

# Ephesians

## Summary

The book of Ephesians is a letter sent by the apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus. Ephesus was a bustling trading post and port town in modern-day Turkey. Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31) sharing the gospel message and ministering to new communities of believers. This letter is written as a general encouragement and challenge to the Christians in Ephesus, who were seemingly unmotivated by a specific incident or issue. In this letter, Paul is mainly reminding them of the spiritual transformation that happens when they are saved through the grace of God. He constantly contrasts the hopelessness and selfishness that existed before they followed Christ versus the peace, love, unity, and assurance they have in Christ. He addresses the humility it takes to have God-honoring relationships with those around us. He also addresses the reality of spiritual warfare, specifically focusing on the ways to defend against attacks of the enemy.

## Author

The letter to the church in Ephesus is attributed to the apostle Paul.

## Date

The date given by most scholars for the letter to the Ephesians is around A.D. 60 during his imprisonment in Rome.

## Primary Characters

Paul (Ephesians 1-6)

Tychicus (Ephesians 6)

## Historical Moments

Paul Writes His Letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 1-6)

Paul Is Imprisoned (Ephesians 3,4, & 6)

## Major Theological Themes

**Christ Has Reconciled All** - The church in Ephesus would have been dominated by Gentile (non-Jewish) converts to Christianity, and Paul wanted them to know that the sacrifice that Jesus made had not been limited to the Jewish people. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul assures the Gentile Christians, *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.* Through the narrative of the book of Acts, it can be clearly seen that God intended to restore His relationship with all of humanity, not just the Jewish people.

**God Desires Holiness** - There is a constant reminder throughout the letter to the Ephesians that there should be a visible difference in behavior and demeanor between those who have a relationship with Christ and those who do not. Paul says that the people of the world have become callous to God, have given themselves into all types of sensuality, and their hearts are controlled by greed. On the other hand, he says that Christians should be filled with love, thanksgiving, purity, and humility. God desires for His followers to live in a way that positively reflects His character and love for the world.

**Spiritual Warfare Exists** - Paul believes that the battle between Satan and the followers of God is a real one, or he would not have written Ephesians 6:10-20. This passage highlights the reality of spiritual warfare and what can be done to defend against it. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit, and reliance on the Word of God that protect Christians from the attacks of the enemy. Paul encourages the Christians of Ephesus to prepare now for the struggles that lie ahead.

## Lessons Learned from Ephesians

**God Desires Humility in Our Relationships** - Throughout the letter to the Ephesians, Paul emphasizes the way that Christians should treat each other. He highlights the relationship between husband and wife, calling for the husband to love his wife unconditionally and be willing to give up his life for her. At the same time, the wife is to respect and submit to her husband. Paul also admonishes children to respect the leadership of their parents, and he commands fathers to not provoke their children, but raise them up in a godly way. As an overarching theme, Paul constantly reminds us that every single human being is a creation

of God's and should be served and treated with love. As Christians, we should be the most loving and accepting people, not only towards those in our community but also to those who are disenfranchised and downtrodden.

**There Is No Person Beyond the Reach of God** - Just as Paul reminds the believers in Ephesus that the gospel is for all the nations, we must remember that there is no one outside of the influence of God. Paul himself was a murderer and persecutor of Christians and he was called by Jesus to be the most important missionary in history. Though there may be some people in your life who feel as if they are beyond reach, continue to pray for them, because the love of God can overcome any obstacle.