

The Epistle to the Ephesians - Being Filled to the Measure of All the Fullness of God

Introduction

Throughout the book of Ephesians, Paul reminds us that the faith in Christ Jesus given to us by God should dramatically change us both as individuals and as a church. Paul also points out the gifts God has given us to make it easier for us to be imitators of God (4:24, 5:1) including the repeated prayers of other Christians for our transformation (3:14-19) and the loving ministry of other Christians (4:1-16). The objective of this series of studies is to encourage us to support each other in our pursuit of holiness, and to seek the support of other Christians in our own endeavours to be truly filled with the fullness of God (3:21).

Using the Studies:

1. **Preparation at Home** - Each day:
 - a. Begin by reminding yourself that when you read the bible, God is speaking to you.
 - b. Read the passage.
 - c. Reflect on how you could apply the passage to your life. You may find it helpful to:
 - Focus on one phrase or verse that strikes you
 - Look at the questions and applications suggested for that passage.
 - Think about what you expect to happen over the next week.
 - d. Pray for the other members of your group.

2. **Group Discussion and Prayer:** We all know how difficult it is to live as a Christian. God encourages us to support and challenge each other in our efforts. These studies are intended to be used in conjunction with one or more Christians. When you meet together:
 - a. Agree that everything said during the meeting will be treated as absolutely confidential.
 - b. Share your experiences from the past week of how you tried to apply last week's passage. You could do this step with just one or two people, or with the whole group - whoever you choose will be your "prayer partners". The role of your prayer partners will be to pray for you daily and to encourage and challenge you when you meet. Your role is to do the same for them. Be prepared to be open with each other. It is probably easier to work with the same prayer partner(s) for the whole study series.
 - c. If there was something which helped you apply the passage, you could share that with the group (e.g. putting a copy of a memory verse where you can see it everyday, trying to do something positive instead of just avoiding doing something negative).
 - d. Share ideas on how this week's passage can be applied to your lives.
 - e. Choose an application to work on during the week. Your choice could be the same as someone else's or different to everyone else's. It's OK to change applications during the week to suit what's happening in your life.

3. **After the Meeting:**
 - a. Pray each day that God will help you to apply His Word to your life.
 - b. Pray each day for your prayer partners as they seek to work on the applications that they have chosen.

It really WILL make a difference.

Cheryl Lim 2007

Week 1: The Promise and Purpose of God’s Blessings (1:1-23)

During the week:

1. Read Eph 1:1-23 each day and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.
2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. What blessings in Christ has the Father given us (1:3,5,7) ?
 - b. How can we be sure that the Father has blessed us (1:14) ?
 - c. What does the Father want to be the result of his blessings (1:4,10,12) ?
 - d. Choose a blessing that God has given you or your HCG/congregation, and thank him for it each day.
 - e. How does Paul ask God to bless the Ephesians and why can he thank God for the Ephesians in all his prayers (1:16-19) ? How do we pray for others and how often ?
 - f. Is there a friend/relative who does not yet know “the hope to which God has called [us]” (1:18) ? Pray each day that they may be enlightened by God.

During your meeting:

1. Agree that your discussions will be treated as confidential.
2. Read Eph 1:1-23
3. Discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
4. Select your prayer partner(s) for the term. This can be just one or two people, or it could be the whole group. Tell them how you would like to apply the passage over the next week.

Examples:

1:13-14 – I will remind myself daily that I can be sure of God’s promise of my inheritance, especially during difficult times.

1:16-19 – Choose another Christian and pray for him/her every day.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 2: The Purpose of God’s Salvation for Individuals (2:1-10)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 2:1-10 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. What were we like before God made us alive (2:1-3) ?

 - b. Why has God made us alive (2:4,7,10) ?

 - c. How do you see yourself/other Christians/the world ?

 - d. If God has created us in Christ Jesus for good works (2:10), how does this affect what you see as the purpose of your life, your time and your resources?

 - e. Pray each day that God will show you what good work(s) he has prepared for you that day.

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 2:1-10 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
 - How you went with your previous week’s application.
 - Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
 - How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 3: The Purpose of God’s Salvation for the Church (2:11-3:13)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 2:11-3:13 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. Jesus is “our peace who has made us both one” (2:14). What does this unity mean for Christians and the church? Does it affect the way you relate to other Christians?

 - b. Paul describes the worldwide church as God’s temple, “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (2:22). What characteristics would you expect to see in a group of Christians that truly is part of God’s temple?

 - c. Is there anything you can do to help your HCG/congregation be more like a “holy temple in the Lord” (2:21)?

 - d. Paul asks God to reveal his wisdom to spiritual powers through the church (3:10). Can you see this happening in our local church ? Are there ways in which our local church can achieve this?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 2:11-3:13 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 4: The Fullness of God (3:14-4:2)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 3:14-4:2 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. What does it mean to have the “fullness of God” (3:19) ?

 - b. God “is able to do more than we ask or think” (3:20). Do your prayers reflect this ?

 - c. Paul urges the Ephesians to “lead a life worthy of the calling [they] have received” (4:1). What kind of life should this be ?

 - d. Do you have all the characteristics listed in 4:2 ?

 - e. The climax of this letter is Paul’s prayer that God will “strengthen [the Ephesians] with power through his Spirit so that Christ may dwell in [their] hearts through faith” and that they will understand Christ’s love and be filled with “the fullness of God” (3:16-19). Do you pray these things for other Christians?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 3:14-4:2 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 5: The Consequences of God’s Salvation for the Church (4:3-16)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 4:3-16 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. Paul reminds us that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father (4:3-6). What should this kind of unity look like in a group of Christians ?

 - b. What is the purpose for which Christ’s grace is given to each of us (4:7-13) ?

 - c. Have you recognised how Christ’s grace has been given to you ? How can you use Christ’s grace in the right way ?

 - d. Can you recognise how Christ has given his grace to your prayer partners ? How can you encourage them to use it for the right purposes ?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 4:3-16 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 6: The Consequences of God’s Salvation for Individuals (I) – Putting on a New Nature (4:17-32)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 4:17-32 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. Paul tells the Ephesians to “put off your old nature ... put on the new” (4:23-24). Can you identify any ways in which your nature is changing ?

 - b. How should we speak to others and why (4:25, 29) ?

 - c. How should we deal with our anger and why (4:26-27) ?

 - d. What is the purpose of work (either paid or unpaid) (4:28) ?

 - e. 4:31 lists a number of undesirable activities while 4:32 lists some desirable characteristics. Are any of these particularly relevant to you ?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 4:17-32 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
 - How you went with your previous week’s application.
 - Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
 - How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 7: The Consequences of God’s Salvation for Individuals (II) – Being Imitators of God (5:1-20)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 5:1-20 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. Why should we imitate God (5:1) ?

 - b. What does it mean to live “a life of love” (5:2) ? How can you be more like Christ in this way ?

 - c. With whom should we not be in partnership (5:7) ? How do we avoid such partnerships ?

 - d. Paul warns the Ephesians against spiritual darkness (5:3-20). How can we learn what is pleasing to God and implement this in our lives ?

 - e. We are to “give thanks for everything” (5:20). Are there both good and bad things for which you can thank God ?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 5:1-20 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 8: The Consequences of God’s Salvation for Individuals (III) – Responding to Secular Authority (5:21-6:9)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 5:21-6:9 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. This passage commences with a call to all Christians to “submit to one another” (5:21). Why are we supposed to do this ?

 - b. Three types of relationships (husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave) are considered here. In 1st century society, these were relationships in which one party (husband, parent, master) was granted near-absolute authority over the other. What are Paul’s instructions to the powerful (5:25-28; 6:4,9) ? What are his instructions to the powerless (5:22-24; 6:1-3,5-8)

 - c. How should Christians treat those over whom they have secular authority ?

 - d. How should Christians treat those who have secular authority over them ?

 - e. How should Christians react when they observe other Christians abusing their authority or being abused?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 5:21-6:9 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Week 9: Using God’s Blessings to Fulfil His Purpose (6:10-24)

During the week:

1. Every day:
Ask God to help you and your prayer partner(s) carry out the applications you each chose last week.
Read Eph 6:10-24 and reflect on how you can apply this within your life.

2. Some suggested questions/applications to consider:
 - a. Why is it so difficult to live as a Christian (6:12) ?

 - b. Does knowing the identity of our enemy change the way in which you fight to remain steadfast in your faith ?

 - c. What are the blessings God has given us to help us stand fast (6:14-18) ?

 - d. How can we help others stand fast in their faith (6-18-22) ?

 - e. What encourages you to stand firm against the devil ?

During the meeting:

1. Read Eph 6:10-24 and discuss possible ways to apply the passage.
2. Share with your prayer partner(s):
How you went with your previous week’s application.
Which verse(s) in this week’s passage are most important to you
How you would like to apply this week’s passage over the next week.

My special verse for this week is:

I will try to apply this over the next week by:

My sisters and brothers in Christ would like me to pray that they will:

Name	Application

Outline of Ephesians

The Promise and Purpose of God's Blessings (1:1-14)

The Purpose of God's Salvation for Individuals (1:15-2:10)

The Purpose of God's Salvation for the Church (2:11-3:10)

The Fullness of God (3:14-4:2)

The Consequences of God's Salvation - for the Church (4:3-16)

The Consequences of God's Salvation for Individuals

Putting on a New Nature (4:16-32)

Being Imitators of God (5:1-20)

Responding to Secular Authority (5:21-6:9)

Using God's Blessings to Fulfil His Purpose (6:10-24)