

Free Bible Version

Ephesians

1 ¹This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to God's will, to the Christians^a in Ephesus and those who trust in Christ Jesus. ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with all that's spiritually good in the heavenly world, ⁴just as he chose us to be in him^b before the beginning of this world, so that in love we could be holy and without fault before him. ⁵He decided in advance to adopt us as his children, working through Jesus Christ to bring us to himself. He was happy to do this because this is what he wanted. ⁶So we praise him for his glorious grace that he so kindly gave us in his beloved Son.^c ⁷Through him we gain salvation through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins as a result of his priceless grace ⁸that he so generously provided for us, together with all wisdom and understanding.

⁹He revealed to us his previously-hidden will through which he was happy to pursue his plan ¹⁰at the appropriate time to bring everyone^d together in Christ—those in heaven and those on the earth. ¹¹*In him*—we were chosen beforehand, according to the plan of the One who is working everything out according to his will, ¹²for the purpose that we^e who were the first to hope in Christ could praise his glory. ¹³*In him*—you^f too have heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation. *In him*—because you trusted in him you were stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit's promise, ¹⁴which is a down-payment on our inheritance when God redeems what he's kept safe for himself—us, who will praise and give him glory!

^a 1:1. Literally "saints."

^b 1:4. Or "in union with him."

^c 1:6. Son is assumed here. The Greek says "beloved one."

^d 1:10. Paralleling Col. 1:20.

^e 1:12. "We" meaning Jewish Christians.

^f 1:13. "You" meaning Gentile Christians.

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¹⁵That's the reason, because I've heard of your trust in the Lord Jesus and the love that you have for all Christians, ¹⁶why I never stop thanking God for you and remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you a spirit of wisdom to see and know him as he really is. ¹⁸May your minds be enlightened so you can understand the hope he's called you to—¹⁹the glorious riches he promises as an inheritance to his trustworthy people. May you also understand God's amazing power ²⁰that he demonstrated in raising Christ from the dead. God seated Christ at his right hand in heaven, ²¹far above any other ruler, authority, power, or lord, or any leader with all their titles—not only in this world, but also in the coming world too. ²²God has made everything subject to the authority of Christ, and has given him the responsibility as head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, filled full and made complete by Christ, who fills and brings everything to completion.

2 ¹At one time you were dead in your sins and evil actions, ²living your lives according to the ways of the world, under the control of the devil,^a whose spirit is at work in those who disobey God. ³All of us were once like that, our behavior determined by the desires of our sinful human nature and our evil way of thinking. Like everyone else, in our nature we were children of anger.^b

⁴But God in his generous mercy, because of the amazing love he had for us ⁵even while we were dead in our sins, has made us alive together with Christ. Trusting in him has saved you! ⁶He raised us up with Christ, and in Christ Jesus seated us with him in heaven, ⁷so that in all eternity to come he could demonstrate the amazing extent of his grace in showing us kindness through Christ Jesus. ⁸For you've been saved by grace through trusting in him—it's not through yourselves, it's the gift of God! ⁹This has nothing to do with human effort, so don't be

^a 2:2. Literally “the ruler of the power of the air.”

^b 2:3. The Greek literally says “Children in nature of anger.” Following the previous thought about human nature, this could mean we are “naturally angry” or rebellious towards God. Alternatively, this could be viewed that we are the object of divine anger, though God is not specifically mentioned here.

proud of yourselves. ¹⁰We're the product of what God does, created in Christ Jesus to do good, which God already planned that we should do.

¹¹So you who are "foreigners" humanly-speaking, called "uncircumcised" by those who are "circumcised"^a (which is only a procedure carried out by human beings), you need to remember ¹²that once you had no relationship to Christ. You were barred as foreigners from being citizens of Israel, strangers to the covenant God had promised. You had no hope and you lived in the world without God. ¹³But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once a long way off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴Christ is our peace. Through his body^b he made the two into one, and broke down the separating wall of hostility that divided us, ¹⁵freeing us from the law with its requirements and regulations. He did this so he could create in himself one new person out of the two and so make peace, ¹⁶and completely reconcile both of them to God through the cross as if they were just one body, having destroyed our hostility towards each other.

¹⁷He came and shared the good news of peace with those of you who were far away, and those who were nearby, ¹⁸because through him we both gain access to the Father through the same Spirit. ¹⁹That means you're no longer strangers and foreigners; you are fellow citizens of God's people and belong to God's family ²⁰that's being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together, growing to form a holy temple for the Lord. ²²You too are being built together in him as a place for God to live by the Spirit.

3 ¹This is why, I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of you foreigners, ²(well, I'm assuming you've heard that God gave me the specific responsibility of sharing God's grace with you), ³how, by what God showed me, made clear the mystery that was previously hidden. I wrote to you briefly before about this, ⁴and when you read this you'll be able to understand my insight into

^a 2:11. That is, the Jews (circumcised) and the Gentiles (uncircumcised).

^b 2:14. From the context it appears that Paul is referring here to Jesus' crucifixion.

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the mystery of Christ. ⁵In past generations this wasn't made clear to anyone, but now it's been revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ⁶that foreigners are joint heirs, part of the same body, and in Christ Jesus share together in the promise through the good news.

⁷I became a minister of this good news through the gift of God's grace that I was given by his power that was at work in me. ⁸This grace was given to me, the least important of all Christians, in order to share with the foreigners the incredible value of Christ, ⁹and to help everyone see the purpose of the mystery which from the very beginning was hidden in God who made everything. ¹⁰God's plan was that the various aspects of his wisdom would be revealed through the church to the rulers and authorities in heaven. ¹¹This was in accordance with God's eternal purpose that he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²Because of him and our trust in him we can come to God in total freedom and confidence. ¹³So I'm asking that you don't get discouraged that I'm suffering—it's for you and you should value that!

¹⁴This is why I kneel before the Father ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its nature and character, ¹⁶asking him that out of his wealth of glory he may strengthen you in your innermost being with power through his Spirit.

¹⁷May Christ live in your hearts as you trust in him, so that as you are planted deep in love, ¹⁸you may have the power to comprehend with all God's people the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love. ¹⁹May you know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you're made full and complete by the fullness of God.

²⁰Now may he who—through his power working in us—can do infinitely more than we ever ask for or even think about, ²¹may he be glorified in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

4 ¹So I—this prisoner in the Lord—am encouraging you to make sure you live according to the principles to which you were called. ²Don't think proudly of yourselves; be gentle and patient, showing tolerance to each other in love. ³Make every effort to remain one in the Spirit through the peace that binds you

together. ⁴For there's one body, and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope. ⁵The Lord is one, our trust in him is one, and there's one baptism; ⁶there's one God and Father of everyone. He is over all and through all and in all.

⁷To each of us grace was given in proportion to Christ's generous gift. ⁸As Scripture says, "When he ascended to the heights he took captives with him, and gave gifts to humanity."^{a 9} (Regarding this: it says he ascended, but that means he also had previously descended to our lowly world. ¹⁰The one that descended is the same one who also ascended to the highest heaven in order that he could make the whole universe complete).

¹¹The gifts he gave were so that some could be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, ¹²with the purpose of preparing God's people for the work of helping others, to help the body of Christ to grow. ¹³We grow together until we all reach the state of being one in our trust in and knowledge of the Son of God, completely grown up, measuring up to full maturity in Christ. ¹⁴We shouldn't be little children any more, tossed about and blown along by every passing breeze of doctrine, confused by human trickery, led into error by crafty people who deceitfully scheme; ¹⁵instead by speaking the truth in love we ought to grow up in everything into Christ, who is our head. ¹⁶It's because of him that the whole body operates, every joint holding it together as each individual part does what it's supposed to, and the whole body grows, building itself up in love.

¹⁷So let me say this to you—in fact I insist on it in the Lord—that you should no longer live like the foreigners do, in their empty-headed way. ¹⁸In the darkness of their minds they don't understand, and they have been cut off from the life of God because they don't know anything and in their stubbornness they don't want to know. ¹⁹Because they are past caring they abandon themselves to sensuality, and greedily do all kinds of disgusting things.

²⁰But that's not what you learned about Christ! ²¹Didn't you hear about him? Weren't you taught concerning him? Didn't you

^a 4:8. Quoting Ps. 68:18.

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learn the truth as it is in Jesus? ²²So get rid of your former lifestyle, that old nature that ruins you through deceptive desires! ²³Let yourselves be re-made spiritually and mentally, ²⁴and put on your new nature that God created so you will be like him, right and holy in the truth.

²⁵So reject lies, and tell the truth to each other—for we belong to each other. ²⁶Don't sin by getting angry; don't let evening come and find you still mad—²⁷and don't give the devil any opportunity. ²⁸Thieves, stop your stealing, and do honest, productive work with your hands, so you'll have something to give to those who need it. ²⁹Don't use bad language. Speak words that will encourage people as necessary, so that those who listen will be helped. ³⁰Don't disappoint the Holy Spirit of God that marked you as belonging to him until the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of every kind of bitterness, rage, anger, verbal abuse, and insults, along with all forms of evil. ³²Be kind and compassionate to each other, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

5 ¹So then, imitate God since you're his much-loved children. ²Live in love, just as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us, a gift and sacrificial offering to God like a sweet-smelling perfume. ³Sexual immorality or any kind of indecency or greed should never be mentioned concerning you, as God's people should not be doing such things. ⁴Obscene talk, stupid chatter, and coarse jokes are totally inappropriate—instead you should be thanking God. ⁵You know it's absolutely sure that no-one who is sexually immoral, or commits indecency, or who is greedy, or is an idol-worshiper will inherit anything in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Don't let anyone fool you with lying words, for it's because of such things that God's judgment is passed on the children of disobedience. ⁷So don't partner with them in this. ⁸At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. You are to live as children of light ⁹ (and the fruit of light is everything that's good and right and true), ¹⁰demonstrating what the Lord really appreciates.

¹¹Don't have anything to do with the pointless things that darkness produces—instead expose them. ¹²It's shameful even to speak about the things such people do secretly, ¹³but when

anything is exposed by the light then it's revealed as it is. Light makes everything visible. ¹⁴That's why it's said, "Wake up, those of you who are sleeping, rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵So be careful how you live your life, not foolishly, but wisely, ¹⁶making the best use of opportunities because the days are evil. ¹⁷So don't be ignorant—find out what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Don't get drunk on wine which will wreck your life, but be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Share together with one another using psalms and hymns and sacred songs, singing and making music to the Lord with your heart. ²⁰Always thank God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹Each of you should be willing to accept what others tell you to do out of reverence for Christ. ²²Wives, do what your own husbands tell you to do, as you would if the Lord told you. ²³The husband is head of the wife in the same way as Christ is head of the church—his body and its savior. ²⁴In the same way that the church does what Christ says, wives should do what their husbands tell them in all things. ²⁵Husbands, you should love your wives in the same way as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. ²⁶He made it holy, he made it clean by washing in the water of the word,^a ²⁷so that he could make the church his own, with no flaw or blemish or any kind of fault, but holy and blameless. ²⁸Husbands should love their wives just like this, as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself—²⁹for no one ever hated his own body, but feeds it and looks after it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰for we are parts of his body. ³¹"This is why a man leaves his father and mother, and is joined to his wife, and the two are united in one."^b ³²This is a deep hidden truth—but I'm talking about Christ and the church. ³³However each husband should love his own wife as he does himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

6 ¹Children, do what your parents tell you, for this is the right thing to do. ²"Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment that has a promise attached: ³"that things may go

^a 5:26. Presumably an allusion to baptism.

^b 5:31. Quoting Genesis 2:24.

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well for you and you may live a long life on the earth.”^a ⁴Fathers, don’t make your children mad, but look after them by disciplining them and instructing them about God. ⁵Servants, obey those who are your human masters, with proper respect and awe, doing things from sincere motives as if you were serving Christ. ⁶Don’t just work well when you’re being watched to gain approval, but work like servants of Christ, honestly doing God’s will, ⁷happily serving as if you were doing it for the Lord, and not for people. ⁸You know that whoever does what’s good will be rewarded by the Lord, whether that person is a servant or someone who is free. ⁹Masters, you should treat your servants the same way. Don’t threaten them, remember that the Lord in heaven is both their master and yours, and he treats people the same, without favoritism.

¹⁰Lastly, stay strong in the Lord, and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on all the armor of God so you can withstand all the devil’s attacks! ¹²We’re not fighting against human forces, but against supernatural rulers and powers, the dark lords of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³Take all the weapons God provides so that you may be able to stand your ground in the day of evil and after doing all you can, to find yourself still standing! ¹⁴So stand up, wrap the belt of truth around your waist, tie on the breastplate of justice and right, ¹⁵and put on the shoes of readiness to share the good news of peace. ¹⁶Above all, take up the shield of trusting God, by which you’ll be able to put out all the devil’s flaming arrows. ¹⁷Wear the helmet of salvation, and carry the sword of the Spirit—the Spirit that’s the word of God. ¹⁸Always pray in the Spirit as you do all this. Stay awake and keep on praying for all God’s people. ¹⁹Pray for me too so that I’ll be given the right words to say, and that I’ll be able to explain confidently the hidden truths of the good news. ²⁰I’m an imprisoned ambassador for the sake of the good news, so please pray that I will speak fearlessly, as I should. ²¹Tychicus, our good friend and faithful minister, will give you all my news and explain everything so you’ll know

^a 6:3. Quoting Deut. 5:16.

how I'm doing. ²²That's why I'm sending him to you—to tell you what's happened to us and to encourage you. ²³Peace to all the Christians there, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, with love and trust in him. ²⁴Grace to all those who eternally love our Lord Jesus.

