

What's the Point....of Ephesians?

Mark Garner

Ephesians emphasizes the love of God and the truth of God, even more so than most of the epistles. As the letter develops their significance and the blessings they bring, it also calls us to open our minds and hearts to God, so that he may help us understand these ideas more deeply. The apostle understands how difficult it can be for us to understand God's eternal and transcendent nature, so he prays for his readers, as he also encourages us to pray, for understanding.

That The Eyes Of Our Hearts May Be Enlightened (General Themes & Background)

From the beginning of Ephesians, Paul emphasizes the importance of understanding both God's truth and God's love, as well as the significance of Jesus' ministry. He also describes how God's Spirit within us helps us with the difficult process of appreciating and embracing these essential ideas. The apostle also prays for God to bless his readers with wisdom (1:15-17), hoping that we might also learn the importance of a genuine, close relationship with God.

Thus, the apostle hopes for us to see with "the eyes of your heart". His hope is that we will think and pray and meditate on these themes, instead of looking for dictionary definitions or using human logic. Ephesians has many things to think about, and it can teach us more each time we read it.

Ephesians is one of the epistles that Paul wrote while imprisoned in Rome, sometime roughly between AD 62 and AD 64. Earlier, Paul had spent considerable time in Ephesus, which was a regional center for commerce, as well a point where several highways intersected.

Overview Of Ephesians

Ephesians opens by telling us some of the many spiritual blessings Jesus gives us, including redemption, salvation, and the gift of God's Spirit. Paul uses the phrase, "the riches of his glorious inheritance", and he also tells us of the fullness of Jesus (Ephesians 1). Next, the epistle contrasts our old life with where Jesus has brought us. We were once far from God and were without hope, yet God's Son has brought us near, and he has given us a lasting hope (Ephesians 2).

Then, the apostle expands on the splendor and the overflowing grace we see in the message of Jesus, and on God's manifold wisdom. He again encourages us to understand God's love and his truths more deeply (Ephesians 3). In the next chapter, the epistle begins to transition to some daily applications. It emphasizes the oneness of God, and our need to rely on Jesus' grace and love; then it contrasts the emptiness of this world's ways with God's timeless truths (Ephesians 4).

Then, the apostle helps us understand God's call for us to leave the darkness of this world's harshness, immorality, and pride, and instead to live by the love, humility, and patience of Jesus (Ephesians 5). In the closing chapter, we see the imagery of the armor of God, and Paul's encouragement for us to pray on all occasions (Ephesians 6). Ephesians is a book full of themes and ideas well worth reading and pondering.

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Caleb Dillinger

I have taught, preached, and discussed the letter to the Ephesians more than most of Paul's letters. In 2025 alone, I have preached from it, studied it with the elders, and discussed it in small group. What makes Ephesians so relevant for Christians today? First, it's high emphasis on Christ and what Jesus has done for us. Second, it's emphasis on grace and transformation. Third, it's focus on the body of Christ. And fourth, it's teaching on the spiritual realm.

There are six chapters in Ephesians, and Christ is mentioned multiple times in every chapter. Paul cannot talk about anything important for the church to learn in this letter without tying it back to Christ. We are called to be faithful in Christ (chapter 1), made alive together with Christ (chapter 2), created in Christ (chapter 2), have Christ dwell in our hearts (Chapter 3), receive grace from Christ (chapter 4), learn Christ (chapter 4), submit to Christ (chapter 5), and love Christ (chapter 6). These are just the specific instructions/teachings on Christ, not to mention all the other lessons taught about his headship and ascension and lordship. Ephesians remains one of the best books of the New Testament to read for learning about what Jesus means to the church today.

Ephesians 2 testifies to the grace of Christ in clear language: We were made alive together with Christ, by grace we have been saved through faith (2:5-8). Paul goes on to talk about the reconciliation of sinful people (those far off) with God, and how Jesus played the central role in that reconciliation (2:13-18). Grace and how that transforms us is unmistakable.

The body of Christ is emphasized in chapter 4, particularly finding fellowship and unity. Chapter 4 also specifically addresses how we ought to live because of this transformation by grace, how kindness and grace need to be evident in our own lives. Chapter 5 continues this focus on the body with an emphasis on love and submission.

While all of Ephesians deals with spirituality, chapter 6 gives insight into the spiritual realm. Jesus had already died, rose, and ascended, yet still Paul talks about the constant struggle against spiritual forces of darkness. We are to put on the whole armor of God to stand against such spiritual forces.

Why read Ephesians today? You will be challenged, but you'll learn so much more than you thought you needed to know. You'll be encouraged. You'll focus on Jesus. You'll be better prepared to live faithfully. That's the point of reading Ephesians in the 21st century.