST** utilize what He gives us more and not our own strength and ingenuity
- c. This strength is to be "in the power of His might" (the sovereign strength (κράτος)) of His ability (ἰσχύος) which is **unlimited** - we receive regular reminders of this need when we switch to trusting self and quickly find ourselves without strength and courage and clearly overwhelmed by circumstances (proven to be out of our control)

### B. Put on the whole armor of God so as to stand firm - vs. 11-13

#### 1. The "schemes" of the Devil - vs. 11

Such an analogy is designed to cause us to take this subtle enemy's attacks seriously - it is easy to trust our perception of "peace and safety" and become lulled into a sleep while the enemy plunders

The "human aspect" of this is seen in Eph. 4:14

"A man's method of sinning is Satan's method of ruining his soul." Clarke - as "con men" use what they know are natural inclinations, so the devil exploits using his thousands of years experience with human nature

- a. Armor would seem unnecessarily cumbersome if we did not realize we were about to be attacked - it is not for life comfort as much as it is defense against an assured attack - it would also seem more an irritant if we thought the coming attack was of little threat (**underestimating** the enemy or by disbelieving and disobeying your commander)
- b. Note also the word "whole" (πανοπλίαν - lit. "every instrument" of war) indicating a need for completeness (each piece designed to protect a particular vulnerability) - don't just take it seriously; take it **all** seriously!
- c. When is the last time we were attacked by the devil using his "methods?" How would we know if it seemed like our own thoughts or the most sensible way of thinking at the time? (though, when scrutinized, it was not submissive to God and His word)
- d. The word for "schemes" is μεθοδείας describing a well-crafted trickery that's used often because it has been well-tested and typically works - our personal insight is not as experienced and wise/perceptive enough to spot it - this is why it will only be by means of the "whole armor" so we must learn how to put it on

#### 2. The scope of the "struggle" (far more extensive and organized than normally anticipated) - vs. 12

Verses like this enable us to realize the magnitude of what is going on around us - clearly one of the enemy's objectives is to cause us to see only battles of "flesh and blood" and to not acknowledge anything beyond it

- a. It is normal and easy to perceive only what we see before us (and to trust it too much) when it comes to the interactions of life - but Paul stresses that the conflict we face is not against "flesh a blood" (a reference to humanity) - when it comes down to it, even though it may seem as though the enemy is "bad people" they are just **pawns** in a much larger organization
- b. The description given in this verse to this "spiritual warfare" is on of a well-organized hierarchy, all of it constantly warring all around us, into the universe (heavenly places)
- c. "It is a notable passage in Anselm, compares the heretic and the persecutor to the horse, and the devil to the rider. Now, saith he, in battle, when the enemy comes riding up, the valiant soldier 'is angry not with the horse, but horseman; he labours to kill the man, that he may possess the horse for his use; thus must we do with the wicked, we are not to bend our wrath

To actively work to be equipped is stressed - notice we are told twice to put on/take on the armor of God and to stand, withstand and stand firm

We know these are spiritual because Paul's distinguishing them as not being "flesh and blood" - any time we are in opposition to God, we are siding with (at least in practice) with this evil organization

We would be naive to think that what takes place in this world, by the apparent means of the "free will" and general "good sense" of the world's leadership is of themselves - no one is truly autonomous/independent and we must consider the underlying influences to what takes place on the earth (that of God and that of the Devil's "mafia")

We are not told that Job was ever informed as to why he was suffering what he was suffering

This "ground" is not the ground of your own choosing (to fight for) as much as it is assigned to you

And in all this, remembering the fight is not against "flesh and blood" but always a spiritual one (keeping this always in mind when we consider our strategies)

There is the danger, ahead of time, that the equipment will be unused or untested and the recipient having the sense of being restricted by the armor

### C. The full armor of God - vs. 14-18

#### 1. The Belt of Truth - vs. 14 - Stand, having fastened truth (as a belt) around your waist

If we are not honest with ourselves before God, living in reality in light of Him, and not taught and focused on His revealed Truth, everything falls apart "in the day of evil"

- a. The "truth" here is without the proper article in the Greek, giving more a sense of honesty, sincerity, realness - there is no issue with including in this **the** Truth (of the Gospel, of God's Word), but the intent looks to be that of genuineness at the start (the first thing put on, as in the soldier's belt upon which other things were fastened and the general attire was secured)
- b. The picture could also include the wrapping around us of truth - sincerity/genuineness is important, but it must also be based upon the Truth ("what is really what", as just discussed in the reality of all this being a spiritual conflict and not of flesh and blood)

#### 2. The Breastplate of Righteousness - vs. 14 - Stand, having your vitals protected in righteousness

If we are truly in Christ, the imputed righteousness is more than positional - it has a practical result as being regenerated our likes/loves change

- a. Using this illustration, the "vitals" (heart, lungs, etc.) are guarded with righteousness (actually right living, thinking, character and the trusted imputed/infused righteousness of Christ) - the heart, for instance, is truly protected with holy living/thinking
- b. To understand this better, we need to see that unrighteousness (wrong living/loving) is corrupting to the core and can cripple and kill (as one vulnerable in battle if there is not breastplate) - when we hear the word "righteous" we often think of "rules and regulations" yet such (if founded correctly) are protective from natural, evil tendencies

against them, but Satan that rides them, and spurs them on, labouring by prayer for them as Christ did on the cross, to dismount the devil..." William Gurnall

- d. It is important to remember who the real enemy is, for those we see and interact with may be those under the influence (schemes) of the devil and his cosmic organization - and with Paul's usage of the word "πάλη" (typically "wrestle") instead of the common word for battle, it would appear that he is describing skirmishes/attacks close-up as well as from a distance
- e. The devil (this name meaning "slanderer", accuser, traducer (one who tells lies about another)) has an extensive organization which purpose is the opposition of God in every way possible - one of the top levels in this organization are "the rulers" (τὰς ἀρχάς as in where the orders begin), followed by "the authorities" (τὰς ἐξουσίας - delegated power - given orders and authority to enforce them), "against the cosmic/world powers that preside over this present darkness" and "against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"
- f. Much has been written and speculated as to this breakdown and what each might specifically refer to - we know for certain they are spiritual and not physical, they are of the "heavenly places" which is an indicator that they are above earthly rule/government (and likely are influencers toward "evil" in all its forms) and these preside over "this present darkness" (evil, spiritual blindness, spiritual ignorance, deceit)
- g. Remember the interactions between God and Satan in Job (Job 1:6-12) and the spiritual struggle described in Daniel 10:10-13 - the point of such texts (including here in verse 12) is not that we come to understand the spiritual warfare intricacies as much as it is just to be informed that it is happening and that it is out of our control - but we, on our part, are to be ready for the results of these evil influences on what is happening all around us versus that of a simpleton, living as though all that is occurring is discernible by his eyes and natural perception - we are to be preparing to be prepared to stand against the "whiles of the devil"

#### 3. Therefore, this being the case, "take up the full armor of God" - vs. 13

- a. **Stand** your ground! This is the objective... **withstanding** to **stand** firm when facing each of the "evil days" coming (days of attack, and judging by the text, these attacks will be intended to cause us to fall and abandon our post (our area of responsibility))
- b. The way this is all worded is interesting - the description is one being fully equipped (full armor) to withstand when the attack comes, and then when all is done (the "course has been stayed"), remain at your post standing firm, anticipating the next attack
- c. Many consider their responsibilities complete when enduring their first (or even second) onslaught, but we are not finished until called home - this is our life outlook as soldiers
- d. Vincent, quoting another wrote, "Gibbon relates how the relaxation of discipline and the disuse of exercise rendered the soldiers less willing and less able to support the fatigues of the service. They complained of the weight of their armor, and successively obtained permission to lay aside their cuirasses [*kwi'rases - breastplate/backplate*] and helmets (ch. 27)."



In describing what the “righteousness” is here, the Cambridge Bible notes stated, “... loyalty in principle and action to the holy Law of God”

compare this to I Pet. 1:13-16

Preparedness is based in the faith/belief in the one telling us of what is coming and what is needed to be ready to face it

see also Isa. 52:7, Php. 4:4-8- the core of our peace (while being attacked) is the knowledge that the war has already been won

This peace acts as a footing also in that the wearer is not given to panic nor overcome with anxiety

Faith is involved in not only shielding from these arrows/darts, but in the confidence it will protect us (it is reliable, dependable, trustworthy) - such arrows are intended to kill and disable (either will typically do in the moment of battle)

The effectiveness of this shielding of the faith is seen in the use of the word “all” - all the fiery darts of the evil one can be thwarted

The answer/defense against these darts is not “I believe” but “It is written” as our Lord exemplified

As with any sin, the wound (the point of internal influence) spreads and infects farther than its seemingly small point of impact

It is there to help the warrior not lose his head in both senses

One not believing they’re “saved” will run from danger and threatening opposition

c. Both of these pieces are mentioned with the wording “having put on” (in the middle voice) indicating these are what we actively (deliberately) “put on” - We are to “put on” sincerity (the opposite being hypocrisy where we are (knowingly) not fully convinced/committed and would likely turn back or defect to the enemy once seriously challenged)

d. And here, regarding the breastplate of righteousness, “right living” (as opposed to living according to inclination and “least resistance,” leading to vulnerabilities in the heart) is protective of the heart - unrighteousness provides the enemy a target to exploit and opens up the heart to dangerous/deadly influences - impure living is living without vital protection

3. Stand firm, having your feet shod (shoed) with the preparedness of the Gospel of Peace -vs. 15

a. The sandals/shoes worn by the Roman soldier (likely the inspiration behind these descriptions and comparisons of Paul) were known to have nails or nubs on the soles (as in cleats) to provide traction and stability in holding one’s place in battle

b. This verse stresses the need for preparation (as in having readied your feet (the body’s anchors) for standing ground against oncoming opposition) - core to the idea of being prepared is that of expectation/anticipation of something coming

c. The readiness here is not one of personal resolve/strength - it is a readiness based upon the “Gospel of Peace” (specifically the “good news of peace”) - consider that to face this *war*, we must have *peace*, and the Gospel provides the ultimate peace... peace with God

d. When considering this analogy, we may deduce that one of the objectives of the enemy is to knock us off our feet - with the Gospel, we cannot lose our footing (being dug-in with the assurance of our peace with the invincible Lord over all), so we expect to resist the enemy

e. One is “dug-in” with the assurance they cannot lose what is most precious (security brings with it peace) - this age (the world) has nothing of this type of “peace” to offer

4. Standing firm while having taken up the shield of faith - vs. 16

a. This piece of armor is emphasized “in addition to all” (or “above all”, “in all circumstances”)

b. The shield was designed to be used defensively from all sides and was used by being directed to where attacks were coming from (even from behind) - they were constructed in such a way so as to have arrows bounce off of them, and if they penetrated (especially if arrows were aflame) the darts would be quenched

c. It is linked to “faith” (literally τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως “the shield of the faith”), so with the article it references objective faith (THE faith), though in answer to those seeing this as being subjective faith (personal belief) we can agree that it all pivots on what is actually believed and not as much the amount of sincere belief (though clearly, if not sincerely believed, it will never be “taken up” and used anyway)

d. Notice this piece of armor defends even the other pieces of armor from being hit - notice also, (as with the sword) this defensive protection is meant to be wielded - this is all needed since the fiery arrow attacks could come from any direction, at a distance, unexpectedly

e. These flaming arrows are warded off by faith, making the essential make-up of these arrows and their practical purpose to be doubts (for faith is needed to ward-off doubt) - such doubts are at the core of all sorts of temptations to sin (lust, bitterness/anger, laziness, godlessness)

f. Since these are the flaming arrows “of the evil one,” they are all intended to inflict pain, infection and death (of all sorts) on its victim and would not necessarily just be fired upon the soldier but on anyone within range (even the ignorant who don’t know they are in battle)

g. “Satan attacks by indirection - through good things from which no evil is suspected. There is a hint of its propagating power: one sin draws another in its track: the flame of the fire-tipped dart spreads. Temptation acts on susceptible material. Self-confidence is combustible. Faith, in doing away with dependence on self, takes away fuel for the dart. It creates sensitiveness to holy influences by which the power of temptation is neutralized.” Vincent

5. In order to stand firm, take/grab “the helmet of the salvation” - vs. 17

a. The helmet was the protection of the head (the place of thinking, control over the rest of the body, and the place for sight and hearing - all of which are essential not to lose)

b. In the spiritual armor this is represented as “salvation” and the similar analogy used in I Thes. 5:8 references it as the “helmet of the hope of salvation” (the hope that comes with having salvation)

c. Assured salvation protects the controlling and cognitive aspects of our being

Notice the similarities in Isa. 59:14-21 where the Lord is described as putting on similar armor (garments of vengeance) in His bringing judgment in repaying His enemies

In this text, we could see that the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation protect the head (thinking and general "control of life/living")

The armor is provided because we are vulnerable in many ways and will be attacked - those not aware of or focused on the spiritual battle will see no need to follow these directives

For the inclination is to lean on that which is physical - our own intellect, feelings (emotions and personal strength/resolve, faith in people and man-made institutions and human philosophy)

Much of our time before attacks is the learning and studying of it so as to wield it correctly in battle - just quoting Scripture or knowing it is not enough - the Lord used each verse in its context to ward-off even the Devil's misuse of God's Word - Mt. 4, Luke 4

As this section began in verse 14 "Take up the whole armor of God" we should look on it as not putting in on "at times" because we have taken it off "at times" as much as we should realize it is all there (because of Christ) and we are to see ourselves as what we are... soldiers and not live as civilians or run in fear from the fight

Each of these pieces (truth, righteousness, salvation and faith) are not exceptional but normal - not having these fundamentals would cause one to wonder if they were ever enlisted

The problem is never with the equipment but with the user

- d. The use of salvation in this verse looks to differ somewhat from the one used in I Thes. 5:8 in that this one deals more with the salvation during the attack (each one) in the "day of evil"
- e. The use of "take" is more connected with "stand" (both being aorist imperatives) - the idea would be something like, "stand, since you having taken the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet for the preparation (which is the Gospel of Peace)" and also having taken up the shield of faith - now "grab" the helmet (which is the salvation **through** the coming onslaught of the enemy and his deceptions/schemes)
- f. The salvation in the moments that make up the "day of evil" are clearly based in not just God's overruling power/might, but in His saving work on our behalf (as, for instance, the devil casts slanderous dispersions using us as examples against the saving work of Christ, or as he would have us believe "salvation" (rescue) in the moment is in his power to supply... telling use we just need compromise "a **little** ")
- g. Again, to be assured victory will embolden us to face the fight and hold our ground (based on the faith) against the opposition, but to be hit with doubts (having lowered the shield of faith and failed to put on the helmet (surrounding the head) of our salvation in the moment because we disregard the danger and are likely to be wounded and in need of help)
- h. It is important to remember that the Devil does not care about us; his war is against God and his interest in us is our demise or our **defection** to his anti-God cause - Gen. 3 shows his tactics

#### 6. In order to stand firm, also take-up the sword of the Spirit - vs. 17

- a. In these battles (evil days), how do we (clearly made of flesh and blood) defend and fight that which is spiritual? First we recognize it as a spiritual battle leaning on that which matters and has "power" in the "spiritual realm" such as faith, righteousness and truth
- b. Here is the offensive weapon of the sword which we have by means of the Holy Spirit of God and it being the Word of God (literally the "utterances" of God) - as the Lord demonstrated when facing temptations (fiery darts if you will) responding "It is written" (the core to each response) and if our Lord did this, why would we consider any of our thoughts/ideas of better/greater power to thwart the enemy's attacks?
- c. Many attacks (if not most) will be in our **minds** (hearts) which is why we learn and come to understand God's Word (as being from God and so superior to any counter attack we could design) - see Heb. 4:12 where the Word is described as sharper than any other sword

#### 7. Note that the pieces of the armor are to have already been put on - this is not a practice we expect to do daily, but to consider it already on (at our use) and are to utilize it and realize each piece as actually being at hand for the fight - **the fight is real!**

- a. Consider what other options would look like - if we suppose we are in Christ, how could we imagine not having the "belt of truth?" One of the core signs of being a Christian is the inner drive to be **genuine** and, if there are times of insincerity, they will not (cannot) last
- b. If we do not live righteously and have none of its pictured protection (here in this text), how long do we imagine we could stand in the heat of battle without serious wounds?
- c. If we do not utilize the "grip" (traction) of our shoes (the Gospel of Peace) we will fall unnecessarily - all the armor needs to be used as intended!
- d. A soldier may not take up his shield and allow the arrows to hit, but where is the sense in that? He may not, at times, fully trust the Faith, but how would he expect to do so without ever using it (actually trusting its effectiveness above all else and not **yielding** to the seemingly overpowering strength of the enemy?)
- e. Or why would any soldier cover his head with his hands when a helmet is available? This helmet is assurance in God and not self - self-confidence and independence (typically motivated and driven by **pride**) are the man-made replacements for these pieces of armor
- f. If one never takes up the sword which is readily available, why would one then ever deem themselves a soldier for Christ (possibly sympathizing with the enemy, or yielding to intimidation) or, worse yet, considering the surrender of the sword to the enemy (as in formal surrender) before the battle is finished (or possibly before the battle has even begun!)

#### 8. Standing firm with the panoply of God, there must always be communication (prayer) - vs. 18

- a. Prayer is not described as a piece of armor, but as is essential in battle, lines of communication (all types) must be maintained and used

The “all prayer” could take the form of personal, private prayer, or public prayer with others in the battle or prayers that are verbalized or that are in the mind

As dealt with in Php. 4:6, the same “prayers and supplications” are the defense/offense against anxiety (fear, controlling intimidation) because prayer directs us to compare what we fear to God (His strength, wisdom and grace)

We should hope to have our prayers be from the heart, but must also seek to communicate with our Lord (our Leader) with insight into who He is, how He thinks and in a spirit of consistent subordination

If one doesn't believe there is a threat they are more apt to sleep, and that peacefully, taking on a carefree outlook

There is a natural tendency to complain and criticize the church and to never truly, sincerely pray for it - it is too easy to see other believers as the enemies, but even when they are in error, the issue is with the sin or error and not with them - we don't pray that they'll see our rightness but that they will see what is truly right

None of us is above asking for prayer - it is normal (not humbling) to desire that others pray for us in our duty - we and they must leave the results (the answers) to the Lord

This reality (of our being in the service of the Lord Almighty) ought to be something that is a constant source of boldness as we face what would normally overwhelmingly intimidate us

- b. This communication is to consist of “all prayer and petition” - the first word for prayer describing general communication with God and the second consisting of requests (bringing needs before/to Him) - such is to be being done with “all prayer” (all forms and methods of communications with Him) and is to be done “at all times”
- c. The concept and practice of prayer is often either disregarded (forgotten) or formalized (as if quoting prepared scripts for “just in case” something might happen) - it would be good to view this in light of the context as in a military/warfare setting where it must be maintained
- d. Prayer is a dependence on God and as is about to be emphasized as a means to staying focused - we don't pray because we're not thinking of God (and His ever-presence) - even rote praying is better than nothing, for at least it directs our attention to God (though possibly not in the right/best spirit)
- e. This praying is to be “in the Spirit” - the proper article (*the*) is not before “Spirit” and could have reference to our inner soul/spirit (as in praying “on the inside” with who we really are with sincerity) - the context (having just dealt with “the sword of the Spirit”) would lean more towards it being in the Spirit - as such then it would need to be in alignment with the revealed truth (the sword) that He has provided and in line with His inner agreement with the will of God (versus prayers of our own will without regard to God's will)
- f. Prayer will also involve a sense of “pouring out our hearts” to God, for who better to bring our frustrations and concerns to? It is not done in a tone of a demand (or even a threat) but one of bringing it to Him and leaving it there (trusting whatever He does with it)
- g. And in regards to all this, in the spirit of the soldier, stay alert (the word is ἀγρυπνέω describing someone without sleep) - the costs are high to a soldier who drifts off into sleep and so dreaming rather than being aware of what is happening all around
- h. This alertness is to be maintained “in all perseverance” (all steadfastness, with an urgency to and dedication to staying alert) - prayer is a means to staying alert and staying alert lends to a more consistent prayer life - see also Luke 21:33-36 and I Pet. 4:7-11
- i. In being alert/aware, the focus is also to be on those around us in our petitions (prayers) for them - there is to be an ongoing state, prayer which will include our fellow soldiers (all of them) - we of course should pray for those we know, but in this context the exhortation is to pray for all the “saints” (set-apart ones) - we pray for all the saints (all the Church still in the war)
- j. Notice in this verse the urgency and thoroughness demanded - “with all prayer” “praying at all times” “keep alert with all perseverance” “making supplication for all the saints” and all this following the instruction to put on all (the full) armor of God

#### D. An ambassador in chains - vs. 19-24

##### 1. Paul asks as a part of his telling them to pray for all the saints, to pray for him also - vs. 19-20

- a. He did not provide specifics to pray for the saints but he does ask that they pray for certain things regarding himself and his God-given role - this does serve as an example of what we ought to ask as for prayers for ourselves (directed at doing and doing well our God-given responsibilities)
- b. Paul knew he was not (nor ever would be) in a position where he could just talk on his own, but was just as dependent as ever on being given the correct things to say - Young's Literal Translation worded this, “... that to me may be given a word in the opening of my mouth...”
- c. His need for a proper message was in line with his role as an “ambassador” (one given the job to speak for and represent their leader and country)
- d. He was likely referring to the time soon to come when he would need to give an open account in his defense as part of his appeal to Caesar - he would be before “kings” (as the Lord said he would in Acts 9:15) and Paul did not place confidence in himself (and so asks they pray that He be given to say what he ought to say)
- e. He asks for boldness in his speaking, in coming at it as an ambassador from the King of Kings and not as a simple, ordinary prisoner (cowering in pursuit of mercy)
- f. This “boldness” (παρρησία) is a particular kind of courage, picturing one emboldened to speak freely and openly (versus that of guarding the mouth out of fear of what other might think or how it might be taken)
- g. This was needed in the proclaiming the “mystery of the Gospel”



This would mean that the Gospel message was for the Romans also - boldness would be needed to declare such a message to a society (and its leadership) that presented itself as all-sufficient in their religious and philosophical thoughts and answers

The word for "ought" is δεῖ, a verb describing something that makes something fitting and worthy of what it is to do

It makes sense that these descriptions would go together- Paul was devoted to the Lord and His purposes and so he found special appreciation in those that had the same priorities and same drive in the Lord's service

All other encouragements must work around the most fearful topics and find their effectiveness in evading them

All other "unities" cannot offer lasting peace for what unites them (apart from Christ) will condemn them in the end

See Paul's instruction regarding those who claim to know the Lord but do not truly love Him - I Cor. 16:22

- h. The "mystery of the Gospel" had been detailed by Paul to the Ephesians in chapter 3 and revealed that the "good news" was to the whole world (not just the Jews through whom came the Christ and the message and means to salvation)
- i. The Gospel, properly declared, deals with the natural condition of mankind (as in Rom. 3), followed by the needed mercy and grace and as a result, "salvation" by faith in the work of Christ on our behalf in dealing with sin - all of which is thrilling to the person aware of their guilt and need before their creator, but of the highest offense to those who see themselves as having "worked it all out" on their own and in a "reasonable" way
- j. He knew he was an ambassador for the Lord (His representative) but his situation was compounded by being "in chains" (coming to these powerful rulers as one that would appear to them as only a prisoner, and yet Paul knew he was there for a much higher purpose)

## 2. Encouragement "of your hearts" sent by means of Tychicus - vs. 21-22

- a. Paul knew there would be concerns for him and his general welfare, so as not to leave them in suspense (and possibly prone to worry) he sends Tychicus to "tell you everything" - this not just what they were up against, but how Paul was handling it (for such news would need to have with it the focus of faith Paul had so it would be an encouragement/comfort)
- b. The description of Tychicus is one we ought to desire be able to be said of us - he was described as a "beloved brother" and a "faithful minister/servant in the Lord" (so deeply loved by Paul and considered faithful in his service to the Lord) - see also Col. 4:7
- c. The encouragement that he would bring was assured by Paul because he also had encouragement with Tychicus and so knew he would comfort these believers - there are other types of "comforts" to be had in the world that are temporary and unreliable, but the Gospel is the only one that deals with reality in its fullest before our Creator and the answer to all off it

## 3. The final greeting - vs. 23-24

- a. "Peace to the brethren" - as he began (in Eph. 1:2) he now ends with a reference to the same peace (that comes from knowing God's grace) - it is directed to the "brothers" (a reference to family and one made up of both Jews and Gentiles made into one family, not by genetics or culture but by their unity in Christ)
- b. The "love" mentioned here is linked with "faith" as if indicating true love comes with the Faith and true love (loving) is founded in faith - here it is a love of God/Christ (to Whom they direct all their trust) and a love of their brothers (known to be so because of their faith, and it is this faith that unites us eternally, stronger than any other factor that might bring individuals together)
- c. The grace Paul wishes for them is directed at those "who love our Lord Jesus Christ" and that, not with a pseudo "love" but one that proves to be genuine because it is not "corruptible" (it lasts because nothing will pull it away by infecting it with an alternative "love")
- d. Those insincerely loving the Lord ought not sense His grace for a sense of His condescending undeserved goodness cannot be unadored but only by hypocrites