

THE R.U.S.H. BIBLE STUDY

EPHESIANS



KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT FAST



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY FIRST EDITION 2020 VER.26

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Ephesians

Paul writes beautifully to the church at Ephesus about how to walk in grace, peace, and love for one another. **Author: Paul**

In Ephesians – Jesus is the Head of His Church

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."



TEACHER: 6 CHAPTERS

Find Ephesus on the map. Ephesus was a resort city on the coast. Wealthy and well educated, Paul doesn't rebuke them and finds no controversy in their church. Here Paul is free to talk about Christian maturity. Let's read his opening chapter, and rejoice with Paul as we discuss in between each segment. Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. He then had Tychicus, and Onesimus deliver them.

This Onesimus was the runaway slave that was the result of the Epistle to Philemon. Later in this letter Paul also mentions Tychicus as a valuable member of his entourage. Tychicus was a missionary and served as a capable floating Pastor so Timothy and Titus could visit with Paul. This Tychicus also delivered several of Paul's Epistles.

STUDENT:

CH. 1

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. ² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. ³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴ Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. (NLT)

STUDENT:

Because of his love ⁵ God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose. ⁶ Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! ⁷ For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, ⁸ which he gave to us in such large measure! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Remember from our previous lessons that Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, went to Heaven, and spent 3 years with Jesus in Arabia in person. His description here of God's disposition towards us is of pure joy. That sense you had when you had a kid, the love and excitement, the joy etc. that is God's attitude regarding us. You had that feeling when your kids were born because God breathed into Adam His life. That life was then passed down through man-kind until it got to you. It is from the remnant in your DNA of what God imparted to Adam.

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STUDENT:

In all his wisdom and insight ⁹ God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰ This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

¹¹ All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning. ¹² Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory! (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹³ And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. ¹⁴ The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

I'm getting a sense that Paul really likes this church. A generation or so later, long after Paul is martyred in Rome this church would develop a not so colorful personality of power and influence. This we know from the books of 1 Timothy & Revelations, but at the moment they are batting 1,000.

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STUDENT:

This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ which he used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. ²¹ Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. ²² God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. ²³ The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul, as in his other letters, reminds them of where they came from in chapter 2. Remember the 3 questions? Where were you? Where are you? Where are you going?

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CH. 2

STUDENT:

In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. ²At that time you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. ³Actually all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. In our natural condition we, like everyone else, were destined to suffer God's anger. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Here Paul re-enforces salvation by God's free gift of grace.

STUDENT:

⁴But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, ⁵that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved. ⁶In our union with Christ Jesus he raised us up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. ⁷He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his grace in the love he showed us in Christ Jesus. ⁸⁻⁹For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Saved through faith, not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can brag about it. The big question is, knowing our flaws, why did God give us this free gift?

STUDENT:

¹⁰God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do. (GNT)

TEACHER:

"We haven't been saved merely to keep God company, but to do good." DH

STUDENT:

¹⁹So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now citizens together with God's people and members of the family of God. ²⁰You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. ²¹He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes it grow into a sacred temple dedicated to the Lord. ²²In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul now talks of his ministry to the gentiles in chapter 3.

CH. 3

STUDENT:

⁷I was made a servant of the gospel by God's special gift, which he gave me through the working of his power. ⁸I am less than the least of all God's people; yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News about the infinite riches of Christ, ⁹and of making all people see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect.

STUDENT:

God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, ¹⁰ in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms. ¹¹ God did this according to his eternal purpose, which he achieved through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In union with Christ and through our faith in him we have the boldness to go into God's presence with all confidence. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul now over flowing with love for the church in Ephesus, pens these next words.

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STUDENT:

¹⁴ For this reason I fall on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. ¹⁶ I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, ¹⁷ and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, ¹⁸ so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love.

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STUDENT:

¹⁹ Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

²⁰ To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: ²¹ to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

In chapter 4 we see a recurrent theme. Patience and unity.

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STUDENT:

I urge you, then—I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord: live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you. ² Be always humble, gentle, and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another. ³ Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ there is one God and Father of all people, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Skipping to verse 17 Paul warns us not to fall back into our old habits. Remember the parable of the clean house Jesus taught. An evil spirit looks around for a place to rest, and finds his old home clean, moves back in.

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STUDENT:

¹⁷ In the Lord's name, then, I warn you: do not continue to live like the heathen, whose thoughts are worthless ¹⁸ and whose minds are in the dark. They have no part in the life that God gives, for they are completely ignorant and stubborn. ¹⁹ They have lost all feeling of shame; they give themselves over to vice and do all sorts of indecent things without restraint. (GNT)

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CH. 4

TEACHERS:

I heard a minister say recently that there is no such thing as a saved sinner. "You're saved or a sinner" he said. "If you're saved you're not a sinner." His argument was semantically derived, true, but we may be going too far in the other direction when we get sloppy with grace. Jude says it well, "you've turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." As Pentecostals we strive to live sinless lives. This is sanctification. It should be easy for the world to tell we are different. Peter uses the word "peculiar". (1 Peter 2:9)

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STUDENT:

²² So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. ²³ Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, ²⁴ and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Then Paul gets personal, and starts listing specific sins he wants us to watch out for. Little foxes spoil the vines.

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STUDENT:

²⁵ No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. ²⁶ If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. ²⁷ Don't give the Devil a chance. ²⁸ If you used to rob, you must stop robbing and start working, in order to earn an honest living for yourself and to be able to help the poor. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

²⁹ Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. ³⁰ And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. ³² Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

The obligatory R.B.S. list. This list from v.22 are things that destroy us.

1. Lying.
2. Anger that leads to sin.
3. Staying angry for a whole day.
4. Robbing instead of performing honest work.
5. Using harmful words.
6. Grieving the Holy Spirit.
7. Bitterness.
8. Passion.
9. Anger, note this is the only 1 repeated.
10. Shouting insults.
11. Feeling hatred.

Paul continues in chapter 5 with some more "deal breakers."

He says in verse 5 no one doing these things will ever inherit the Kingdom of God.

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STUDENT:

³Since you are God's people, it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you. ⁴Nor is it fitting for you to use language which is obscene, profane, or vulgar. Rather you should give thanks to God. ⁵You may be sure that no one who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (for greed is a form of idolatry) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

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TEACHER:

In preparing for this lesson I checked out 21 of the most popular translations, trying to make that list easier, or looking for loop holes. No such luck. Sorry :) Paul tells us not to even hang around with people like that. So lets make a list of people we can't socialize with. This should be fun.

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|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The sexually immoral | 4. People who use obscene language |
| 2. Indecent people | 5. People who use profanity |
| 3. Greedy people | 6. People who are vulgar |

Paul closes the statement with the phrase "No one who does these things will receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and God." I need to clean up my own act. I need to police myself. Question, how is this different from Jesus hanging out with publicans and sinners? Where's the line? In purpose. Jesus sought to save them.

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STUDENT:

⁶Do not let anyone deceive you with foolish words; it is because of these very things that God's anger will come upon those who do not obey him. ⁷So have nothing at all to do with such people. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

How do we pull this off, any ideas? How have you handled un-saved people in your inner-circle? Let's see what Paul says. Let's discuss it after the reading of the next passage.

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STUDENT:

¹⁵So be careful how you live. Don't live like ignorant people, but like wise people. ¹⁶Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days. ¹⁷Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do.

¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts. ²⁰In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give thanks for everything to God the Father. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul's answer to all that spiritual carnage in the list he made above? 5 easy steps.

1. Be filled with the Spirit.
2. Be sober.
3. *Speak* the psalms, hymns and sacred songs.
4. *Sing* hymns and Psalms with praise in your hearts.
5. Always give thanks for everything in your hearts in Jesus name.

Paul ends chapter 5 with counsel for married couples, because as you know life happens. The main problem people have with this passage is the husbands read what Paul says to the wives, and the wives read what Paul says to the husbands. Don't make that mistake. Read it all, but take your own obligations to heart. Remember, you are obligated to God, not just your spouse.

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STUDENT:

TO THE MARRIED COUPLE

²¹ Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.

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TO THE WIVES

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Savior of the church, his body. ²⁴ And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

TO THE HUSBANDS:

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶ He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word, after making it clean by washing it in water, ²⁷ in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty—pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection. ²⁸ Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. (²⁹ None of us ever hate our own bodies. Instead, we feed them, and take care of them, just as Christ does the church; ³⁰ for we are members of his body.) ³¹ As the scripture says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.” (GNT)

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STUDENT:

TO EVERYONE:

³² There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. ³³ But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.

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TEACHER:

Am I the only one who sees this? Why is the guy’s part so long, and the girls part so short? Moving on.

Chapter 6. The final chapter of Ephesians talks of raising kids, slaves (indentured servitude), today that would seem to apply to those in the workforce (bosses and workers), and the Armor of God. We will read and discuss after every segment.

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CH. 6

STUDENT:

Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. ² “Respect your father and mother” is the first commandment that has a promise added: ³ “so that all may go well with you, and you may live a long time in the land.” ⁴ Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction. (GNT)* in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (KJV)*

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STUDENT:

⁵ Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ. ⁶ Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ. ⁷ Do your work as slaves cheerfully, as though you served the Lord, and not merely human beings. ⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do. ⁹ Masters, behave in the same way toward your slaves and stop using threats. Remember that you and your slaves belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹⁰ Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. ¹² For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³ So put on God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹⁴ So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, ¹⁵ and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. ¹⁶ At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷ And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸ Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people. (GNT)



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TEACHER:

NEXT LESSON PHILIPPIANS.

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"For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith."

Ephesians 2:8

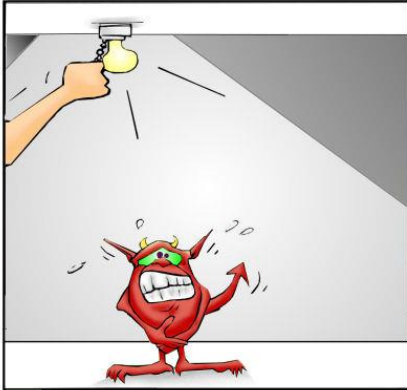
Ancient ruins in Ephesus. Hadrian's Temple.



The temple of Artemis in Ephesus



The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



In the 'light'.. the powers of darkness are left exposed. **Ephesians 5:13**

