

WHO AM I?

Ephesians



Lesson 1

villagebible.church/ephesians

Student Lesson

GOD WANTS YOU
TO EXPERIENCE AN
INCREDIBLE LIFE
WITH HIM

Open it

1. What experience, possession or relationship would make life amazing for you?

Background of Ephesians

Ephesus was a powerful coastal trading city located on the Cayster River, 3 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. It is in Asia Minor, now modern-day Turkey, and one of the five leading major cities of the Roman Empire. It housed the temple of Diana, the goddess of sex. Idols were on every corner pointing up to the temple. Ephesus became a place of pilgrimage for worshippers. Silversmiths would manufacture little images of Diana for people to take home. Diana was one of the seven wonders of the world. You have teenagers, men and women in Ephesus in an ungodly culture trying to live godly lives. The culture was always trying to pull them away. This is a strong church. We know this because Paul taught there for 3 years. You will never have a strong church without a strong pulpit. Paul doesn't have any issues to correct. There are no doctrinal problems. This book was written to edify and build up the church at Ephesus.

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Ephesians 1:1-6.

2. How does Paul describe himself?
3. How are the people in Ephesus described?
4. How are we blessed?
5. For what are we chosen?
6. For what were we predestined?
7. What has God freely given us?

Read Ephesians 1:1-2.

Often we fly through the intros of books, and we fail to realize the richness and depth of introductions. Paul first shares who he is and by what authority he writes this letter to the Ephesian believers. Paul is called an apostle of Christ. An Apostle had three characteristics. They had to be personally sent by Jesus, they had to have seen the resurrected Jesus, and they had the ability to perform miracles. There are only 13 Apostles in the New Testament (the 12 Apostles, minus Judas, plus Matthias¹, plus Paul). Paul was appointed an Apostle by the will of God.

Paul next shares that he is writing this letter to the saints in Ephesus, meaning believers in Jesus Christ who live in Ephesus. He describes them with two words, “saints” and “faithful.” “Saint” in Greek comes from the same root word as “holy” which means to be “set apart for God.” The second word that describes these believers is “faithful,” meaning trustworthy or reliable. It’s in and through their relationship with Christ Jesus that they have the ability to be faithful.

Paul is God’s spokesperson, and he extends grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. “Grace” is God’s unmerited favor that he gives us. It’s getting good things like salvation and all the blessings in Christ that we don’t deserve. “Peace” is important because we were once God’s enemies because of our unforgiven sin, but now we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.² Not only do we have peace with God, but God gives us an inner peace that allows us to face danger and suffering without fear or a trembling heart.³

8. Are you a saint or a sinner?

9. Is there a person or situation that is "stealing" your peace right now? How can you apply God's peace to your circumstance?

¹ Acts 1:12-26

² Romans 5:1

³ Philippians 4:6-7

Day 3 — Today's Theme: God Wants You to Be Wealthy—Don't Settle for Money

Read Ephesians 1:3.

Even as a student, are you driven by money? There's never enough money. Money will never satisfy you. Money is not bad. It's how you use your money that can be bad. W. Graham Scroggie said, "There's two ways in which a Christian may view his money. 'How much of my money shall I use for God?' or 'how much of God's money shall I use for myself.'" The truth is that everything we have is a gift from God, including all of the money that you have in your possession.

Some of you don't even have a bank account yet, but the moment that you trusted your life to Jesus, God gave you a spiritual bank account that has every spiritual blessing in Christ. It's as if you started with nothing, and then God started making limitless deposits in your spiritual bank account, not because you did anything to earn these deposits, but because He freely gives to us!

How has God blessed us? We don't have enough ink and paper to describe every spiritual blessing that we have in Christ. The best blessing we have is having Jesus Himself living in and through us. Jesus has given us eternal life and a restored relationship with our Heavenly Father! J. H. Howett said, "The real measure of our wealth is how much we'd be worth if we lost all of our money." Because we are "in Christ," we are worth the priceless blood of Jesus!

10. What is the attraction to having a lot of money?

11. What does true wealth look like in God's eyes? How can you acquire this wealth?

Day 4 — Today's Theme: God Wants You to Have Purpose—Don't Settle for Ambition

Read Ephesians 1:4.

Ambition is defined as “a strong desire for success, achievement, power, or wealth”⁴ As a student, you may be ambitious to achieve goals, get all A's, win a state championship, get a nice set of wheels, pursue a career, or something else. To achieve these things isn't necessarily bad. God wants us to use our gifts and talents to achieve things, but we need to do these things as we walk with Jesus and strive to bring glory to Him through these achievements in life. When we pursue these ambitions apart from Jesus, we will come up empty and unsatisfied. God has given us a much higher purpose and calling than just ambition. In Ephesians 1:4, the word “chose” in the Greek is in the “middle voice” which indicates ownership or possession, meaning that God specifically chose us for Himself. Some protest and ask, “Why did He choose some for salvation and others are condemned to hell?” That's the wrong question. All of us were on a highway to hell. None of us deserves salvation. In God's infinite wisdom and pleasure, He chose to extend mercy and grace to us and pluck us off that highway and save us. God chose us before He laid the foundation of the world. Do you know why you are alive and why you are here? It's not so that you can get through middle school and high school and get on with your life. God has placed you in the school that you attend to accomplish His purpose to be His light in the midst of a dark world. We see that He chose us to be holy and blameless. “Holy” means separated and dedicated to God. “Blameless” means that no one can find fault with us and accuse us of wrongdoing. It is God's action in Christ that blankets us with His own holiness, and lets us stand blameless before Him. Satan's purpose for us is to get us to do anything that is contrary to being holy and blameless. When you stand before God, He's not going to care how well you did in school, how great an athlete or musician you were, how much money you made, or what positions of prominence you held. He'll only care about how faithful you were at abiding in Christ.

12. What are some ambitions you have in life?

13. God chose you to be holy and blameless. Are you holy and blameless? If yes, why? If not, what steps can you take to be holy and blameless?

⁴ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/ambition>

Day 5 — Today's Theme: God Wants You to Have Love—Don't Settle for Lust

Read Ephesians 1:5-6.

Remember that Ephesus was a culture dominated by sex. Sex dominates our culture. Too many teens want to be accepted, so they will use sex to gain acceptance, but it's a false love. Just look at the movies, videos, TV, and internet today. Paul says that in love, God predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. The adoptive son had all the rights of a natural son. A number of years ago, I was talking with a manager of a bookstore named Kathy. For 10 years, she and her husband tried to have kids, but they couldn't, so they adopted two boys from Peru, Chris at age 6½ and his baby brother. Kathy lived in Peru for 3 months to learn how to be a Peruvian mother. In that culture, a person is strongly looked down upon and considered an outcast if he doesn't have a father to pass on his name. When Chris arrived in America and got off the plane, there were 50 people waiting to meet him at the airport. However, Chris made a beeline straight to his new dad, and throwing his arms around him with the biggest hug he could give, he said, "thank you, thank you, thank you for giving me a name." The same is true for us. We had no name, but the Father has given us His name. He has adopted us. There is a heavenly Father who is crazy about you and loves you beyond comprehension!

14. How does our culture tempt you to give in to lust? How does God's Word help you say no to lust?

15. How does the Bible describe God's love for you?

16. How can you experience God's love?