
EPHESIANS

READING PLAN AND STUDY GUIDE

Church

BEYOND IMAGINATION

FALL 2021

NOTE: MUCH OF THIS RESOURCE IS ORIGINAL TO
OAK HILL FELLOWSHIP CHURCH. SOME QUESTIONS WERE FORMED
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What is the best thing you could imagine God doing in our church?
Would it be...

- ...celebration gatherings where Jesus is proclaimed and adored as our highest aspiration?
- ...Gospel Communities who are devoted to one another and genuinely helping one another grow to maturity in Christ?
- ...disciples who are equipped and using their God-given spiritual gifts to edify the church and evangelize the lost?
- ...masses of lost people turning from their sins and trusting Jesus as their Savior and Lord?

These are some of the *highest* things that we could ask or imagine for our church. Sometimes we settle for even less than this when we relate to God's church, thinking that it is merely there to meet our felt needs or give us a weekly shot-in-the-arm of inspiration.

But what if we believed that God actually wanted even *more* than this for his church? What if we really believed that God is willing and "able to do *immeasurably more* than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" for his "glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations." (see Eph. 3:20-21 NIV). That's the picture of the church that the Apostle Paul paints in his letter to the Ephesians.

THE
PURPOSE
OF THIS
STUDY

*Pursuing God's
unimaginable
vision for his
church so that he
might receive
much glory.*

As we gaze into the glorious picture of Christ and his church through this study in Ephesians, we pray God does more than we could imagine in the following areas of the mission he has given us:

- **Proclaim Jesus** – That he would expand our WONDER at our identity in Christ so that his work defines our daily experience.
 - **Equip Servants** – That he would expand our VISION of church ministry so that we each maximize our role in the body.
 - **Send Witnesses** – That he would expand our PASSION for the gospel of grace so that we carry it to the lost.
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DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 1 - CHURCH BEYOND IMAGINATION (OVERVIEW)

EPHESIANS 1:1-2

DAY 1: Eph. 1:1-23

What do you notice about Paul's heart for the Ephesian church in this chapter? What does he want them to understand about their relationship to Christ and one another?

DAY 2: Eph. 2:1-22

What do we learn about Paul's audience through this chapter? How do you think verses 1-10 relate to verses 11-22 (notice the before/after motif in both sections separated by "but" in v. 4 and v. 13)?

DAY 3: Eph. 3:1-21

What do we learn about the ministry of the Apostle Paul through chapter 3? Describe his ministry in your own words.

DAY 4: Eph. 4:1-5:21

In your own words, summarize how the body of Christ is to function and the role every individual believer plays.

DAY 5: Eph. 5:22-6:24

What challenges do believers face in living out their calling? How does the cosmic battle described in chapter 6 affect our attempts to live out the rest of this book?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 2 -
BLESSINGS
BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
1:3-14

DAY 1: Observation

Circle the individual names of the Trinity used in this passage using three different colors. Then, identify pronouns like "who," "him" and "he" and determine which person they refer to. Circle those pronouns in the corresponding color.

DAY 2: Observation

Underline any phrase including "according to" or "to the praise." What is Paul emphasizing through the repetition of these phrases?

DAY 3: Interpretation

Note the repetition of "in the heavenly places" in Ephesians 1:3, 1:20, 2:6, 3:10, 6:12. How is this phrase used in each place and what is the significance of its repetition throughout Ephesians?

DAY 4: Interpretation

Write down a list of all the Spiritual blessings listed along with a brief definition of what each one means. If you do not know, use a Bible Dictionary at biblestudytools.com.

DAY 5: Application

Look at your list of Spiritual blessings from the day before. Which one do you tend to forget or disbelieve most often? Which one do you cherish the most? Memorize the verses where those attributes are found.

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

PRAYER WEEK

WEEK 3 - ENLIGHTENMENT BEYOND IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS 1:15 - 2:3

DAY 1: Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:3-9

Who in your life has shown great faith, hope, or love? Thank God for them and then find a way to tell them why you thank God for them.

DAY 2: Eph. 1:17-18; Col. 1:24-29

Pray for the members of our church to be filled with wisdom, revelation, and enlightenment of God's great plan. Think of specific members (perhaps in your GC) and pray for them by name.

DAY 3: Eph. 1:19-21; Col. 2:9-15

Pray that the members of our church would know the incredible power of God in their lives. Pray for specific people who might need to know the power of God.

DAY 4: Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:15-20

Pray that we would not fear any earthly or spiritual power other than God because the powerful King of the Universe has been given to us, the church. Pray that we would live as members of Christ's body in a darkened world.

DAY 5: Eph. 1:15-23

Pray for our Sunday Celebration Gathering and/or Gospel Communities using Paul's prayer in this text as a guide.

DAILY TIME
WITH THE
LORD

WEEK 4 -
GRACE BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
2:1-10

DAY 1: Observation

Create a two-column chart. On the left side, record what is true of the person "in sin" in v. 1-3. On the right side record what is true of the person who is "in Christ" in v. 4-10.

DAY 2: Observation

Circle every time the word "grace" is used and put a box around any time the word "works" is used. What do you notice about the relationship between these two words?

DAY 3: Interpretation

1) What does it mean to be “dead” in 2:1 (See Genesis 2:16-17; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12-21; 7:8; Ephesians 4:18; 1 Timothy 5:6.)? 2) Who is “the prince of the power of the air” (see also 6:11-12), and what power and authority does he now have (See 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 4:4; 5:19.)?

DAY 4: Interpretation

God’s saving work is described in three main ways. – “Made us alive together with Christ” – “Raised us up with Him” – “Seated us with Him” (See also 1:20.) Define each of these phrases using Romans 6:1-14 as a cross-reference.

DAY 5: Application

Do you tend to define your relationship with God primarily in terms of your work for him or by his grace toward you? How do the two work together in your life? How can you remember his grace toward you as you seek to follow Jesus today?

DAILY TIME
WITH THE
LORD

WEEK 5 -
ACCESS BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
2:11-22

DAY 1: Observation

Create a two-column chart. On the left side, record the description of "Gentiles Before Christ." On the right side, record the description of "Gentiles in Christ."

DAY 2: Observation

Put a circle around every instance of the word "far" and a square around every instance of the word "near." Note also who is far and who is near.

DAY 3: Interpretation

What is a Gentile (use a Bible Dictionary at biblestudytools.org if you need help)? Why does Paul describe them as he does in v. 11-12? How do you think this potentially affected the relationships between members of the church in Ephesus?

DAY 4: Interpretation

What three pictures of the church does Paul use in v. 19-22? What does each picture reveal about the nature of the church?

DAY 5: Application

Do you approach your spiritual life and your relationship with God primarily as an individual pursuit or as something you do in community with other believers? How do the pictures you wrote down from v. 19-22 shape the way you relate to God and others in his church?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 6 -
A PLAN BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
3:1-13

DAY 1: Observation

Put a circle around every instance of the word "mystery" and a square around every instance of the word "gospel." How does Paul define the mystery in v. 6? What is the relationship between "gospel" and "mystery" in this passage? What is the relationship between the mystery and the church?

DAY 2: Observation

What is Paul's relationship to the mystery, the gospel, and the church? What is the job God has given him?
(see also Acts 22:12-21)

DAY 3: Interpretation

Notice the repetition of "for this reason" at the beginning of v. 1 and again in v. 14. The current section is an interruption. What is the reason for this interruption and explanation before Paul goes on to pray what he does in v. 14-22?

DAY 4: Interpretation

What is the purpose of the church according to v. 10-11? Who are the "rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (see also Eph. 6:12)?

DAY 5: Application

How does the purpose of the church in this passage compare to the way you typically think about the purpose of the church? Do you see the "glory" that it is to be part of God's unfolding plan (v. 13)? How will you grow your capacity to see that glory?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

PRAYER WEEK

WEEK 7 -
GLORY BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
3:14-21

DAY 1: Eph. 3:14-15; Eph. 1:20-23

Spend time praising God for his position above all things. Praise him as the giver of life.

DAY 2: Eph. 3:16-17a; Eph 2:22

Pray that the Holy Spirit would strengthen our church to experience more of Jesus Christ through faith. Pray for specific believers in your Gospel Community.

DAY 3: Eph. 3:17-18; Job 11:7-9

Pray that the Lord would increase our comprehension of his vast glory. Pray that we would be both humbled and strengthened in him.

DAY 4: Eph. 3:19; Col. 2:9-10

Pray that our church would more deeply understand the love that Jesus has for us. Pray that we would be so saturated with our experience of God's glory that our community would encounter Jesus through us.

DAY 5: Eph. 3:20-21; Jude 24-25

Ask God to work in powerful ways through our church so that he receives much glory. Ask him to increase our imagination about what he wants to do.

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 8 -
UNITY BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
4:1-6

DAY 1: Observation

Paul uses the word "therefore," meaning that what he writes next depends on what he previously wrote, in this case all of chapters 1-3, and especially his prayer starting in 3:14. Summarize Ephesians 1-3 in your own words. In what way do these chapters set up verses 1-6 (and the rest of the book)?

DAY 2: Observation

Put a circle around each instance of the word "one." Create a simple definition for each element that is described as "one." (example: body = Church)

DAY 3: Interpretation

Look at Eph. 4:1-2 and cross-reference with Phil. 1:27 and 1 Thess. 2:12. In your own words, what does it mean to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called"?

DAY 4: Interpretation

Consider again the word "one," specifically in relationship to the word "body" (see also Eph. 2:16). What does this teach us about the way God sees the church locally, globally, and across history? How do the other "one" elements shape the way we understand what constitutes the true church? What does this mean for the way we relate to other churches?

DAY 5: Application

Do you emphasize these "one" elements in order to promote unity in our church and across churches? Repent of any way you have broken fellowship with those who share these "one" elements of Christ's church.

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 9 -
MATURITY
BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
4:7-16

DAY 1: Observation

Underline all the connecting words in this passage (therefore, so that, but, as a result, for, however). Read the passage again slowly and observe how these connecting words add to the meaning.

DAY 2: Observation

Read Eph. 4:7-16, and then read Psalm 68 that is quoted in v. 8. What does Psalm 68:18 mean in context? How does Paul use it here?

DAY 3: Interpretation

Cross-reference Eph. 4:10 with Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-30; 1 Peter 4:10-11. What is similar in these passages? What is unique about the gifts mentioned in Eph. 4:10? What is the purpose of spiritual gifts in general, and more specifically, the spiritual gifts mentioned here in Ephesians 4:10?

DAY 4: Interpretation

Notice that all the pronouns used are plural and corporate. How does this fact, along with the body metaphor, affect the way we measure what it means to be "mature in Christ"?

DAY 5: Application

What part do you play in helping the church grow to full maturity in Christ? How does your maturity relate to the maturity of the church and vice versa?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 10 -
NEW LIFE BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
4:17 - 32

DAY 1: Observation

Create a list in two columns: how the "Gentiles" walk and the way the Ephesians "learned Christ" (i.e., learned to walk in Christ). What differences do you notice?

DAY 2: Observation

Underline all the command verbs (action words) in the passage. Circle all the verbs that God has done for believers in Christ. How do these two types of verbs relate to one another in the passage?

DAY 3: Interpretation

Notice the word "but" at the beginning of v. 20. What does Paul say makes the difference between the "Gentiles" and those in Christ?

DAY 4: Interpretation

What does it mean to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind" (See Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18.)?

DAY 5: Application

How have you seen the new nature taking root in your life? What do you still need to put off, and what do you need to put on in its place?

DAILY TIME
WITH THE
LORD

WEEK 11 -
COMMUNITY
BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
5:1-21

DAY 1: Observation

Circle all the things God has done for believers in Christ, and all the ways he has changed their identity (ex: "beloved children").

DAY 2: Observation

Underline all the things that believers are called to do as a result of what Christ has done.

DAY 3: Interpretation

Describe an example of the following "unfruitful works of darkness": sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking.

DAY 4: Interpretation

In v. 8, Paul introduces a darkness and light motif.

Cross-reference Isa. 51:17, Isa. 60:1, John 3:20-21, 1 John 1:5-10 and Rom. 13:11-12. Summarize the scriptural theme of darkness and light in your own words.

DAY 5: Application

How can you help others in our church community to walk in the light (see 5:15-21)? Pray that you will live out a commitment to do so.

DAILY TIME
WITH THE
LORD

WEEK 12 -
MARRIAGE
BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
5 : 2 2 - 3 3

DAY 1: Observation

List out the connection points in the metaphor between Christ and the church and the husband and wife.

DAY 2: Observation

In two columns, list all the responsibilities given to the wife, and all the commandments for the husband. What do you notice?

DAY 3: Interpretation

Note that Paul says that the statement of Genesis 2:24 refers to Christ and the church. How does this impact our understanding of marriage and the roles of husband and wife in it?

DAY 4: Interpretation

How can we know if this passage is bound by time and culture, or if it is a timeless truth? What indicators do you see in the text that could help you determine this?

DAY 5: Application

Describe your current views on marriage? Do they align with the view described here? How can you personally support the marriages of our church (including your own if married)?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 13 -
FAMILY BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
6:1-4

DAY 1: Observation

Compare the order of the roles Paul addresses in these verses with the order of the roles in 5:22, 25 and 6:5-9. What do you notice?

DAY 2: Observation

What is the relationship between the words "obey" (v. 1) and "honor" (v. 2)? What do these commands have to do with the responsibilities given to fathers in v. 3-4?

DAY 3: Interpretation

What is the difference between discipline and instruction? Look up these words in a Bible Dictionary at biblestudytools.org.

DAY 4: Interpretation

Cross-reference Eph. 6:4 with Prov. 1:8-19. How do these verses in Proverbs shed light on the commands in Ephesians?

DAY 5: Application

Consider the fact that this passage was written in a letter to the whole church. How can a church support families in our church in the parenting of their children? How will you personally support families in our church?

DAILY TIME WITH THE LORD

WEEK 14 -
CALLING BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
6:5-9

DAY 1: Observation

Underline the command verbs given to both bondservants and masters. What phrases does Paul use to further explain these commands?

DAY 2: Observation

What motivations does Paul give for obedience to these commands?

DAY 3: Interpretation

Read and consider the article "10 Things You Should Know about Slavery In the Bible" at samstorms.org. What is different and what is similar about our current workplace relationships and first century slavery?

DAY 4: Interpretation

Why would a master's threatening be contrary to the gospel? How might remembering the impartiality of the Heavenly Master (Eph. 6:9) change a master's heart?

DAY 5: Application

With which role do you most identify: bond servant or master? How will you purpose yourself to remember the Lord in your daily work?

DAILY TIME
WITH THE
LORD

WEEK 15 -
PROTECTION
BEYOND
IMAGINATION

EPHESIANS
6:10 - 24

DAY 1: Observation

Underline all the connecting words in this passage (finally, therefore, so that, but, as a result, for, however). Read the passage again slowly and observe how these connecting words add to the meaning.

DAY 2: Observation

What words do you notice repeated in this passage? What do they emphasize?

DAY 3: Interpretation

List out each piece of "spiritual armor." Why is each piece of armor a fitting representation of its spiritual counterpart?

DAY 4: Interpretation

What is the relationship between the armor in v. 10-17 and the prayer request in v. 18-20?

DAY 5: Application

Practically, how can you put on this armor daily with the rest of God's army, the church?



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