



# 1 | EPHESIANS 1-6

## A BREATHTAKING VIEW

*Jesus Christ will save and sanctify you if you trust in him alone.*

### Outline

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Consider Your Identity in Christ (chs 1-3)

*Remember Who You Are in Christ*

*Remember Who You Were Without Christ*

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*Remember Your Forever Family in Christ*

Consider Your Responsibility in Christ (chs 4-6)

*Walk Worthy in the Church*

*Walk Worthy in Your Personal Life*

*Walk Worthy at Home and at Work*

*Walk Worthy in the World*

### Call to Worship

*Lamentations 3:22-23* | The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

### Songs

*Wonderful, Merciful Savior*

*Living Hope*

*He Will Hold Me Fast*

*O Praise the Name*

*All Glory Be to Christ*

## Announcements

We invite you to the 2023 Springfield Bible Conference, October 13-15. The theme will be “Biblical Spirituality.” The speakers: Phil Johnson (Executive Director of Grace to You, the multi-faceted ministry of John MacArthur), Justin Peters (his ministry is to physically afflicted persons like himself and against false prophets), and Curt Daniel (pastor of Faith Bible Church).

## Sunday School Introduction

The subject of the book of Ephesians is vital to your existence on this planet as God’s child. What does it mean to be “in Christ” as an individual and as a congregation? What does it mean to grow in Christ? These are the themes of the book of Ephesians.

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# 1. BACKGROUND

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Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian congregation in the middle of this pagan city **of 300,000 in the ancient world**. Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor (now Turkey). It had a harbor that at that time opened into the Cayster River, which in turn emptied into the Aegean Sea. Because it was also at an intersection of major trade routes, Ephesus became a commercial center. It boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana (Greek Artemis; *cf* Acts 19:23–31). Paul made Ephesus a center for evangelism for about three years (*cf* Acts 19:10), and the church there apparently flourished for some time, but later needed the warnings of the letters to the seven churches (Rev 2-3). Ephesus is very much like the cities of this world today. And believe it or not, even in this modern day, our cities are just as pagan as in Paul’s day.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of Paul’s letter is that the Ephesians needed to stop changing with the fads of the world and instead be growing and changing in Christ. The letter to Ephesians could be summarized with Paul’s description of body life in chapter 4.

**Ephesians 4:15b-16** | We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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.

Don’t you want to be growing and changing in Christ? Have you ever felt like you were not making the progress in the Christian life that you desire? Would you like to know how to do that? Paul tells us in Ephesians.

## AUTHOR

Paul is the author of the book of Ephesians, of which there is almost no dispute. The author identifies himself as Paul (1:1; 3:1; *cf* 3:7,13; 4:1; 6:19–20). Some have taken the absence of the usual personal greetings and the verbal similarity of many parts to Colossians, among other reasons, as grounds for doubting authorship by the apostle Paul. However, this was probably a circular letter, intended for other churches in addition to the one in Ephesus. Clement (35 AD – 99 AD), an early pastor of the Roman congregation and disciple of the apostle Peter writes of the beloved apostle Paul in his early letter to the Corinthians.

*1 Clement 5:5-7* | Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.

It was under his imprisonment in Rome around 62 AD that Paul likely wrote several letters including Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians, while he was under house arrest (3:1;4:1; 6:20; cf Acts 28:16, 30-31). During this time, Paul had relative freedom in his own rented house, albeit, he was chained to a Roman soldier in the elite Pretorian guard (Phil 1:13; 4:7). As Luke records: “Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him” (Acts 28:16).

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## 2. STRUCTURE

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Ephesians is divided into two sections. The first three chapters are our identity in Christ, and the final three chapters are our responsibility in Christ. You cannot do what God has called you to do, until you realize what God has called you to be. Your actions always proceed from who you are. Theologians call this the indicative (our identity in Christ) and the imperative (our responsibility to walk according to our identity). Thirteen times in the book of Ephesians we find the phrase “In Christ.” Four times Paul says we are seated “with Christ” in the heavenly realm. Three times he says Christ dwells in you or in your heart! Something has changed! We are no longer enemies and strangers to God. We are His children. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Have you ever seen a crawling butterfly? Our kids have a pet caterpillar. They hope to see this caterpillar go into his cocoon for three months, and come out as a butterfly. The caterpillar who was once bound to the ground should be able to fly. Can you imagine if the butterfly with great big wings just crawled on the ground and never wanted to fly? What if he kept saying: “I’m only a caterpillar – I can’t fly!” You may be like that caterpillar. God has given you wings of holiness and a Spirit-filled nature, but you are like that crawling butterfly. You have the power to fly in conformity to Christ, but you keep crawling on the ground of old sinful living. You may not be continuing in sin the way you used to, but there are little slave masters in your life that control you. It may be anger. It may be lust. It may be anxiety and worry. It may be irrational thoughts and fear.

Martin Luther said that indwelling sin is like a man’s beard, which even though each day it is shaved off and smooth, yet it never stops growing back. Only when the shovel beats the ground on our grave does it stop. Indwelling sin remains in us as long as we live.<sup>1</sup> It is not that a Christian is sinless, but we are sinning less. You say, ok, I want grow and change in Christ. How can I do that? The book of Ephesians tells us.

### CONSIDER YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST (CHS 1-3)

We need to realize that we are a “new creation” in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). You are not what you once were. You are (1:3) “blessed... in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” Colossians 2:10 says it a different way: you are “complete in Christ.” You lack nothing! You have all you could ever need already in Christ. Paul does not say, you have a few blessings or most blessings, but *every* spiritual blessing in Christ. As far as your soul is concerned, you do not need the perfect spouse to be complete. You are complete in Christ. You do not need a better job to be complete. If you are single, you do not need marriage to be complete! No human being will

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther. *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1303.

complete you. No amount of money will complete you. What are you living for? A better house? A better car? Better relationships? These things will not complete you. You are complete in Christ.

### *Remember Who You Are in Christ*

Though in this life we are never sinless, we also can never be what we once were. John Newton, the former slave ship captain who was liable for the imprisonment of tens of thousands of Africans into slavery, and guilty for the death of hundreds and hundreds of them came to Christ and wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace.” God changed him. Listen to his words. He said, “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am!”<sup>2</sup> So, it is with every Christian. Though we are not yet what we long to be and what we will be one day when Jesus comes, we can truly say “the old life is crucified with Christ” and that our old life is “dead with Christ.” We will never be that person we were before our conversion. We are truly a “new creation.” This is the message of Ephesians 1-3.

### *You are Chosen and Accepted in Christ*

You are (1:4) “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world...” God “predestined you for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has accepted us in the Beloved” (1:5-6). God chose you and accepts you in Christ. He did this before the foundation of the world. Long before you were born, he loved you. Even while you were dead in your sins (2:1) he still loved you and chose you. And yes “while we were still weak,” unable to save ourselves, the Bible says, “at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom 5:6). We must stop trying to make ourselves acceptable to God! “We love him because he first loved us!” God loves us not because of our good behavior. Even our most righteous deeds, Isaiah says, are like “an unclean thing...like filthy rags.” God loves us not because we are good, but because he is good. God is kind and merciful and tender! He sings over you! He rejoices over you, like a nursing mother rejoices over her infant child. You are no longer an outcast. You are no longer rejected. You are loved. You are chosen. You are welcomed and accepted in the Beloved One, Jesus Christ!

### *You are an Heir of God*

**Ephesians 1:4** | 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.

The word inheritance (1:11, 14, 18) evokes thoughts of money or property handed down from generation to generation, with some special person receiving a legacy from a parent or relative. The heir is granted full benefits and ownership privileges and has gratifying knowledge that he is unique, blessed, chosen for honor in some way. “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (1:7). You don’t have to purge your sin in purgatory. You don’t have to earn your way back to God through good works. You are forgiven! How? Through redemption.

What is redemption? In the context of Ephesians means to purchase a slave. In the ancient world, 50% of the Roman Empire was in slavery. Those conquered by the Romans were made slaves. Those who could not pay their debts were slaves. Sometimes criminals were made into slaves. Back then, if a man had an inheritance he wanted to give away, but he had no sons, then he would go to the slave market and purchase a slave and make him a son. At that moment of redemption, he received all the rights and privileges of a natural born son. He would receive the full inheritance of a natural born son! God went to the slave market of sin and saw us as slaves of

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<sup>2</sup> John Newton. *The Christian Spectator*, vol 3 (New Haven, CT: S. Converse, 1821), 186.

sin. And God gave his Son as the purchase price for our salvation. You see God's grace is free to us, but it is not cheap! It cost God everything! That is why Paul says in Ephesians 1:11, "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." We have an inheritance. We who squandered our lives in slavery to sin have become sons and daughters of the living God. We now have all the rights and privileges of his own dear Son. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

In the Old Testament God promised Abraham a new home and a new family. He gave him the promised land of Israel. He promised to make his descendants multiply like the sands of the sea and the stars of heaven. That was just a shadow of the greater and genuine things in the New Covenant. Today we not only are heirs of the promised land, but Romans 4:13 says God's promise to Abraham was that he would literally be the "heir of the cosmos." He's not heir only of the promised land, but the whole universe. He would be heir of the entire new heavens and new earth. Through his seed, he would not only bless Israel but through his Seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And Galatians 3:29 says, "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." You have the same inheritance!

### *You are Sealed as God's Special Possession*

You are not your own. You are bought with a price. Glorify God with your whole being!

**Ephesians 1:13-14** | 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, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

When God saved you, he sealed you with his Holy Spirit. The seal refers to a stamp of ownership. You have the stamp of God's ownership. He can never deny Himself. He has joined you with Christ. That can never be undone. The Holy Spirit is the "guarantee" of your "inheritance." The word "guarantee" was in weddings. The engagement ring was the guarantee of the wedding. It was also used in purchases. The down payment was the guarantee that you would one day in the future get the property. The Holy Spirit is God's engagement ring, his down payment guarantees that one day we will have all of heaven. His Holy Spirit is his seal of ownership on his special possession. You are holy and set apart for God's kingdom, child of God.

Then in Ephesians 1:15-22, Paul prays that the congregation at Ephesus will have the "eyes of their heart" opened and illuminated to who they are in Christ and to their inheritance, and to the fact that Christ is their Sovereign Lord and Head.

### *Remember Who You Were Without Christ*

In Chapter 2, Paul begins with a very dark thought: what we once were without Christ.

#### *You were Dead in Trespasses and Sins*

Paul begins by looking back before the Ephesians' salvation: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins" (2:1). A trespass is when we break God's law purposely. Like a sign that says: "no trespassing" and we go beyond guarded area. All of us by nature are lawless. We lie, steal, lust, complain, and curse by nature. A sin is to "miss the mark." It means to set out to do what is right, and then to miss it. That's the story of our lives, isn't it? It says we are dead, and then it says we walk in the world, with the wicked one and by our own passions and lusts. The idea of dead is that we have no true tenderness toward God. When it comes to a contrite and broken spirit, we are hard and dead and senseless.

#### *You were Living as a Slave*

These verses describe what we were before Christ: living in slavery to sin.

**Ephesians 2:2-3** | ...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 — 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.

It says we are slaves before we come to Christ: We were slaves of the world: we followed the course or current of the world. It's not talking about the dirt under our feet or the planet, but the "world system." What is now. What is temporary. What is in front of my eyes. Riches. Lust. Power. Popularity. The lust of the eyes. The lust of the flesh. The pride of life. The "world" means the world's "way of thinking." We were slaves to that.

We were slaves of Satan: the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Lucifer is that fallen angel that is presently the governor of the atmosphere- He governs what is philosophically "in" what is "cool" and "hip" as to the philosophies in the realm of wickedness. What is Satan promoting today? He says – let's redefine marriage and make homosexuality a human rights issue, or – let's call the murder of infants in the womb the compassionate "choice" of the mother, or – let's glorify immodesty and make women mere objects and property, or – let's erase the order of God's creation and encourage men to act like women and women to act like men. You see, we used to be in slavery to these philosophies of the wicked one. He blinds the eyes of all unbelievers on the planet. We were enslaved to the wicked one. We were slaves of self and our own wicked heart. Verse 3, "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." We were once governed by our feelings and passions. We were governed by lust, anger, fear, bitterness, covetousness. We wanted what we wanted, and we were willing to sin to get it!

### *Remember Your New Life in Christ*

Then we read the greatest words in the Bible in Ephesians 2:4,

**Ephesians 2:4-6** | But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

What is this? Because of God's mercy, when we were dead in sins, He regenerated us. He gave us a new nature. He united us with Christ. He made us alive. We are no longer what we once were. Paul uses the metaphor of a dead person being made alive and resurrected to describe what theologians call regeneration. What is regeneration? The prefix is *re* which means new, and *genesis* which means beginning. Regeneration is a new beginning with God. In Adam all die, but in Christ, all are made alive. We are given a new beginning with God. The curse is erased. Our guilt is gone. Our transgressions are thrown as far as the east is from the west.

The Bible has many metaphors for regeneration. We have a new heart. We no longer have a heart of stone. The only hard, stubborn heart is transformed into a tender heart of flesh (Eze 36:25-27). We are no longer stubborn. We have new life – resurrected with Christ! We are no longer dead in sin. We are born again. We are no longer a child of this sinful world. We are a new creation. The old life is passed away. The new life has come. In all the metaphors for regeneration, we are passive. God does it all. I cannot birth myself. I cannot give myself a heart transplant. I cannot resurrect myself. I cannot create myself. God must do it! All the sinner must do is believe!

**Ephesians 2:8-9** | For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

And yet our entire salvation including our faith, is a gift from God! Of course, there is so much more! You are no longer pagan Gentiles (2:11), cut off from God's family, as 2:12 says:

**Ephesians 2:12** | ... 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.

Now you are "brought near by the blood of Christ" (2:13). You are no longer identified mainly by your race or family on earth where there is hostility between Jew and Gentile. But Christ has "the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14) and created "one new humanity." You are now "no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (2:19). You are part of God's forever or eternal family!

### *Remember Your Forever Family in Christ*

Ephesians 3 speaks of the great mystery of God's hidden plan. Who would have guessed that God would join all the Gentile nations of the earth with Israel into one new family?

**Ephesians 3:6** | 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.

This goes back to the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12 and 15, which says that through Abraham's seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And so now you are no longer what you once were! You are part of God's forever family, and this was the plan even before the beginning of time, and God reiterated it to Abraham.

You are loved! You are chosen! You are accepted and welcomed by God! You are God's child, and therefore you are an heir of God, you are sealed by God's Spirit! You have a new nature that is empowered to live holy. You are part of God's forever covenant family! That's Ephesians 1-3. That's who you are. And based on who you are – i.e. your identity, God calls you to live up to your responsibilities.

### **CONSIDER YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN CHRIST (CHS 4-6)**

Paul begins the second part of Ephesians with a challenge to walk worthy of our identity in Christ.

**Ephesians 4:1** | I therefore... urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

Walk worthy! Because you are "in Christ," you need to walk in a manner worthy of His high and holy Name! Paul gives three realms where we exercise Christian maturity: in the church, in close human relationships, and in the world.

### *Walk Worthy in the Church*

So, the first realm where we exercise Christian maturity is the church. In Ephesians 4:1-10, we are called to live in peace with other Christians. In 4:2, we are called to "bear with each other in love." This literally means to lovingly tolerate each other's peculiarities and differences. I know you don't have any peculiarities or irritating habits, but I'm sure I do! We are all like porcupines, and we don't realize we are sticking each other. We sometimes cause offense to brothers and sisters and we don't even know it! When you find offense in the Body of Christ, you ought not to

go church hopping and find the perfect church. If you do find the perfect church, don't join it, because it will no longer be perfect!

Then, in Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul tells us *how* to live in Christian maturity in the church community. He basically says you need to listen carefully to the word that is preached by the pastors, teachers and evangelists, and then get busy and serve God by building up your eternal family. This language is all over the New Testament. Over 35 times in the NT we are told to do something for one another in the church. Love one another. Bear with one another. Teach one another. Encourage one another. Here in Ephesians 4:11-13 Paul says that God has given the pastors, teachers, and evangelists to equip the church. Listen to them preach the Word. But doesn't stop there. It says it is the people in the church that is to do the work of the ministry. Your church doesn't just have the elders and pastors as ministers. No, every one of you is a minister of the gospel of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:11-13** | And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,<sup>13</sup> 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.

Get to know the people in your church. Do you know each other? Are you in each other's homes? Are you committed to this body of believers? God put you here not to sit and soak up the Word only, but to apply it to each other and speak the truth to each other in love.

### *Walk Worthy in Your Personal Life*

So, the first realm where we exercise Christian maturity is the church. The second is in close earthly relationships. All close relationships will bring difficulty. In Ephesians 4:17 and following, Paul gives us the secret to growing and changing in Christ. This is the blazing center of the book of Ephesians. In Ephesians 4:17 says an unregenerate person cannot carry out the Christian life – "You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds." Why? Because unsaved people (Gentiles):

- Have hearts that are hard like marble (4:18a),
- Are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God (4:18b),
- They have given "themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity" (4:19)

You get the picture! Without Christ we are a mess! Those in Christ are totally equipped to live in holiness because we have been... (as 4:24 says, "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.")

Verse 25 has an important word: Therefore! Therefore, based on your regeneration in Christ, you can change! Look at the verses before:

**Ephesians 4:22-23** | ...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,<sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.

### *Worthy in Communication*

Since you are indwelt a new nature in Christ, you can put away:

lying (4:25), and sinful anger and holding grudges (4:26) – did you ever go to bed angry and wake up angry? Because you are regenerate in Christ, stop doing that. Don't give any opportunity for the devil to counsel you (4:27). Every time you choose to continue and live in sin, the devil is going to whisper in your ear a lot of hateful things. Count on it. Every time you hold a grudge and are not willing to forgive, you give Satan another opportunity to preach to you his message of



hatred (4:28). The thief, if he is saved, should stop stealing. And when is a thief not a thief? When he merely stops stealing? *No*. When he starts working hard and starts to be generous, giving his money away to people in need!

God wants you to grow in Christ right now. You grow by replacing sinful habits with godly habits. Paul applies this to the area of communication. Paul says:

**Ephesians 4:29** | 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.

Only 7% of our communication is words. 93% are attitudes, gestures, and facial expressions. Someone close to you could ask: “How are you” And you might say (happy attitude) “I’m doing just fine.” Or you might say (sarcastic attitude, rolling eyes): “I’m doing just *fine!*” God wants to change you from the inside out – not just your words, but your heart, your attitudes – that the joy and peace of the Lord would be seen even on your face!

Paul gives finally gives us the secret to putting off bitterness and a lack of forgiveness. He gives the “Put off” principle in Ephesians 4:30-32. Put off bitterness, anger, wrath (grudge holding), etc. Bitterness is a cycle of craziness! You replay the insult of offence over and over again, but it doesn’t help. Someone said, “Holding grudges and being bitter is like you drinking a bottle of poison and hoping the other person will die.” Paul says put off these sinful ways of thinking, like bitterness. Take it off like a filthy garment. Take it outside the city gates and burn it in the garbage pile. Put off these things: bitterness, wrath – boiling over and calming down, anger – grudge holding, clamor – shouting, slander – personal blasphemy, malice – settled hatred against someone. You say, “How do I get rid of these toxic behaviors and emotions?” Paul tells us to be like Christ.

**Ephesians 4:32** | Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

### *Worthy in Holiness*

Ephesians 5 begins with reminding us we need to be regenerated in order to experience meaningful change, and for the child of God, we have a new nature that ought to lead us to a life of holiness where we are “imitators of God” (5:1). We are no longer the same.

**Ephesians 5:8** | For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (5:8).

You are a new creation. Live up to this transformation that has occurred in you.

### *Walk Worthy at Home and at Work*

Only if you are regenerated can you live in the home with joy under God’s established order. “Wives, submit to your husbands, as to Christ” (5:22) “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord...” (6:1-4) We can only live according to God’s order if we are regenerated! You can only have joy in the home if you are not hoping others around you will change. Stop trying to change those around you. Give up on trying to change your spouse. You need to change. Parents you cannot change your children. Plead with them that they will never change until they bow before Christ as Lord and Savior.

Paul then addresses slaves who lived in households. Over fifty percent of the Roman empire were brought into slavery mainly through debt, as prisoners of war, or sometimes through volunteering to be slaves, since living in a wealthy home with all your needs taken care of was desirable in the first century. His instructions to slaves, and really to all people employed whether free or slave is act as:

**Ephesians 6:6-8** | ...bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

## *Walk Worthy in the World*

Finally, Paul says we need to “be strong” in the Spirit of God (6:10). We need to walk worthy of Christ in the world. How?

**Ephesians 6:11-12** | Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> 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.

Your problem is not your boss. Your problem if you are married is not your spouse. It's not your parents. It's not the people in the world. Your battle is against Satan!

Paul says we need to walk worthy of Christ in the world. How? Put on the whole armor of God (6:10-18). Every piece of armor is related to the Word of God. If you want to change, you need to be in the word day and night. The gospel shoes, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit are all related to the Word of God. Get into the Word and you will grow and change. Don't just read it. Meditate on it. Apply it to your life. You can have all the knowledge of the Bible (Jas 3:13ff) and still have wisdom that is earthly, feelings-oriented, and demonic. No, apply the Word to your life, and you will grow. Pray through the Word. Pray the Psalms! Pray the promises of God. Pray the commands of God. Tell God you are not able, but he is.

This is how you grow and change. You must be regenerate. You must be in union with Christ or you will never joyfully serve Christ in the Spirit. You can carry out the commands and responsibilities of Scripture because of the life transforming change God brought you when you were born again.

### *Conclusion*

How we want to grow in Christ! How can we stop from being “crawling butterflies” and start flying? Remember who you are in Christ. And then walk worthy of your calling. Let me close with 1 Thessalonians 5, which summarizes the hope of our sanctification and the theme of Ephesians:

*1 Thessalonians 5:23-24* | Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

### **Benediction**

Ephesians 3:20-21, 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, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Members Meeting**

We received a letter of resignation from Jerry and Kathie Soen yesterday. Jerry had resigned from the elder board a couple months ago. There were concerns between him and I concerning doctrinal and functional direction. We disagreed on encouraging Pentecostalism in the congregation. Our delay in coming to you with this resignation was to give him the control of the timing and how this would be announced. Please pray for them. Pray for us as elders to have wisdom and direction. We love the Soens deeply and will miss them.