

Metro Women's Bible Study **Ephesians 1:1-6**

Lesson 1

As we begin the book of Ephesians, may your heart be anticipating its' tremendous truth. When you study it, may God's word stir in you a new and deeper excitement for all that He has for you. Paul's letter to the Ephesians deals with the most fundamental Christian doctrines. The church is the body of Christ, the walk of the Believer and our position in Christ. Moreover, this epistle stresses the sovereignty of God in salvation and the eternal sweep of God's great plan, by which believers are lifted from the depth of sin's depravity and curse to the heights of eternal joy and communion with God. Let His truth come to you afresh and you will never be the same again, as you get a glimpse of its inexhaustible depth.

DAY ONE: Read Ephesians 1:1-6

1. Read through the book of Ephesians one time this week. Next read this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?

a. Ephesians 1:1-6 has been divided into 2 sections. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 1-2

Verses 3-6

b. How would you title each section?

OPTIONAL: From the list below, record the key words and their symbol (which you have chosen) on the Key Word and Symbols Chart.

Key Words: *God, Jesus, Spirit*, and the phrase *in Him or in Christ*

OPTIONAL: Now, using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words every time they are used in Ephesians 1:1-6. Remember, as you mark the words, *God, Jesus*, and *Spirit*, to mark any personal pronouns that refer to Them such as *He, Him, whom* or *Himself*. You do not need to mark every word that refers them – only those that you feel are significant.

2. Read through verses 1-6 and make a list of 4 things that reveal what God has done or promises to do for the believer. Record the phrase and the verse reference.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

3. Glance back over the list and take a moment to thank Him for all He has done for you. Record just one answer from your list share what you are most grateful for and why.

DAY TWO: Read Ephesians 1:1-2

1. The letter to the Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel. According to verse 1, what does Paul call himself?

a. An *apostle* can be described as one commissioned to do something as one's representative. Who was Paul representing?

b. What does Galatians 1:1 reveal?

In secular Greek *apostle* was commonly used to describe one who was sent in an official capacity as an ambassador, delegate, messenger or envoy. A good parallel of *apostle* is our English word *ambassador* defined by Webster as "a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government as the resident representative of his own government for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment".

2. What might be some of the responsibilities when representing another?

a. What do you learn from 2 Corinthians 5:20?

Paul was called to be an apostle *by the will of God*. Paul encountered Jesus Christ on the Damascus road, he discovered the gross error of his way (Acts 9:1-8). The Greek word *will* (*thelema*) refers to God's will as His gracious disposition toward something. *Thelema* is God's will as an inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, which pleases and creates joy. God's *will* signifies His gracious disposition toward something, what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. It means in essence that God started it and He completes it. Paul's life is a Christ-made life not a man-made life. Paul's commission as apostle was God's will done on earth.

3. This word *thelema* (*will*) is used four times in Ephesians 1 – write the phrase out for each of the verses below then take a moment and meditate on these uses in context. What did you learn?

Ephesians 1:1-

Ephesians 1:5-

Ephesians 1:9-

Ephesians 1:11-

4. Ephesians 1:1 tells us Paul was writing, *to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus*. Read this phrase again and record how Paul described those he was writing to.

a. In using the word *saints*, Paul is not only describing all of the Christians in Ephesus, but all true Christians. All believers are *saints* (set apart ones for God) and *faithful* (in the context of this verse, those who have put their *faith* in Jesus). Look up the word *saints* in your concordance and write out the English translation.

Saints-

b. *Hagios* (saints) includes the idea of taking something filthy, washing it and setting it apart as something brand new and useful for a different purpose. Would others say that a "holy" character and conduct (not a "holier than thou" attitude) characterizes your day to day life? Why or why not?

c. Paul identifies the Ephesians as *saints* nine times in this book. The term "saints" refers to the believer's standing, rather than to his state, because all believers are saints. It refers to his position, or our position as justified, rather than to our progress as sanctified individuals. Every believer is a saint. Of course, every believer ought to be saintly. Not every believer, at every point of his live, is saintly, but we who are saints, ought to live saintly. What is the challenge to the saints in 1 Peter 1:14,15?

5. Paul uses another descriptive word in verse 1 regarding the, *saints who are in Ephesus* what is it?

a. Look up the word *faithful* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Faithful-

b. Paul called the saints *faithful*, could he say this about your life? Even more important, would God refer to you as *faithful* in Christ Jesus?

c. Would you say that faithfulness is a habit or practice of your life? Explain

Dearly beloved of God, does your present practice match your privilege position? Are you being faithful to live a "set apart" life in a society where all lines of decency and morality have been virtually completely eroded? As children of the Living God, may our conduct match our creed!

6. The last three words of verse 1 are very important as how we can live as saints and how we can be faithful. What are the last three words?

a. The phrase, *In Christ Jesus* alludes to the intimate, living union between a believer and his Lord. He is now our life. Highlight or underline what the following scriptures say about being *in Christ Jesus*. What did you learn?

1 Corinthians 1:30- "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

Galatians 2:20- "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Colossians 3:4- "When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

Philippians 4:13- "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

b. He is our sufficiency, our all in all. Does "in Christ Jesus" describe your experience? What is the Father's desire for you? Read Philippians 1:6.

7. In Paul's opening words in verse 2, what two things does Paul desire for the *saints* and *faithful*?

a. Where (Who) does *grace* and *peace* come from?

8. As Christians, we believe that *grace* and *peace* come from God. Yet, too often, we behave as if He is only one source of *grace* and *peace*. What are some other things believers might foolishly look to meet the desire for *grace* and *peace*?

9. The two great heritages of the Christian are grace and peace. These are two things you can always have, no matter what your circumstances. Grace is all God's power, all his love, all his beauty available to

you. Please share an experience that would encourage others of *how* God's grace and peace sustained you.

DAY THREE: Read Ephesians 1:3,4

1. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Paul is literally saying "*Let God be well spoken of (adored, praised)...bless Him for His great goodness.*" When doctrine is rightly understood we cannot help but bless His holy name. Look up the word, *Blessed* in a dictionary or your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Blessed-

a. Let David's words stir your soul... Read Psalm 103:1-5. Stop and take a few minutes to bless Him.

2. Paul sums our up riches in this verse with the phrase "every spiritual blessing" in verse 3 and then he proceeds to explain them and to tell us how we can draw on them for effective Christian living. How does 2 Peter 1:3 back this up?

3. The phrase *in heavenly places* is used five times in Ephesians. Highlight or underline each occurrence of this phrase. What did you learn about *heavenly places*?

Ephesians 1:3- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Ephesians 1:20- which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 2:6- and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 3:10- to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 6:12- For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

4. Verse 3 ends with, *in Christ*, which speaks of our spiritual position. Why is this fact going to be stressed again and again in this letter?

5. Ephesians 1:4 addresses God's calling on those He has *chosen* to receive His *blessing*. When did He *choose* us?

Note: It is not within the context of this homework lesson to debate the doctrine of *predestination*. What we do know from these verses is that *saints* (believers in Jesus Christ) have been *chosen* by God to receive spiritual blessings. Let us spend this lesson rejoicing in this fact, rather than debating theologies which man has yet to resolve.

6. What did He *choose* us to be?

7. God chose us in Him, *that we should be holy and without blame before Him*, we are chosen, not because we are holy, but that we may be made holy. What do these verses reveal about being chosen, *holy*, and *without blame*? Highlight or underline your answers.

John 15:16- “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

Colossians 3:12- “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”

2 Timothy 1:9- “Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”

Colossians 1:22- “He has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him.”

In context, Paul is saying that all believers are in a position before God of being holy because they are all *in Christ*. Acting or living holy is another matter that requires daily presentation of one's self to God and moment by moment dependence on His enabling, transforming grace and His Spirit. The fact that believers are positionally holy is sound doctrine which becomes the basis for holy living.

8. The last two words of verse 4 reveal God’s heart towards us, what are they?

DAY FOUR & FIVE: Read Ephesians 1:5-6

Eph.1:5,6 – “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

1. According to verses 5 and 6, answer the following questions:

- a. How did he predestine us in verse 5?
- b. What did He *predestine* us to in verse 5?
- c. What did He make us in verse 6?
- d. Why did He do this *according to* in verse 5?

2. Verse 5 states, *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ*. Throughout the Greek world the wealthy and influential practiced adoption. Sometimes just a simple declaration in the marketplace turned a slave into a son. It was an ancient remedy used when a marriage failed to produce a male heir. No change in name came, but the adopted son immediately became heir to the entire wealth and position of his adoptive family. Look up the word *adoption* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Adoption (adoption as sons)-

3. What do the following verses teach regarding the intimacy of our new relationship with God the Father. Highlight or underline what you learned. How do these verses apply to you in a practical way? Explain

Galatians 4:4-7- “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Romans 8:14- “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

John 1:12,13- “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children (sons) of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

4. Adoption brought about a total break with the old family and provided a new family relation with all its rights, privileges and responsibilities. What does it mean to you that you have been adopted as a child of God?

5. God has adopted us *according to the good pleasure of His will*. How did he do this?

6. It is ‘the good pleasure’ — as it is put in another place by the same Apostle — ‘of His goodness.’ How do 2 Thessalonians and Philipians expand on this truth? Highlight or underline your findings.

2 Thessalonians 1:11- “Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power.”

Philippians 1:6- “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.”

7. Write out verse 6 thoughtfully.

a. Why did God adopt us?

8. You are to his *praise, glory, and grace*. Have you ever looked at yourself through God’s eyes? What does Ephesians 2:7 show us?

9. Do you know that according to verse 6 that he has made you *accepted in the Beloved*? Look up the word accepted in a dictionary and your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Accepted (dict.)-

Accepted (con.) :-

a. How are we *accepted*?

b. Who is the *Beloved*?

God takes a delight in us; we are acceptable in his sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! Remember, it is *in Christ* because Christ is accepted, therefore those who are **in him** are accepted. What a position of privilege! It includes our justification before God, but the term "acceptance" in the Greek means much more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of divine complacency (pleasure), and even of divine delight.

DAY SIX: Review Ephesians 1:1-6

1. As believers, we have received many *spiritual blessings*. Share just a few that are special to you.
2. God has granted the believer spiritual blessings *according to His good pleasure*. How would you explain this to someone who felt like they had to earn God's blessings or God's acceptance?
3. Scan through the verses in this lesson and record some of the phrases that assure us that God will accomplish His plans for us.
4. Share one thing from this lesson that has impacted you.
5. Record on your Worksheets what you have learned about: **"Truths about God, Truths about Jesus, Truths about the Holy Spirit, Truths about the Believer, and Instructions."**

*This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.-
Isaiah 43:21*