



39 DAY FAST – EPHESIANS

8/4/2011 – 9/11/2011

Remedy Church exists to glorify God by calling all peoples into fellowship with Him and with one another through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

39 Day Fast & Re-Focus through the book of Ephesians

Introduction:

This next 39 days is for the purpose of directing us as a church, called together to do life and mission, to focus on Christ and our need for His Gospel. It is designed to re-ignite a deep passion for Jesus and to stir our affections for Him and cause us to live for Him.

What's the best way to do this 39 day study? I recommend thinking of something that causes you to miss out on time with Jesus. Maybe it's TV, maybe it's social media, maybe it's food. Whatever it is, try to fast from it during these 39 days to focus and feast on Jesus.

Why fast?

When we fast we say:

"My heart is hungry for 'all the fullness of God'. I long for a deeper work of God in the midst of his people. I yearn for a mighty tide of missionary zeal to spread a passion for the supremacy of Christ in all things for the joy of all peoples. I long to see unmistakable, supernatural new birth taking place week in and week out through the compelling witness of God's transformed people wherever he is named." – John Piper. A Hunger for God

That is why we fast. These next 39 days are to position ourselves within the will of God that He would move mightily in Remedy Church and strengthen those who are already here. We want Him to strengthen our walks with Jesus, strengthen us to kill sin in our lives, strengthen us to be great spouses, strengthen us to be used by Him to build the KINGDOM in Rock Hill and see many people come to Jesus in the city!!

We are beseeching the Sovereign God to come and move mightily as HE wills.

By fasting, we are simply demonstrating how bad we want it.

(**If you want to learn more about fasting you can go to iTunes and to the Remedy Church podcast. On 8/8/2010 there is a sermon on fasting and praying you can download and hear some teaching on it.)

Memorizing

During the 39 days, one of the goals is to memorize a small portion of Scripture. The text is Ephesians 2:1-10. There are a lot of great verses in this book, but we'll focus on these verses for memorization because of they are so great in capturing the Gospel for us in words. We will memorize around 1 verse every 4 days.

Don't be legalistic, but still be committed.

You don't have to fast anything to do this. You don't even have to do it everyday. If you miss a day, that's ok. Just pick up the next day. Don't make this a legalistic exercise to add to your already busy schedule. Use this as a tool in your everyday time with Christ to focus on Him and let Him show you what you need to fast. It would be great if you were able to do all 39 days together as a church.

If you are fasting something, go ahead and write it down here. This is just a simple way to remind yourself as you do this.

I am fasting from _____.

Day 1- Ephesians 1:1-4 - Thursday, August 4

Ephesians was written by Paul from prison in Rome to the people in Ephesus. The first 3 chapters are filled with doctrine and theology, then the second 3 chapters explain what this doctrine means to the church, families and individuals practically. This is why he ends the letter with the “armor of God.”

Read the text:

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

These first 4 verses are filled with tremendous power. They set the tone to an amazing introduction to a great letter. First Paul introduces himself, then calls himself an Apostle. He calls himself this because he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus where he was radically called to follow Christ.

You were to. More than likely you weren't converted walking down a road by a bright light. But you were still *radically converted*. Have you ever thought of it like that? Verse 2 declares that Christians have received grace and peace from God. This is always radical. God is so good.

Verse 3 begins describing to us the radical free mercy of God given to Christians. We'll look at it over the next few days.

But for today let's focus on 3 things.

1.) Blessing. – Paul starts by declaring blessing on God. He does this to stir the readers hearts to do the same. He is wanting you to be filled with gratitude and to focus on the magnificence of God and to set you aflame with high thoughts of God.

God is worthy to be blessed. What does it take for you to have a heart on fire for God and to be set afire for Him?

Paul further says that it is “*every spiritual blessing*”. This is reminding us that the perfection of Christ has been blessed onto us. Amazing!

2.) Chosen. – Before the foundation of the world was even set, God was the first cause in your salvation. All the benefits we receive from God and being His child are because of God's eternal purposes and election. Before we had ever done anything. God is so good to us.

How does being chosen make you feel? How does this make you feel about God?

3.) Holy. – God has declared those who are in Christ to be holy and blameless. Can you believe it? His righteousness and perfection has been given to sinners. Though we are totally acquainted with our own sin, God has called you “*HOLY*”.

How does it make you feel to be called holy and blameless even though we don’t always live that way? If this is what is declared true of us before the foundation of the world, then how does it make you want to live?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*

Day 2- Ephesians 1:5-6 - Friday, August 5

Read the text:

In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Paul begins these two verses by declaring us that God has predestined us because of His love. The end of verse four says, "*In love...*". So we know that it is His love that has caused us to be predestined.

How is it loving for God to predestine us to be saved?

Why is it important to understand God's adoption of us? Write down how thankful you are to be a child of the King.

Verse 6 tells us that one of the causes of His predestining us is for "*the praise of His glorious grace*". God does all things for His glory. This means that man's greatest problem is not ethical, but it's doxological.

How does this affect your evangelism?

How should your day-to-day change if you did everything for the "*praise of His glorious grace*"? Name 3 specific things.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

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Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*

Day 3- Ephesians 1:7-10 - Saturday, August 6

Read the text:

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Wayne Grudem defines 'Redemption' this way:

Christ's saving work viewed as an act of "buying back" sinners out of their bondage to sin and to Satan through the payment of a ransom (though the analogy should not be pressed to specify anyone to whom a ransom was paid). – *Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology*

Write some of the specific things that Christ has bought you back from. What are some of the things He specifically saved you from?

"The forgiveness of our trespasses" has been granted to us according to "the riches of his grace". This means our sins are not counted against us now that we are in Christ. He did this because of His kindness. He has lavished this grace on us. Since we have received this grace, our attitude toward our current sin should be serious. John Owen wrote, "Always be killing sin or it will be killing you."

All your sin has been forgiven. So, how might your attitude change toward your current sin in your life?

Verse 9 seems to indicate that at one time God's will was a mystery, but now it has been made known. Christ has come for all to see that salvation is offered to us. The mystery has been revealed.

What are some more purposeful steps you can take in making known this "mystery", which is the gospel, to those who have not heard?

His purposes are undeniably wise and just. We can never *fully* understand them. (But we never abandon pursuit of them because we cannot know them fully.) We pursue them because we can at least know them in part. Pursuing understanding God, though in part, is the most God-honoring thing we can do. His purposes of salvation had been kept hidden, but now the mystery has been revealed. God's purpose in election has been extended to the Gentiles now as well.

In verse 10, Paul refutes any questions as to why one specific time period might be chosen over another, this time is the "fullness of time". God's providence must always take precedence over man's presumptions. This is shown by the word *dispensation*, for by the judgment of God the lawful administration of all events is regulated. So, God is governing all events in human history by His own good judgment.

Since all events in human history occur by God's own good judgment; answer the question "why it is necessary for you to share your faith in order for people to be saved?" (See Romans 10:14-17)

One of the major themes in the Bible is unity. Outside of Christ all things were in disorder. He has come to unite them back together, or restore them to order. Christ has gathered together His body and united them together in one. His body must have unity.

How can you personally promote the theme of unity in Remedy Church?

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Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*

Day 4- Ephesians 1:11-14 - Sunday, August 7

Read the text:

11 *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

An “*inheritance*” is something that has been passed down. God has passed down the inheritance to His children. He “*works all things according to the counsel of his will*”.

Calvin says here, Paul “*speaks of Him as the sole agent, and as doing everything according to His own will, so as to leave nothing to be done by man. In no respect, therefore, are men admitted to share in this praise, as if they brought anything of their own.*”

Verse 12 points us to the final cause of all things. It is “*the praise of His Glory*”. We are the illustrations of God’s glory to the world. We are to shine out the goodness of God to the world.

What ways, throughout the day today, can you shine out the goodness of God to the world?

In verse 13 Paul provides two strong statements of encouragement. “*The word of truth*” is THE word of truth, not A word of truth. As if Paul is saying here, “there is no other truth, but the gospel. All other things come under its supremacy.” It has power and is efficient in bringing us to salvation. Romans 1:16, says that *the gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.*” So the power and truth of the gospel is something external from us. It is not our persuasiveness that brings someone to Christ. It is the power of the gospel itself. Its power and efficacy are self-contained, and given to it by God. God is who maintains its power. This is a freeing truth for believers when it comes to evangelism. No matter how the gospel is presented, the power doesn’t come from us and how well it’s communicated, but within the gospel itself. This is why in 1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul says that he went “*to preach the gospel, not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*” If we try to present the gospel by our own persuasiveness, we take away from the power of the cross of Christ.

Do you find this a freeing truth? How does this encourage you to press on in evangelism?

The Holy Spirit.

When we believe in Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can aid to remove doubts that a Christian has throughout their walk. The true conviction that believers have of the Word of God, their justification and their sanctification does not come from the flesh or within. It is not man-made, philosophical system that is constructed by us to offer peace to ourselves. It is the work of the Holy Spirit living inside of us. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can have peace and not doubt. This is how our evangelism is effective too. In the same way, evangelism is not a human made thing to bring people to Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who gives it power and effectiveness. Now believing or the exercising of faith does occur first then the sealing happens. Many would say that this is the work of man, then the work of God. However, it would be correct to say that the work of faith on behalf of the believer was done by God also. Faith happens in two parts: (1) The hearing of the knowledge or the

enlightenment, (2) becoming a steady conviction or establishing it in the mind. The first is an obvious work of God. We are not told anything of God unless He imparts it to us. The second part here is also a work of the Holy Spirit. He works in our hearts to establish His truth and make it a conviction. So here we see that all parts are the Work of God, our believing and our sealing. PRAISE HIM!!!

“Guarantee” (v. 14)

The Greek word for ‘guarantee’ is *arrabon*. The word *arrabon* connotes the idea of the first part of a price that is paid in any contract as an earnest and security of the remainder. And, therefore, it is not taken back, but kept until the rest is paid to complete the whole sum. (like earnest money.)

When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit after justification, His promises are then confirmed to us, and no fear shall overtake us that they will be revoked. The promises themselves are not weak, however our trust is. When the Holy Spirit lives in us, our trust and confidence is strengthened. The Spirit is then, the earnest (or guarantee) given to us of our inheritance of eternal life.

This is a significant verse demonstrating to us the idea of “once saved, always saved”, or that one cannot lose their salvation. Take some time to write how this makes you feel free to live under God’s abundant grace?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:2 - *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*

Day 5- Ephesians 1:15-23 pt 1 - Monday, August 8

Read the Text:

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

There is a two-fold description given here of real Christian character. They have faith and they love. Their faith is directed towards Jesus (as well as their love) and love to all the saints. Interestingly here Paul says "toward all the saints".

Calvin comments, "Love ought to embrace all men, but here the saints are particularly mentioned; because love, when properly regulated, begins with them, and is afterwards extended to all others."

In other words, our love is aimed at all men, but primarily at believers and secondarily at non-believers.

Do you tend to show love to believers more or unbelievers? Why? How can you love both well?

Prayer

In verse 16, Paul is model for us all in praying for people. He is telling them this to encourage them to continue in their faith. He wants them to reach new heights of faith. Every height of faith we achieve should encourage us to push on. There should never be a time where we think we have achieved a place to stop and feel comfortable. Paul is encouraging the Ephesians here by telling them that he is praying for them, thus encouraging them to grow more.

Write down 3 names of people you need to pray for today and pray specifically v. 17-19 for them.

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Pray that they would...

- 1.) Be given a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him
- 2.) Have the eyes of their hearts enlightened
- 3.) Know what is the hope to which he has called them
- 4.) Know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:2 - *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*

Day 6- Ephesians 1:15-23 pt 2 - Tuesday, August 9

Read the Text:

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

If you love Jesus, you will love the church.

Jesus loves the church. He is passionate for her. He died for her. Never should a Christian give up on the church. God never will. If you love Jesus, you must love the church. If you love the church you will do all you can to teach, help, and grow her into maturity.

Verse 22 says that Christ is the ‘head’ of the church. “Head” signifies the same as “right hand” in verse 20 where it tells us of Jesus’ power. Jesus has the authority over all. Therefore, everyone else who is a believer is a *member* of the body. This is important. Pastors, elders, deacons, lay people all are a member. Members have the same rank as each other. Everyone is just as valid in the body as another. Every member plays a key role in the body. It is dangerous to give one member more power than he should have. He is not the head. It is dangerous to hold in high esteem one member over another. Again, he is not the head. Only the head is to be worshiped. Further, if one member does all the work and, in turn causes the other members to neglect their work, then they become atrophied. The body is the church. Jesus loves the church. He died for her. God is patient and loves His church. This is another way we should be more like God.

What are some ways you can love and serve the church like Christ does?

Verse 21 reminds us that it is in “*this age*” that Christ is King, but also “*in the age to come*”. This means that Jesus’ glory and reign are not temporary, but is eternal. This gives the Ephesians (and us) unshakeable confidence in Christ. When we remind ourselves that our King reigns eternally, our devotion to Him is renewed as well as our hope in sanctification. We will desire to press on and fight in this life for holiness, because our Savior and King reigns eternally.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:2 - *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*

Day 7- Ephesians 2:1-3 - Wednesday, August 10

Read the Text:

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

The Bad News First (tomorrow the good news!)

No one like bad news. No one. But to understand and appreciate the GOOD NEWS, it is a good exercise to understand the bad news.

Paul begins chapter two by giving an illustration to explain his former statements.

Verse 1 begins “*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins*”. Another way to think of this is that you were dead *because* of your trespasses and sins. Death was not going to happen to us, it had happened. Our sin killed us. It is wrong to think of yourself before Christ as just bad. We are dead. The only way a dead person can be made alive is by an act of God. This death was a spiritual death; meaning our soul was alienated from God.

This illustration is showing us from 1:23 that it is indeed Jesus who fills all in all.

Verse 2, though this is still the bad news, has great promise. The words “*once walked*” remind us that this is what *was* true of us before Christ. There are two amazing truths in this short phrase that should cause us to pause for a moment and consider how great the love and mercy of God is.

(1.) We once did walk in the course of the prince of the power of the air (who is satan). We were devil-worshippers outside of a relationship with Christ. This truth must land on us powerfully to grasp fully God’s love and mercy towards us. We were not just sinners, we were direct enemies of God. We weren’t just dead, not doing anything, we were carrying out unrighteousness against God as an enemy of His. While we did this against Him, He made us alive in Christ. He simply overflows with mercy. This is amazing love that has been shown to us. Knowing He loves us like this should cause us to love Him the same way.

(2.) We *once* did walk in the course of the world. The keyword here is *once*. Now, as believers, we have the power (Holy Spirit) within us to have victory over sin in our lives.

Verse 3 says we “*all*” once were children of wrath. Those who have not put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins still have the wrath of God remaining on them. This should drive us to mission and to want to make disciples.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:2 - *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*

Day 8- Ephesians 2:4-7 - Thursday, August 11

Read the Text:

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

But God

“*But God*”; arguably the two greatest words in the Bible. These two words pack so much power. These two words are the central theme of our hope as Christians in any situation. When we have despair, these two words bring the greatest of hopes. These two words change man’s eternity.

Mercy

Why are the words “*But God*” so powerful? It is because they highlight the GREAT mercy of God for us. God’s mercy is praised here as to the cause of our being made alive. Further God is said to have *rich* mercy, meaning there is nothing more valuable.

Calvin says “*that it (God’s rich mercy) had been poured out in a singularly large and abundant manner. The whole of our salvation is here ascribed to the mercy of God.*”

Love

Why did God choose to show us this mercy? LOVE!

1 John 4:10 & 19 say, “*In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” “*We love because He first loved us.*”

His love for us is too great for words to capture. Instead, it is to be experienced. It is to be felt. It is to be understood by our senses, not just our cognitive abilities.

How can you revel in the love of God for you today?

We were dead...

We weren’t bad. We were spiritually dead; incapable of doing anything for ourselves. This clause sounds very much like Romans 5:8 “*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” While we were the people described in Ephesians 2:1-3, God died for us. Now we can see Paul’s use of “*rich mercy*” and “*great love for which he loved us.*”

Calvin astutely says, “*Everything connected with our salvation ought to be ascribed to God as its author.*”

We’ve been made alive...

Let this sink in deep to our souls. We were dead, and now we’ve been made alive. This is glorious. There is something even more amazing. Don’t miss this ... *Our spiritual birth is when we really begin to live.*

Calvin says, “*The meaning is, that there is no other life than that which is breathed into us by Christ: so that we begin to live only when we are ingrafted into him, and enjoy the same life with himself.*”

His insight is that we only begin to live when we have been ingrafted into Christ. This is so counter-culture. The world teaches that there are the ones who are really living life and that the Christian life is boring. The opposite is the truth. Those who are in Christ are the ones who really have life.

By Grace you have been Saved

Grace is unmerited favor. We did nothing to earn God’s favor. God has shown us unbelievable favor, not out of necessity, but love. This keeps us from boasting, for one cannot earn or work to their salvation. It is given to him solely and wholly from God.

Positional Truth: You've been seated in the Heavenly Places.

Positional truths are things that are true, regardless of how we feel. No matter what kind of day we've experienced, whether of one of victory in Christ, or filled with sin, these truths do not change. Positional truths can give us tremendous hope in times we "feel" far from God. Verse 6 says that we have been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Positionally, this is true of us who are in Christ, whether we feel this way all the time or not. This is not something we have visually seen, but this blessing is in our possession.

Describe how this positional truth provides hope to you on your "worst" days as a follower of Christ?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

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Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:3 - among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Day 9- Ephesians 2:8-10 - Friday, August 12

Read the Text:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Grace through Faith

When someone asks you how you've been saved, this is the easiest and most succinct answer you can give. "Grace through faith." God's grace has been extended, therefore you are now capable to exercise faith in Jesus and you are saved. The faith you put in Jesus is a gift from God.

Why does Paul make sure he says that it's a gift at the end of verse 8? Paul knows the human heart. We are so apt to attribute glory to ourselves. In verse 9, Paul wants to keep us from boasting. His deepest desire is that Jesus receives ALL the glory. Paul is compelled to contrast the difference between grace and works. If man does any work in obtaining his salvation, then he will have reason to boast, even on that one point. Paul sees this as a possibility, therefore strives to contribute all of man's salvation, from beginning to end, to God. Man was not created to *be* worshiped, but *to* worship.

Paul says of himself in Galatians 6:14, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Saved to do Good Works

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come."

We have been made new creations by God for a reason. Verse 10 says that we have been "created in Christ Jesus". This new creation we now experience is to do good works. This is one way we glorify God.

The key thing here is that God prepared in advance the "good works" themselves. Isn't that so freeing? He has already prepared them for you. You just walk in them. God has done all the work. As His children, we JOYFULLY get to walk in these works, doing them for His glory.

What 'good works' is God calling you to do today for His glory?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

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Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:3 - *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

Day 10- Ephesians 2:11-13 - Saturday, August 13

Read the Text:

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **12** remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Remember

He calls the Ephesians still not to forget that they were lost at one time. The circumcised, though it was by hand, had called them “the uncircumcised” because they were once far from God. The Ephesians had a permanent reminder of their old lifestyle, namely being uncircumcised. Paul instructs them not to forget lest they become boastful. This in no way lessens the real circumcision of their heart (Romans 2:29) that had taken place, which is the real sign for them of their justification before God.

Could this exhortation to remember be relevant for us today?

Those outside of Christ

In verse 12, Paul lists five characteristics that are given of people who do not know Jesus. All of these characteristics are a terrifying state to be in. This should drive us to love unbelievers more and show them the boundless mercy of God.

- (1) They are separated from Christ.
- (2) They are alienated from the commonwealth.
- (3) They are strangers to the covenants of promise.
- (4) They have no hope
- (5) They are without God in the world.

(1) *They are separated from Christ.* This is probably the most terrifying. They have not yet experienced the beauty and preciousness of the love of Christ for His bride. It is a beauty that is breath-taking.

(2) *They are alienated from the commonwealth.* Meaning, they do not enjoy the benefits of being in a body of believers and visually seeing and experiencing the body of Christ be the body. They do not get to see others care for others, nor are their needs met by the body. They do not experience real Christ-like community.

(3) *They are strangers to the covenants of promise.* Nothing can be more precious to a fallen saint than the precious promises of God in His Word. These are the things that we bank our lives on. They give remarkable hope in the face of trials. Unbelievers do not have this. Praise God we can hope in His great promises.

(4) *They have no hope.* They not only don't have hope in His promises, but are in the end left with no hope at all. There is nothing to hope in that is finite, for it will pass. One can only hope in what is infinite, for it will not pass. They have no hope because they do not know “*the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge*” (Eph 3:19).

(5) *They are without God in the world.* Without God in one's life, there is no moral compass. One will continually give into the passions of his flesh. He is unable to resist it. He is a slave to his flesh. All kinds of sin can arise from this: sexual immorality, depression, gluttony, chemical dependency, etc... Without God, one's life will continually spiral down unless, God in His mercy, reaches in and pulls him from his utter despair. “*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” (Romans 7:25) for saving us! “*Oh the depth of the*

riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33).

Which one or two of the five characteristics makes you the most thankful that you have Christ in your life? Why?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:3 - among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Day 11- Ephesians 2:14-16 - Sunday, August 14

Read the Text:

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Jesus is our Peace and made us One

The “our” is where Paul now includes the Israelites in the reconciliation with God. The “peace” shows us that Jesus is actually standing in the gap between God and man and making peace. Without Him, we would be enemies with God. We would not be reconciled with God. We would deserve the full wrath of God. Our sin would be justly punished by God. But, we are not punished by God. Christ is our peace that exists between us and God. *“What a beautiful title is this which Christ possesses, - the peace between God and man.”* (Calvin).

This phrase is saying that Christ has made both Jews and Gentiles one now. We are one in that we are now all spiritually children of Abraham. We are all under the covenant made with him. We are children of God not because of the flesh, but because of the promise (Romans 9:8). So now to be a child of God, Jews also must include Gentiles into the family. If they do not, then they are not truly in the family of God.

Reflect on being in the family of God. This is good news.

How will you represent Christ today as a member of His family?

Abolished the Law of Commandments

In verse 15, Paul explains the previous verse. This phrase explains to us what the “wall” is. The wall was made by the commandments and ordinances. Because the Jews followed the commandments and ordinances prior to Christ, they were sanctified by God through keeping these things. But now, because Christ has come, He has abolished having to follow the commandments and ordinances for a relationship with God. This is now done through Christ. So the “wall”, which created a distinction between the Jews and Gentiles, is gone. Christ abolished the wall. WOW!!

Why? Why did He do this? Verse 15. *“That he might create in himself one new man in place of two, so making peace”*

We have been regenerated by Christ alone. In this phrase Paul says *“in himself”*. This means in Christ is where this new man is created. The Jews and Gentiles find their reconciliation with each other and with God in Christ. So peace has been made.

Killing the hostility?

Who is hostile? It could be thought the hostility being mentioned is between Jews and Gentiles. But verse 16 says, *“reconcile us both”*. Therefore both Jews and Gentiles are being reconciled together with someone. After this phrase, the cross is mentioned. This is to remind them of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. Propitiation is the appeasing of God’s wrath. This was done by Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice. The hostility is now gone between God and man. Peace has been made. Since Christ has become our peace and the sacrifice for us, our lives must always reflect thankfulness.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:3 - *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

Day 12- Ephesians 2:17-22 - Monday, August 15

Read the Text:

17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Jesus Preached Peace.

Jesus was the initiating preacher. When you see the word “*preach*” in the Bible, you can also use the word “*proclaim*”. Jesus took the initiative to proclaim peace.

What did He proclaim? Verse 18. Through Jesus there is ACCESS to the Father. This is a great message. There is power in this.

Who do you need to take the initiative with today to proclaim the Gospel?

No longer aliens, but Citizens

Perhaps this is difficult to understand unless you’ve been out of the country somewhere you are not a citizen. The truth is for those in Christ is that they are now “*fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.*” They, and we, have been given citizenship in to heaven (Philippians 3:20) and are now considered to be saints and have all the rights that go along with this. We are now in the family of God along with the children of Israel.

Built on a Legacy

Our salvation is built on the shoulders of others saints that have gone before us. Someone shared the Gospel with someone, who in turn shared the Gospel with someone, who in turn ... you get the point. The Gospel was eventually told to you.

Who will be in your spiritual legacy? Will the line terminate with you?

In verse 20 Paul draws our attention and minds to those who have gone before us building the church. This is the legacy of the Christian faith in which we are now partakers and builders also.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,*

Day 13- Ephesians 3:1-6 - Tuesday, August 16

Read the Text:

1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Stewardship

Stewardship is mostly a word associated with money. But do we think of it in relation to the Gospel as well? God's grace has been given to Christians. They are to steward this grace. Paul is writing this letter from jail. There is NEVER a time for him that he doesn't want to steward the grace of God. In trials or when all is well, these are all opportunities to steward the circumstances we are in for Christ. Pray, and ask that today you will steward the grace of God well today.

The Mystery has been made known

Colossians 1:27 says, "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

How had this mystery been hidden to the sons of men in other generations? Did not the prophets speak of Christ's coming? How was it a mystery to them? They did to some degree have a knowledge of a coming Messiah, but they did not know exactly when or how. So this was a mystery.

But Colossians 1:27 sheds even more light on the mystery. The Old Testament saints had the promise of God to be *with* them always, we now have the promise to have Christ *in* us. This is a mystery they did not fully understand – that God was going to physically take up residence inside them. The other generations did not have the benefit of God in them for sanctification that we have. What a gloriously blessed mystery! The mystery was that God is now saving the Gentiles, but also that God lives IN us.

Knowing that God lives in you, how does this help you in the process of sanctification?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,*

Day 14- Ephesians 3:7-10 - Wednesday, August 17

Read the Text:

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Everyone is a Minister

This is not a title that Paul has arrogantly given to himself. He lived his life keenly aware that it was God who chose him on the road to Damascus to be His child. Paul is tapping into a truth that is true of every child of God. 2 Corinthians 5:18 tells us that all of us have been given the “*ministry of reconciliation*”. Therefore, everyone is a minister.

How does this truth change the way you ‘minister’ to others?

Paul lived a life manifestly seeing the “*working of His power*” (v. 7) in his life. Every Christian has this ability in their life.

What are some places in your life you specifically want to see the “*working of His power*” made manifest?

Least of all the Saints

This type of talk was common with Paul. (See 1 Cor 15:9, 1 Tim 1:15) Before he was converted he was a persecutor of the church and he simply could not get over that God has saved him. This is what drove him. This is what made him the greatest missionary ever to live.

How might we live differently if we never got over that God has saved us?

Paul's Mission

Verse 8 tells us that Paul wanted to proclaim to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He also wanted to illuminate men's eyes so that they might see how this Gospel, accepted by faith, was operating in the hearts and lives of men. He taught that the Gospel replaced fear with trust, gloom with gladness, hatred with love, and separation with fellowship.

Who needs to hear this message of hope that only comes from the Gospel of Christ?

The Plan is the Church

The local church is the plan of God. The church is the masterpiece of God in which His excellencies are made manifest. This verse is saying that the world should be able to see the infinite diversity and sparkling beauty and manifold wisdom of God by looking at the church. The more the church lives in harmony with its high calling, the more also will the world be able to see and understand the nature and the character of God and His wisdom. This means that the people of God are part of this plan.

If you are a part of the church, you are a part of the grand plan of God of displaying His wisdom to all.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,*

Day 15- Ephesians 3:11-13 - Thursday, August 18

Read the Text:

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

His Eternal Purposes

His eternal purposes govern the contents of the ages and all their continuity. The end of verse 11 shows us that the purposes of God have always centered around the person of Jesus Christ. Verse 11 is a very comforting passage assuring believers that God's ultimate design is the church (v. 10) and it rests on the sovereign Rock of Jesus Christ. The church's works are not mere human striving, but believers are doing the eternal will of the Lord.

We have Boldness and Access with Confidence.

Verse 12 could be literally translated, "in whom we have the courage and access in confidence".

The three key words in verse 12 are *boldness, access & confidence*.

These words highlight for us the relationship we have with Jesus.

We can and should approach Jesus without restraint and tell him all our troubles, asking Him to help us with all our needs.

How does your prayer life need to improve in light of verse 12?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:4 - *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,*

Day 16- Ephesians 3:14-19 pt 1 - Friday, August 19

Read the Text:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Prayer

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is magnificent. It should be read and prayed through often. This should be a prayer you pray for yourself and others frequently. Paul petitions the Lord for many glorious things, that if we did as well, our lives would look radically different.

Paul asks for 5 things in this prayer that are remarkable.

- 1.) That he may grant you to be strengthened with power
- 2.) That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
- 3.) That we may have the strength to comprehend the love of Christ.
- 4.) That we may know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.
- 5.) That we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We will study 2 of these today, and the other 3 tomorrow.

1.) That he may grant you to be strengthened with power

The crux of what we are asking God for is that within our hearts we would see such a controlling influence of the Spirit in our lives that we would be strengthened more and more with Spirit-imparted power. To be sure, at salvation we have been given power by the Holy Spirit. So here we are asking that His controlling influence would be made manifest more and more in our lives.

2.) That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

It is important to note here that we are not re-asking Jesus to take up residence in our lives for the first time. The idea of "dwelling" here does not insinuate that Christ isn't always dwelling in the hearts of His people.

Faith is full surrender to God in Christ. Therefore asking that God may dwell in our hearts through faith is asking that we would be fully surrendered to Him. It is living our lives that we acknowledge that we are completely expectant on God for everything. Further it is showing that we want to yield everything to Him.

Where in your life do you need to surrender fully to Him?

Pray through this prayer today asking God to make these things present in your life.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:5 - *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*

Day 17- Ephesians 3:14-19 pt 2- Saturday, August 20

Read the Text:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Prayer

Today we will examine the last 3 things in which Paul prays for the Ephesians.

3.) That we may have the strength to comprehend the love of Christ.

The full request being made here comes from verse 18 and says that we, “*may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth*” of Christ’s love.

Vast. Very very vast. Paul is trying to paint the picture with words that Christ’s love for us is SO BIG, SO VAST, that comprehending it is complex. Further, that understanding it must be a supernatural work of God in us. But it is something that we MUST strive to understand. It means everything. This love is definitely experiential. Paul is telling us the necessity of living and experiencing this love.

He wants us to see that we must be earnest and zealous in the pursuit of the love of Christ, and all the while be totally aware that we can never say, “Now we know all there is to know about the love of Christ.” That will never happen because His love is so vast.

4.) That we may know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

This 4th request sounds very similar to number 3. Almost so similar that they could be linked together. But there is a distinction. As we pursue comprehending and understanding the love of Christ, we pray that we will see that His love surpasses just mere knowledge. We are not merely pursuing comprehending or understanding it, but more experiencing it.

This is moving from head knowledge to heart knowledge. That is the distinction. To be sure, comprehending Christ’s love (#3) is absolutely crucial and beautiful.

What we are praying here is that the finite will be able to experience the infinite’s love as much as possible.

5.) That we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

This is the climax of the prayer. This is the pinnacle to which Paul has been building.

We are asking God to fill us with all His fullness. We are asking to become more and more like Him. We are asking to be made more perfect. We are asking to be made more holy.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says, “*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*”

Therefore we see that as we ask God to make us more like Him, that we fix our gaze upon Him. We set our faces toward Him and behold His glory. Then we will be transformed into His image and be made like Him.

Pray through this prayer today asking God to make these things present in your life.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:5 - *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*

Day 18- Ephesians 3:20-21 - Sunday, August 21

Read the Text:

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer

This is the close of the prayer. This is the 'doxology' of the prayer. Paul is readily acknowledging here that although he has sought the Lord and asked for His favor and for things, he is completely aware that there are things that he simply does not even know to ask for. And so he asks for those as well.

One commentator outlines Paul's train of thought in verses 20-21 this way:

- a.) God is able to do all we ask him to do; b.) he is even able to do all that we dare not ask but merely imagine; c.) he can do *more* than this; d.) *far* more; e.) *very far* more.

This is the God we serve and who we love.

Further, this is the God we pray to, who hears us, and who answers our prayer.

How limited are your prayers to the Infinite God? How could your prayer life change?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:5 - even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

Day 19- Ephesians 4:1-3 - Monday, August 22

Read the Text:

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

How do you walk?

There is a distinct shift in the book of Ephesians from chapter 3 to chapter 4. While the first 3 chapters are filled with more theology, the second 3 chapters are more concerned with how you live now based on this theology.

We see this right in the beginning of chapter 4. Paul says, “*therefore, I urge you to walk...*” This means in light of the doctrine in the first 3 chapters, I urge you to live differently.

He specifically exhorts to walk 4 certain ways here:

- 1.) Worthy of the manner of the calling to which we have been called
- 2.) With all humility and gentleness
- 3.) Bearing with one another
- 4.) Eager to maintain unity.

1.) Walk Worthy

You have been called by God to be His child. Your life should reflect this. Live as an adopted son or daughter of The Heavenly Father.

2.) Humility

Humility has been called the first, second and third essential of the Christian life. The child of God realizes there is no place for pride in their life.

3.) Bearing with one another

The Christian is long-suffering. He forgives as he has been forgiven. Christian spouses forgive. Christian friends forgive. Christians are patient and bear with one another because they have been taught by Jesus how to love. Therefore they extend this love to others.

4.) Maintain Unity

Christians are peacemakers. They desire spiritual oneness in the church. If it is at all possible, they want to maintain unity. Unity is necessary from promoting the health and happiness of the church and advancing the cause of the mission. Note in verse 3 unity is traced to the Spirit, who lives in us. He is the one who does this in our lives.

Which of these 4 are you doing well in? Which of these 4 do you need to improve? Why?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:5 - *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*

Day 20- Ephesians 4:4-6 - Tuesday, August 23

Read the Text:

4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The Trinity

These verses are grouped in 3 triads. In verse 6 there is just two things mentioned, but still rounds out the idea that Paul is making. We can see that the trinity is in this construction, first the Spirit in v.4, the Jesus in v. 5 and the Father is v. 6.

The *first* triad is ‘one body, one Spirit, one hope.’

The body is the church. He then mentions the Spirit who is the one who called us when we were saved. The effectual call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is the thing that brings hope to believers. This hope is grounded in God’s promises which cannot fail.

The *second* triad is ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’

Verse 5 is so concise, it is sure to be taken as one idea. Paul is saying ‘One Lord in whom we all believe and in whose name we have been baptized.’

Third is ‘one God and Father of all.’

Paul is emphasizing the redemptive Fatherhood of God. God is the Creator of all things, therefore He is over all and through all and in all. He is “*over all*” because He is completely sovereign over all things. He is “*through all*” because He blesses us through Christ our Mediator. And He is “*in all*” because He draws close to us by His Spirit being in us.

There isn’t anything in all creation that He hasn’t made for His glory. He is over all.

So we see how verses 4-6 tell us about the Trinity and some of the functions of the Trinity. Though it is true that Scripture ascribes election especially to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification especially to the Spirit, yet in each of the persons of the Trinity, all cooperate. We worship *ONE* God.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:6 - *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Day 21- Ephesians 4:7-10 - Wednesday, August 24

Read the Text:

7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." 9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

The Diversity of Gifts

Have you ever noticed how diverse the body of Christ is? Have you ever looked to see how different our gifts are? This is God's design. He didn't want everyone in the body to look the same. He didn't want everyone to be able to do the same things. This was God's idea. Why?

One thing is for sure...it shows us and reminds us just how much we need each other.

God wants us to need each other. So He gives us different gifts to depend on one another.

A couple of things that all of us should note about gifts...

- 1.) *We should recognize it as a gift.* This means knowing that it is not of our own skill or ingenuity, but it was given by God.
- 2.) *We should view it as one among many.* This means that no one person has all the gifts but that everyone does. Everyone in the church should be used to advance the mission. It's never been the plan of God that only a select few in the church would do all the work. But that the whole body would all use their gifts for the advancement of the Gospel.
- 3.) *We should use our gift for God's glory.* We should never use any gift God has given to us for our own glory. This is not God's design. Instead our gifts are to be used for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

What gifts has God given you to use for the church?

Are you using your gifts for the church?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:6 - *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Day 22- Ephesians 4:11-14 - Thursday, August 25

Read the Text:

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Who does the ministry?

Should most of the ministry of the church be done by the staff and leadership of the church?
Or, should most of the ministry be done by the people in the church?

Context Counts

It is very important that we read these verses in the proper context. Remember that yesterday was about gifts. This is the context in which the verses fall today. We should be thinking about gifts and gifting to the church.

In verse 11 this idea continues and Paul tells us that some are gifted to be certain offices. (not a full list)

- 1.) Apostle
- 2.) Prophet
- 3.) Evangelist
- 4.) Shepherds
- 5.) Teachers

Paul has not changed topics and begun talking about church officers. Instead, he is continuing to talk about gifts and uses offices in the church as an illustration. This is not a complete list. (Deacon is missing for example, and some could be combined) Paul is really pointing to the leadership of the church and speaking about them.

The purpose of Christ's gifts of Leaders to the church is this:

To Equip the Saints for the Work of Ministry, for Building up the Body of Christ. (v. 12)

THIS IS HUGE TO UNDERSTAND.

The primary work of the leadership of the church is to *equip EVERY Christian in the church to do ministry*. The primary work of the people in the church is to DO the ministry. Ministry is not something that just the paid professionals are to do, but something every Christian should do.

Now, of course, this means that the leadership does ministry as well, but their *primary* job is equipping.

How does this transform your mindset about how ministry should be done as a community on mission?

When do we stop?

When do we finally stop pushing forward as a church in ministry? Is there ever a stopping point? Yes. Verse 13 makes clear for us when we stop. When "*we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*". Until this

happens, ministry is to never stop being done by the people in the church. And let's be realistic, this means that we will all be doing ministry our whole life.

How does this transform the idea of retiring from ministry?

Why do we do it?

Why do we do ministry? Is there a reason that God wants His people in His church to all actively participate in the ministry of the church? Verse 14 makes this clear.

14 *so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

God wants the church to be mature, not nominal. He doesn't want us easily tricked or confused. He wants us to grow up and not be like children.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:6 - *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Day 23- Ephesians 4:15-16 - Friday, August 26

Read the Text:

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The Growth of the Body

How does the body grown? What is a way that we as a church can grow?

Verse 15 tells us all that we are to grow up in every way into Christ.

He tells us specifically to *“speak the truth in love”*.

There are 3 things to see here:

- 1.) *We must speak.* Most Christians, rightly, desire to be amicable. This is Christ-like. What is not Christ-like is silence. Sometimes we confuse being quiet as being nice. We’ve been told, *“if you don’t have anything nice to say, then don’t say anything at all.* While the sentiment is nice in this idea, it’s not *always* true. Some will NOT think the Gospel is very nice. (2 Cor. 2:15-16) Therefore, we must speak.
- 2.) *We must speak the truth.* Exaggerations & half-truths are always lies. As the people of God the truth must be on our lips always. We should saturate our minds and words with Scripture, which is truth.
- 3.) *We must speak the truth in love.* Christians are to be marked and known for their love. There are far too many Christians who are willing to speak (like #1) and ready to tell the truth (like #2), but lack love, (called for in #3). As the people of God with the Spirit of God in us, we should be the most loving people in the city. (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3)

Which one of these 3 do you do well? Which one can you improve in?

Each part works properly

Verse 16 packs a huge punch. It says that when *“each part is working properly, makes the body grow.”*

This is amazing. The body is MADE to grow when each part is working properly. *“Each Part”* represents everyone in the church. So when everyone in the church is working properly, this makes the body grow.

So how does the church grow? How does the body grow?

The text (v. 16) doesn’t seem to say that it’s through the leadership of the church at all, but is wholly dependant on the people of the church.

Is this a familiar idea to you? How does it vary from what you’ve thought about how churches grow? What should you do differently or the same in light of verse 16?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:6 - *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Day 24- Ephesians 4:17-20 - Saturday, August 27

Read the Text:

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!

A Reminder of where you once were

Paul returns to the same language as 4:1 speaking of how we walk or live as Christians. As Paul is apt to do, he reminds them of where they once were when they were separated from Christ.

He tells them 3 characteristics of unbelievers and exhorts them not to resemble unbelievers in this way. Unbelievers...

- 1.) ...walk in the futility of their minds which is why they are darkened in their understanding. (v. 17-18)
- 2.) ...are alienated from the life of God because they are ignorant due to their hardness of heart. (v. 18)
- 3.) ...are calloused towards sin and give themselves to sensuality, and practice every kind of impurity.(v. 19)

1.) Futility of Mind

Paul tells Christians to use their reason in a Christ-honoring way. If our minds are not tempered and trained, our understanding will be darkened and our reasoning skills will be blind. Those who live this way pursue but never achieve, they blossom, but never bear fruit.

"All men know that there is a God, and that it is our duty to worship Him; but such is the power of sin and ignorance, that from this confused knowledge we pass all at once to an idol, and worship it in the place of God." - Calvin

2.) Alienated from the life of God

The life of God is regeneration. Calvin describes this (most interestingly) as not loving the glory of God, like those described in John 12:43. So they are alienated from living for the glory of God, and furthermore do not want to live for it.

"Knowledge of God is the true life of the soul, so, on the contrary ignorance is the death of it" (Calvin)

Pray:

Father, Please keep me from ever having or developing a hard heart. Jesus Christ, my Treasure, please stay fixed in the center of my heart always, keeping it soft and receptive to You always.

3.) Callous toward sin

Callous is being past feeling. When men are calloused, their sensibilities of their heart have been destroyed and they have become abandoned to all manners of iniquity. They are unmoved by the approaching judgment of God, whom they offend, they go on at their ease, and fearlessly indulge without restraint in the pleasure of sin. Verse 19 says that they are greedy to practice every kind of impurity. Greed is the opposite of moderation. Greedy people want MORE than their due. Always MORE. They are self-centered, self-absorbed. So they have nothing stopping them, and they do not stop. They are practicing, with reckless abandon, every kind of impurity or unclean thing.

Examine yourself deeply right now against each of these, one-by-one. They are describing what an unbeliever looks and acts like and what a believer should NOT look and act like.

How many of them still describe you?

Then, in verse 20 Paul says, "*But that is not the way you learned Christ!*"

He is drawing a contrast of the Christian life against what he has said previously.

Christians are to live in a different manner.

"He whose life differs not from that of unbelievers, has learned nothing of Christ; for the knowledge of Christ cannot be separated from the mortification of the flesh." - John Calvin - (commenting on Eph 4:20)

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:7 - *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Day 25- Ephesians 4:21-24 - Sunday, August 28

Read the Text:

21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Paul contrasts his thoughts in vs. 17-20 with vs. 21-24. In vs. 17-20 Paul tells us 3 characteristics of unbelievers. In vs. 21-24, Paul tells us 3 ongoing exercises that believers must practice. We need to remember that Ephesians is written to believers, not unbelievers, warning them to not look like the world. Then, in verse 21, Paul says, “*assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him*”. Brilliant.

3 Ongoing Exercises Believers must Practice. In verses 22-24 Paul tells them to...

1.) *Put off the old self* (v. 22).

This involves real, true repentance. Where there is no repentance, there has not been a putting off of the old self. Romans 6:6-7 tells us:

6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.

2.) *Be renewed in the spirit of our mind* (v. 23).

Being renewed in the spirit of your mind involves (among other things) finding the areas that we deem virtuous and letting Christ renew these areas for HIS glory, not our own. Also, being renewed involves changing our sinful appetites and desires to be more Christ-like.

3.) *Put on the new self* (v. 24).

Putting on the new self is the act of God on man where we begin living for Him as an act of worship. Verse 24 says, “*to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God...*” The creation being referred to here is twofold. First, it is being created as man in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27). The second is regeneration or the new-birth (John 3:3).

Calvin says that regeneration is the “*formation anew of the image of God. The design contemplated by regeneration is to recall us from our wanderings to that end for which we were created.*”

Calvin really captures it well. We are created by God to bring Him glory. That is why He made us. But, we are prone to wander. Regeneration’s design is to call us back to God, away from our wanderings, and back to be worshipers.

Which of these 3 could you strive to do well today? Why?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:7 - *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Day 26- Ephesians 4:25-28 - Monday, August 29

Read the Text:

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and give no opportunity to the devil. **28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Paul continues practically teaching in these verses what the life of a Christian should look like. He address 3 sins that Christians are not to do; lying, sinning in anger and stealing.

Tell the Truth, Don't lie

Paul is beginning to list particular areas in which Christians conduct must reveal itself. One area in particular is the truth. The temptation is to just tell enough information to satisfy the person we're talking to. But this is not Christian. Paul addresses this in verse 25. Notice Paul says it 2 ways, both negatively and positively. He says to '*put away falsehood*' and to '*speak the truth*'. He adds '*for we are members one of another*' to reiterate that believers are one body with Christ as the Head.

Make a goal to let everything that comes from your mouth today be the absolute truth.

Anger

The next admonition deals with anger and resentment. Many years of frustration in a relationship can cause one to build up so much anger and resentment that it can be debilitating. To be sure, Paul is not forbidding anger, but sinning in our anger. It is legitimate to have righteous indignation toward sin. Anger towards one's sin or even the heinous sins of others will happen in life. But, what must do two things when we get angry:

- 1.) We cannot sin. Focus is needed here. When we feel angry, we must point our anger towards the sin itself and not towards the one doing it.
- 2.) We must deal with it quickly. He writes, "*Don't let the sun go down on your anger*". The principle here is to deal with it quickly. If we don't, bitterness and resentment set in and you have - (v. 27), given an opportunity for the devil to cause you to sin in your anger.

Who do you need to resolve something with today in order to keep the principle of '*Not letting the sun go down on your anger*'? What are the steps you need to take to seek forgiveness or extend forgiveness?

Stealing

Stealing can be subtle and *feel* like no big deal. Like a pen at work, overcharging a customer, not giving the customer everything they paid for, not working hard for your employer, playing on the internet at work when you should be working, making copies of music you didn't pay for, etc... There are tons of examples where its easy to rationalize because it *feels* like its such a small thing. Holiness is no small thing. Regardless of whether we *feel* like its wrong or not, stealing is wrong. The example Paul uses is working for a living. Colossians 3:23 says, "*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men*". In the context of work, we work for God. Therefore, we don't steal from our employer their time or supplies. As Christians we pay for things, no matter the cost.

Are you in need of a Zacchaeus moment where perhaps you need to pay someone back that you stole from?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:7 - *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Day 27- Ephesians 4:29-32 - Tuesday, August 30

Read the Text:

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Speech Matters

Paul now turns to the tongue. Corrupt speech is not just saying cuss words. Corrupt speech is that which is putrid, rotten, defiling, and injurious to others. Even for believers who are well advanced in sanctification can at times struggle with this.

Here, too, the only remedy, in addition to prayer, is to fill the mind and heart with that which is pure and holy. Accordingly, Paul writes “*but only such as is good for building up*” and it “*fits the occasion*” and it “*gives grace to those who hear*”. These are three lofty goals for our words.

This sounds like Colossians 4:6, “*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*”

When we don't obey this command of verse 29, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Anthropomorphic¹ language is being employed here. The Bible also speaks of “*resisting the Spirit*” in Acts 7:51 and “*quenching the Spirit*” in 1 Thes. 5:19.

Who do you have trouble speaking to in a kind way? (Boss, employee, spouse, child)
Make it a goal to obey verse 29 today.

Paul returns to sins of the tongue in verse 31 and lists six specific items that Christians should avoid.

- 1.) Bitterness – The ongoing disposition of resentment. Commonly replies with ‘biting’ remarks.
- 2.) Wrath – Settled indignation. When the heart is like a roaring furnace.
- 3.) Anger – Or fury, is a strong feeling of antagonism which is expressed by tumultuous outburst.
- 4.) Clamor – Or brawling; violent outbursts and yelling at others.
- 5.) Slander – Abusive speech directed at someone.
- 6.) Malice – The evil inclination of the mind that takes delight in inflicting hurt on others.

Christians should not have these in their lives. Fight, by the power of the Spirit, to keep these out of your life.

Opposite Virtues

The putting away of the negative things mentioned in vs. 29-31 can be accomplished by the acquisition and development of the opposite virtues in v. 32. Kindness is a Spirit-imparted goodness. It is the opposite of malice. Tenderheartedness is very deep feelings of compassion for others. Paul adds lastly “*forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*” To forgive this way is to forgive freely, generously, wholeheartedly, spontaneously and eagerly.

Who do you need to be kind, tenderhearted to? Who do you need to extend forgiveness to?
Who needs to hear of the greatest forgiveness that can be extended to them by the Gospel?

¹ Assigning Human attributes to God

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:7 - *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Day 28- Ephesians 5:1-2 - Wednesday, August 31

Read the Text:

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Be imitators of God.

This is a pretty straight forward command. As God's child, you should imitate Him. Children imitate their parents when they are young because they love them. Paul is saying this exact thing. As God's child, who loves Him, imitate Him.

Imitating God means being holy as He is holy.

Walk in Love

Let love be the very tenor of your life. Let love characterize all your thoughts, words and deeds.

"Gave Himself up"

Paul called us to imitate Jesus in verse 1. Then reminds us that He gave Himself up for us.

We must be willing to give up ourselves, our desires and wants for the purposes of God in our lives.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:8 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

Day 29- Ephesians 5:3-5 - Thursday, September 1

Read the Text:

3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

As mentioned before, Paul is being very practical with us when it comes to morality and what Christians should and should not do. He lists vices in these verses that Christians must not have in their lives.

Write your own definition and thoughts regarding each one of these listed below. Then underline the ones with which you struggle personally.

Sexual Immorality -

Impurity -

Covetousness -

Filthiness -

Foolish Talk -

Crude Joking -

Read v. 5. How does verse 5 line up with how you've defined these and your own personal struggles with each of these?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:8 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

Day 30- Ephesians 5:6-14 - Friday, September 2

Read the Text:

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them; **8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. **13** But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Paul encourages the Ephesians very practically to think through what being a Christians should look like.

Make a list of the exhortations or words of advice in these verses...

1.) Let no one deceive you...

2.)

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

Day 31- Ephesians 5:15-21 - Saturday, September 3

Read the Text:

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul encourages the Ephesians very practically to think through what being a Christians should look like.

Make a list of the exhortations or words of advice in these verses...

1.) Look carefully then how you walk...

2.)

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:8 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

Day 32- Ephesians 5:22-24 - Sunday, September 4

Read the Text:

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Marriage - Wives

Marriage is a picture of Christ and His church. Jesus is the husband and the church is the bride. Wives are to take their cues from the church.

Wives are to submit to their husbands. Along with verse 33 where wives are told to respect their husband, this is Paul (and God's) other directive given. Why? Because a non-submitting wife is impossible to lead. Submission does not mean that wives do not have a voice or opinion. No Christian husband should treat their wife this way. Submission is joyfully putting yourself under the headship of your husband. It is allowing him to be the servant leader in the home.

Wives, are you submitting to your husbands as you are to Jesus? Husbands, does your wife feel like she is married to Jesus? You should strive for this. Husbands, are you striving to make yourself the kind of husband your wife wants to submit to?

Pray: Pray for marriages in the church. Pray for wives to joyfully submit to their husbands. Pray that this comes easily to the women in the church. Pray that our marriages reflect Christ and His Church.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:9 - *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Day 33- Ephesians 5:25-33 - Monday, September 5

Read the Text:

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body. **31** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. **33** However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Marriage - Husbands

Marriage is a picture of Christ and His church. Jesus is the husband and the church is the bride. Husbands are to take their cues from Jesus.

Husbands are told to do one thing in this text. They are to LOVE their wives.

After he tells them to love their wives he gives them ways they are to love their wives.

Way 1 to love your wife – Love your wife like Christ loved the church. He died in order to make her sanctified and holy. This was His plan. Husbands, you are to love your wife in such a way to make her more sanctified and holy.

Husbands, do you have a plan in place to obey v. 26 so you can wash her in the water with the word? What is the plan for her to be sanctified?

Way 2 to love your wife – Love your wife as your own body. You take care of yourself and feed yourself. Since the two of you are one flesh, you should do the exact same for your wife. This verse is not about food, this is about cherishing. Husbands, you are to cherish your wife.

Husbands, how can you practically show your wife that you love and cherish her today? Maybe you should take her on a date, write her a note, apologize, spend time with her, etc...

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:9 - *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Day 34- Ephesians 6:1-4 - Tuesday, September 6

Read the Text:

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." **4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Being a parent is a great challenge. We are called to raise our children to know and live for the glory of Christ. There are always tough days. But God is faithful and gives us great days with great memories.

Directions to children – v. 1-3

1. Obey your parents. – This is doing what they ask you to do as long as it's not sin. We should do this because God tells us we should do this. If you are a parent, you should teach your children to obey you, but also tell them why they should.
2. Honor your parents. – This is respecting your parents and treating them well. One can obey but not honor. Also one can honor but not obey. Children are called to do both. An example of honoring is speaking well of them even when they are not in the room.

Do you honor and obey your parents?

If you are a parent, do you teach you children to honor and obey you in order to teach them about God?

Direction to parents – v. 4

1. Do not provoke them. – This is simple. Don't do things that frustrate or make your children mad just for the purpose of frustrating them. If you are adhering to what the Bible says and they are frustrated, then that is different. But don't intentionally provoke them. Instead, love them and be gentle with them.
2. Discipline your children. – Read Hebrews 12:5-11.

5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." **7** It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

You can see that God disciplines those He loves. Therefore it is good and right for us to discipline our own children whom we love. WHEN we discipline it must not be out of anger but must be like God does it; with love and compassion.

3. Instruct your children in the Lord. – God's design is that we would daily teach our children about Him.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **6** And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. **7** You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. **8** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. **9** You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The Word of God must be central in the home and must be diligently taught to your children. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START THIS. It doesn't matter how old they are or how much you haven't done. Today is the day to start.

Parents, commit to not provoking your children. Also commit to disciplining them in a Christ-like way and daily instructing them in the Word of God.

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:9 - *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Day 35- Ephesians 6:5-9 - Wednesday, September 7

Read the Text:

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Working daily is part of life. Today's text really deals with slaves and masters in the 1st century, but there are some principles that can be brought out for today.

Employees

Do what your boss tells you to do. Be a good employee for them. Work for them the exact way you would work for Christ. That is what you are called to do. Don't just work hard for them when they are looking in order to look good for them when they are watching. Instead, even when they aren't watching, work hard. Do your work for Jesus in order to bring Him glory. When you work this way, Jesus sees and knows and will reward you for this.

Employers

You have people working for you that you oversee and pay. This is a huge responsibility because in a way, you not only oversee your family but theirs as well. So be fair and patient with those who work for you. The same way that God is fair and patient with us, His children. Don't threaten your employees or scare them. Instead treat them with dignity and worth and pay them well.

Are you an employee or an employer?

How can you express gratitude today to your boss or workers?

How can you illustrate the Gospel to them by the way you work or how you oversee?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:9 - *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Day 36- Ephesians 6:10-12 - Thursday, September 8

Read the Text:

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Over the next 3 days we will discuss the armor of God. Today will be just examining the command to put on the armor of God and why we should put it on. The 2 days after we will be looking at each piece of armor and how God has designed it to protect us.

Be Strong

We are told here to be strong; but not on our own strength. Instead, we are to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might. He is our source of power. This is not something we can produce within ourselves. We must have Jesus in us doing it for us. Apart from Him we can accomplish nothing at all (John 15:1-5), so we see our utter need for Him. We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. (Phil 4:13). We are to struggle forward in His energy that powerfully works within us. (Col. 1:29) Have you tried to fight the fight of faith on your own strength or on His?

Put on the Armor

This is not a suggestion. This is God telling us that we need to do this. Put on the Armor of God, which is forged and furnished by Him so that you can equip yourselves and you will be able to stand. You do not need to stand idle in this battle, but you need to stand firm, hold your ground because the devil is crafty and prowls around like a roaring lion and wants to devour you (1 Peter 5:9).

Paul gives us 2 reasons to put the armor on.

1. So we can stand against the devil's schemes.
2. Because we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual foes.

How will you put on the armor of God today, and everyday?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Day 37- Ephesians 6:13-20 pt 1 - Friday, September 9

Read the Text:

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Since we cannot stand against the devil's schemes on our own power and our battle is against spiritual foes, not our flesh and blood, we know we must put on the Armor of God. We must take up the *whole* armor so the enemy doesn't find us defenseless. We must not waste any time.

There are six pieces of armor that are described in the text, which we must take up. We will examine in detail three of them today and three of them tomorrow.

The Armor of God

1.) Belt of Truth – Paul is telling us we need this basic quality of truth in order to fight. Truthfulness is sincerity of mind and heart. It is the removal of hypocrisy and guile. We are to fasten our minds on His Word which shows us the truth and fight against the deceitfulness of man.

2.) Breastplate of Righteousness – Paul moves to the breastplate and tells us to put this on. This is a devout and holy life. This is being upright morally. This has only been made available to us by the Gospel. It's Jesus' death on the cross that gives us our righteousness. We are to remind ourselves everyday that we have His righteousness. The breastplate of righteousness is a mighty weapon in the hands of the saints to defeat the devil when he and his minions try to accuse us.

3.) Shoes for your feet – This is an important piece of armor. Notice verse 15 speaks of '*readiness*'. A person who experiences the peace of God that has been given to him by the Gospel of Jesus has been delivered of a great burden. The reconciliation he has experienced with God through the blood of Christ gives him great courage and zeal and '*readiness*' to go take the gospel to the nations. Romans 10:15 says, "*And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'*" When a believer puts on the shoes, he wants to share the gospel!

Which of these 3 pieces of armor do you see that you already have on? Why?

Which of these 3 pieces of armor do you need to put on? Why?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Day 38- Ephesians 6:13-20 pt 2 - Saturday, September 10

Read the Text:

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **14** Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. **16** In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; **17** and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, **18** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, **19** and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

As a way of reminder, verse 13 has exhorted us to take up the whole armor of God. Yesterday we looked at the first three pieces of armor, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and the shoes for our feet. Today we'll continue examining the armor and "dressing" ourselves with it.

The Armor of God

4.) Shield of Faith – We need something in our hands to help us defend the attacks of the devil. The shield of faith is that defensive weapon. When the devil shoots his flaming darts of accusation, hold up your faith in Christ as the shield which defends you. His flaming darts are designed to bring persecution, tribulation, doubt, lust, greed, envy, vanity, etc... Only by looking away from yourself and to God and placing your trust in Him for eternal life is it possible to repel the shower of flaming darts.

5.) Helmet of Salvation – In the midst of persecution and hardship, assurance of salvation is a mighty defensive weapon. Without it we would be much more willing to give up the fight. The helmet of salvation is a precious treasure for Christians that pushes him forward to continue because he knows that what God has begun in him will be carried on to completion. (Phil 1:6)

6.) Sword of the Spirit – This is the only offensive weapon in the armor. This is the Word of God. We must have long swords and short swords as our weapons. Long swords are long passages of Scripture that we have memorized in order to kill sin. Short swords are short powerful verses that we pull out and use at times of temptation. Both are needed. We must take time and make the effort to memorize Scripture. Psalm 119:11 tells us "I have stored up your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." From this we know that Scripture memorization is absolutely key in our lives.

Which of these 3 pieces of armor do you see that you already have on? Why?

Which of these 3 pieces of armor do you need to put on? Why?

How do these verses cause you to want to make disciples?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Day 39- Ephesians 6:21-24 - Sunday, September 11

Read the Text:

21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

Friendship

Paul had Christian friends. You need them too. Don't isolate yourself away from people. Make the effort to put yourself into community and be real with them and grow spiritually. While your faith is personal, its never meant to be private. God has designed that the best way for you to grow is in community with other people. Where they can hold you accountable and you can hold them accountable. You can share what's going on with you and really listen to what is going on with them. Notice in v. 22, Paul sends Tychicus for the purpose of encouragement.

Who is God sending you to be an encouragement to today? What specifically do you need to encourage them with?

Mission

All that Paul did was for the purpose of mission. The places he went and the people he met were for mission. Let's be like this. Let's not waste our lives. Let's be strategic with our lives. Let's go places and meet people with the mission of Jesus always on our mind.

Today is the beginning of a great new season at Remedy Church. We need you to accomplish the mission.

Will you join the mission with us?

Will you help us make disciples?

Let's lay everything on the line for Jesus and pray and seek His face and see what He does with us and through us this coming fall.

Would you please pray for Remedy Church today and that God would use us mightily to build His Kingdom?

Who do you need to be praying for and sharing the Gospel with this fall?

Journal:

Lord, I thank You that today the Gospel *comforts* me in these areas:

Lord, I thank You that today the Spirit is *convicting* me in these areas

Lord, I thank You that today Jesus is *calling* me to do this:

Memorize:

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*