



Rags To Riches



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# How to Use This Study Guide

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Each week, as you sit down to study, begin with prayer. Before reading the lesson and answering the questions, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to you. You may find it helpful to have a few study aids such as a dictionary, a concordance, and more than one translation of the Bible. You may also find the following online resources helpful: [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com) [BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

Note: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was used for this Study Guide with consideration of the New King James Version (NKJV) and the Amplified Bible.

At the end of each week's study questions, there is a "Lift Your Heart" section. This will be an important and personal part of your study. You are encouraged to write in your journal what transpires as you listen and respond to the whispers from God's heart to yours. When you look back through your journal at the end of the study, you will be blessed and amazed at your insight and growth.

The Bible is an endless mine of priceless treasure. The "Growing Stronger" section is designed to help you dig more treasures from God's Word that will strengthen your relationship and walk with Him. May what you find there dazzle you!

# Ephesians 1:1-14... *Rich in Christ*

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Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome. Although it was sent to the Church in Ephesus, ultimately it was written to us. It enables us to see the full sweep of God's plan from before creation to the uniting of everyone and everything in Jesus Christ. Even though Paul was probably in rags in prison he knew he had the riches of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"!

## **Read Ephesians Chapter One**

### **Re-read verses 1-14**

1. In these verses, how many times do the words "in Him" or "in Christ" appear?

What does this emphasize?

2. What do verses 3-4 tell you about the blessings you have in Christ?

Who

What

Where

How

When

Why

3. The Trinity of God does the work of saving you. What does each member of the Trinity do in this work?

The Father (verses 4-6)

The Son (verses 7-12)

The Holy Spirit (verses 13-14)

4. How has your “adoption” (verse 5) by God the Father changed your life?

*"Nobody is born into this world a child of the family of God. We are born as children of wrath. The only way we enter into the family of God is by adoption, and that adoption occurs when we are united to God's only begotten Son by faith. When by faith we are united with Christ, we are then adopted into that family of whom Christ is the firstborn."* ~ R. C. Sproul

5. Write verse 7 in your own words.

6. What has God revealed to you?

Verse 9

Verse 10

7. “We have obtained an inheritance...” (verse 11) What does this mean to you as you live in this world?

What does this mean to you in the life to come?

8. How can you live “to the praise of His Glory”? (verses 12 and 14)

### ***Lift Your Heart***

There is a story about a poor farmer who struggled for many years. One day he discovered oil on his property and became an instant millionaire! The oil had always been there, but he didn't know it. We possess a wealth of spiritual blessings but sometimes we don't recognize their abundance. Ask God to reveal the spiritual blessings He has lavished upon you and record them in your journal.

### ***Growing Stronger***

Consider the contrasts in the following verses:

#### **Rags**

Isaiah 6:5

Isaiah 64:6

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

#### **Riches**

Isaiah 45:3

Isaiah 62:3

Romans 6:22

Titus 3:7





# Ephesians 1:15-23... *Prayer that Empowers*

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Paul was a prayer warrior and this is one of two powerful prayers in this letter. Paul thanks God for what He has done for the Ephesian believers and prays that He will do more for them. Not only a prayer of thanksgiving, but these verses are packed with great riches of doctrine of our Christian faith.

## **Read Ephesians Chapter One**

### **Re-read verses 15-23**

1. According to verse 15, what is the two-part description of a Christian?
2. What do you find in verses 16-19 that would serve as examples when you pray for others?
3. What is Paul praying for in verse 17?

*"Prayer and praise are oars by which a man may row his boat into the deep waters of the knowledge of Christ." ~ Charles Spurgeon*

4. What three things in verses 18-19 does Paul want you to know?

5. Describe the riches revealed in the following verses:

Romans 9:23

Romans 10:12

Romans 11:33

6. In what ways have you experienced the power of God as described in Ephesians 1:19?

7. If God is over every authority, power and dominion (verse 21), why do you think evil dictators and rulers exist?

8. Write verses 22-23 in your own words.

9. What role does the Church play in your life?

What role do you play in the Church?

### ***Lift Your Heart***

Write out your prayers for others in your journal this week. Be specific as you pray for their spiritual needs. Refer back to your prayers in a couple of weeks and record how God has answered them.

### ***Growing Stronger***

Using a Concordance or an online Bible search engine, record the references you find for "right hand of God". Summarize what you discovered.



# **Ephesians 2:1-10... *Alive with Christ***

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Psalm 19 begins, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." Every believer, every child of God is part of His display, revealing to the universe the skill of His workmanship and the surpassing riches of His grace.

## **Read Ephesians Chapter Two**

### **Re-read verses 1-4**

1. What was your spiritual condition before your salvation?
2. How did you live?
3. Who or what dictated how you lived?
4. How does Paul describe God's mercy and love?

### **Read verses 5-7**

5. In contrast to the hopeless condition you were in before coming to Christ, what three things has God done for you?

1

2

3

6. Why has He done this?

7. How would you explain God's grace to someone who has no relationship with Him?

8. Write verses 8-9 in your own words.

9. What do you think Paul means in verse 9 concerning works and boasting?

10. Read Matthew 5:16. How does your life bring God glory?

### ***Lift Your Heart***

You were spiritually dead, a child of wrath. But God, because of His great love, offers you mercy and allows you to be delivered from His wrath by grace, through faith. He does all of this with no help from you... Write a prayer in your journal thanking Him for His "rich mercy" and "great love".

### ***Growing Stronger***

Read Ephesians 2:10. The word workmanship in the Greek is *poiema*, and denotes not just effort or labor, but the result of artistic skill and craftsmanship. In the Old Testament, this word is used in reference to the work done on the tabernacle and the temple.

Whose workmanship are you?

Why has God taken such care in creating you?

You don't do a good work *for* God, He does a good work *through* you, as you are faithful and obedient to Him. How is this worked out in your daily life?

How does the Holy Spirit play a part in this work?

Who deserves the credit for the good work you do?





# **Ephesians 2:11-22... *God's Household***

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Peace between Jews and Gentiles was a difficult concept, even for the Ephesian churches. Paul emphasized to the believers that they were no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens, because Jesus Himself is our Peace.

## **Read Ephesians Chapter Two**

### **Re-read verses 11-13**

1. Before their salvation in Christ, what was the condition of the Gentile Ephesians?
2. In contrast, what was their condition after salvation?

How was this made possible?

3. Circumcision was an outward sign of faith and commitment to the God of Israel. Yet many Jews had come to see it as a source of pride and a guarantee of God's favor. What do the following verses say about circumcision?

Deuteronomy 10:16

Deuteronomy 30:6

Romans 2:28-29

Romans 3:29-30

### **Read Ephesians 2:14-16**

4. Using a dictionary, write the definitions for "enmity" and "reconcile".

enmity –

reconcile –

5. How was the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles removed?
6. Who does the work of reconciliation?

*"The Cross is the ultimate evidence that there is no length the love of God will refuse to go in effecting reconciliation." ~ R. Kent Hughes*

**Read verses 17-18**

7. Who were far away?

Who were near?

What did they both need?

Through Jesus, what do they now have?

**Read verses 19-22**

8. Jew and Gentile believers are fellow citizens. What do the following verses say about this?

John 10:14-16

Romans 10:11-13

9. In Ephesians 2:20, Jesus Christ is the "corner stone". How is this "corner stone" described in the following verses?

Psalm 118:22-23

Isaiah 28:16

Acts 4:11-12

1 Peter 2:4-6

***Lift Your Heart...***

God used many things throughout Israel's history to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. One was the temple; God's holy dwelling among His people. God no longer lives in a dwelling of stone, but in a holy temple comprised of those who have faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. What does it mean to you personally to be a dwelling in which God lives? Record your thoughts in your journal.

***Growing Stronger...***

Look up "peace" in your concordance. Pick your four favorite verses and write them in your own words below.

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-

-

-

Why do these particular verses speak to you?

*Study Notes for Ephesians 2:11-22*


# Ephesians 3:1-13... *Divine Purpose*

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The God of eternity plans from an eternal perspective. In these verses, Paul shows that the multi-faceted wisdom of God in all its infinite variety has a purpose... for Paul, the Church, His Son, and for you!

## **Read Ephesians Chapter Three**

### **Re-read verses 1-8**

1. Read Acts 22:1-24 and see why Paul became a prisoner for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1). Would you be willing to do the same for strangers? Explain your answer.

2. How does Paul describe himself in these verses in Ephesians?

3:1

1:1 and 3:5

3:7

What do these tell you about Paul's role in God's plan?

3. What do the following verses tell you about your role in God's plan?

Matthew 28:18-20

Colossians 4:5-6

1 Peter 3:15-16

*"May the Lord give you added courage to be a witness for Him,  
even in a hard place." ~ Billy Graham*

4. What is the "mystery", or secret, in Ephesians 3:2-6?

What do you think God's purpose was in this?

**Read Ephesians 3:9-13**

5. What is the church making known?
6. Who are they making it known to? See also 1 Peter 1:12.
7. How do you think God accomplished His purpose in Jesus, His Son? (Ephesians 3:11)
8. What does Paul say Jesus accomplished for you in verse 12?
9. Paul experienced "tribulations" on behalf of the Ephesian believers. How was this to their "glory"?

### ***Lift Your Heart***

Knowing the will of God becomes clearer when we do what we already know to be His will. Based on what you have learned in this lesson about God's plan and purpose, write what you believe God's will is for you in your journal.

### ***Growing Stronger***

Explore the purpose and will of God in the following verses:

Job 42:2

Luke 4:43

Luke 7:30

John 12:27

Romans 8:28





## **Ephesians 3:14-21... *True Power and Knowledge***

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Paul was a man of prayer. The letter to the Ephesians opens with a prayer and Paul now closes his teaching on the heavenly calling of the Church with prayer. In this prayer Paul gives us an example of how to mine the riches of the Holy Spirit's power and deepen our knowledge of God's love.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Three**

#### **Re-read verses 14-15**

1. What "reason" is Paul talking about in verse 14?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you pray on your knees? What is the posture used in the following verses?  
  
Exodus 4:31  
  
1 Kings 8:22  
  
1 Kings 8:54  
  
2 Chronicles 20:18  
  
Matthew 26:39  
  
Luke 9:16
  
  
3. Who is included in the "family" of God in Ephesians 3:15?

## Read Ephesians 3:16-21

4. Consider what the following verses say about the "inner man" (or woman).

Matthew 12:35

2 Corinthians 4:16

How do these verses apply to your life?

5. What will some of your character traits be if you build your life on love as Paul prays in Ephesians 3:17?

6. As stated in John 15:5, how can you be "rooted and grounded in love"?

7. Write Ephesians 3:18-19 in your own words.

8. In what ways can you "know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge" even though you do not understand it?

*"Prayer is the link that connects us with God." ~ A. B. Simpson*

9. In what specific ways are you encouraged by verses 20-21?

### ***Lift Your Heart***

This prayer concludes the first division of this epistle; Paul ends his prayer with a "doxology". Review the deep riches you have learned about in these first three chapters of Ephesians. Now look up the word "doxology" in a dictionary and write one of your own in your journal.

### ***Growing Stronger***

There are many wonderful prayers in the Bible. Using a Bible dictionary or online resource, find some examples that can help you in your prayer life. Here are a few to get you started:

Psalm 5:1-3

Psalm 9:1,2

Psalm 27:4

Psalm 51:1-4



## **Ephesians 4:1-16... *Our Call to Unity***

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Paul begins this chapter of Ephesians with "therefore", referring back to the first three chapters. God provided for us the way of salvation, broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and is making us into a dwelling place for His Spirit. Therefore, we should live like the people we have become, the family of God.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Four**

#### **Re-read verses 1-3**

1. In verse 1, you are implored (entreated, urged, beseeched) to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. Why do you think Paul was so emphatic?
2. What are the character qualities of someone who is walking in this way?
3. In the course of a day, you may walk in many different places such as your home, work, school, church. Where do you find it most difficult to "walk in a manner worthy of your calling"? Explain your answer.
4. According to verse 3, what is the responsibility of each believer?

#### **Read verses 7-10**

5. You are part of the body of Christ. According to verse 7, in what way are you unique?

6. What do you learn in the following verses about how you are to use the gifts Christ gives you?

Romans 12:4-8

1 Corinthians 12:7,11

1 Peter 4:10

*"Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others, just as other people were given gifts for your benefit." ~ Rick Warren*

**Read verses 11-13**

7. What is the responsibility of your pastors and teachers?

In response to this, what is your responsibility? (See also Hebrews 10:23-25)

8. Do you think the maturity Paul is referring to has anything to do with age? Explain your answer.

**Read verses 14-16**

9. How does Paul describe the behavior of children?

What effect does this behavior among believers have on the unity in the church?

10. All Christians are to "speak the truth in love". Why do you think this directive has two parts?

***Lift Your Heart...***

As Christians, our relationships with other believers bring us joy and strength as well as opportunities to minister to each other. Ask God to show you ways in which you can strengthen the unity you have with Him and with your fellow believers. Make some specific plans to put those into practice, asking God to help you in your endeavors. Record your thoughts in your journal.

***Growing Stronger...***

Describe the following ways you are united with other believers in the body of Christ. Look for other verses to back up your answers.

one body

one Spirit

one hope

one Lord

one faith

one baptism

one God and Father

*Study Notes for Ephesians 4:1-16*




# **Ephesians 4:17-32... *Our Call to Holiness***

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Ephesus was a leading city of commerce and culture in the Roman Empire, as well as the home of the pagan temple of Diana. That influence made Ephesus a very wicked place, full of every conceivable form of sin. In contrast, Paul appealed to the believers to walk in holiness.

## **Read Ephesians Chapter Four**

### **Re-read verses 17-19**

1. How does Paul describe the way the Gentiles live?
2. How do you think this compares to life in present day America, among those who do not walk with Jesus?

### **Read verses 20-24**

3. Where is truth found?
4. In contrast to how you lived before coming to Jesus, what does Paul encourage you to do?
5. How can you be "renewed in the spirit of your mind"?
6. Why do you think your mind is important in this process of renewal?

**Read verses 25-32**

7. Why do you think it is important to "not let the sun go down on your anger"?
  
8. What does James 1:19-20 teach you about anger?
  
9. When a thief breaks in and steals your possessions, everyone would agree that it is wrong. What are some other ways of 'stealing' which seem to be condoned by many?

What are the benefits of working?

10. Write Ephesians 4:29 in your own words.

How could applying this eliminate the majority of life's conflicts?

*"People should leave a conversation with us having been built up and edified, with grace. The Holy Spirit is a Person... He is grieved when we tear down other believers who are also filled with Him." ~ Damian Kyle*

***Lift Your Heart...***

Paul described how we are to live after putting on our new self. Yet in Romans 7:18-19, Paul confessed that he still struggled with his flesh. Do you ever grow discouraged because of your own struggle with sin? God gave His Holy Spirit to help us. Be specific and ask God to help you gain victory over sin in your life. Record your thoughts and prayers in your journal.

***Growing Stronger...***

Re-read Ephesians 4:17-32. List below as many descriptions as you can find of the attitudes and actions of the old self and the new self.

**Old Self**

**New Self**



## **Ephesians 5:1-21... *Love, Light, and Wisdom***

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Imitating Jesus should affect every area of life. Although we cannot perfectly duplicate His character, we are called to look to Him as our model of love, light, and wisdom. With the abiding help of the Holy Spirit, we can walk in His steps.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Five**

#### **Re-read verses 1-4**

1. Using verse 2 as an example, how can you imitate Christ?
2. If possible, use the Amplified Bible to read verses 3-4. What behaviors does Paul condemn in these verses?
3. Why is thanksgiving a good alternative to these behaviors?

#### **Read verses 5-14**

4. Why will the people described in verse 5 be unable to inherit the "kingdom of Christ and God"?
5. Explain how covetousness is idolatry.

*"Envy and greed starve on a steady diet of thanksgiving." ~ Billy Graham*

6. What does it mean to “walk as children of Light”?

In what ways do you struggle with your walk in the Light?

7. In verse 11 Paul exhorts you to expose evil. How can you do this appropriately?

8. How can you walk in wisdom according to verses 15-17?

9. In consideration of the following verses, why is it important to not waste time?

Psalm 90:12

Romans 14:12

Colossians 4:5

**Read Ephesians 5:18-21**

10. How can a life filled with the Spirit be lived out in practical ways?

### ***Lift Your Heart...***

Children often try to imitate their parents. Ask God, your Father in heaven, how He would like you to imitate Him. Record His responses and your reflections in your journal.

### ***Growing Stronger...***

Paul frequently uses the analogy of "walking" for the Christian life. Explain the different ways you are encouraged to walk in the following verses:

Romans 6:4

2 Corinthians 5:7

Galatians 5:16

Ephesians 2:10

1 Thessalonians 2:12





## **Ephesians 5:21-33... *Marriage, Christ, and the Church***

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Marriage is a God-ordained institution. But more than that, it is a sacred picture of Jesus Christ and His Church. In this passage, Paul instructs husbands and wives how they are to conduct themselves in marriage. There is a richer meaning here; this also gives us an insight into the mystery of Christ's relationship with His body, the Church.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Five**

#### **Re-read verses 21-25**

1. Look up "submit" in a dictionary and write the definition:

Write the antonym:

2. How does verse 21 set the tone for this passage?
3. What makes it difficult for you to yield to someone else's wants and needs instead of your own?

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit,  
but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

~ Philippians 2:3 NKJV

4. Paul instructs wives to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord". What does it mean to submit to the Lord?

5. How can you grow in your submission to the Lord?
  
6. If possible, read verse 22 in the Amplified Bible. In what ways can wives be subject to their husbands as the Church is subject to Christ?

**Read verses 25-33**

7. Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. In what ways has Christ loved the Church?
  
8. How does the Word of God wash you?
  
9. What does a godly marriage show you about Christ?

How should this affect the way husbands and wives treat one another?

10. What is the correlation between love and respect in...  
...marriage?  
  
... Christ and the Church?

### ***Lift Your Heart...***

In every relationship there are hurts and disappointments. Is there a wound in your heart inflicted by someone you love? Tell Jesus about it in your journal, confessing your part in the situation. Then prayerfully consider how you will reconcile with that person, and if God leads, go to them.

### ***Growing Stronger...***

Paul refers to the "body" often in his writings. Using the following verses, explain how you are a part of the body of Christ and/or how Christ is a part of you.

Romans 7:4

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Corinthians 12:13

1 Corinthians 12:27

2 Corinthians 4:10

Ephesians 1:22-23



## **Ephesians 6:1-9... *Relationships in Christ***

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Paul instructed the believers in Ephesus how they are to walk in submission to one another out of reverence to Christ. This is essential in our relationships with others. We are to be set apart, different from the rest of the world.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Six**

#### **Re-read verses 1-4**

1. What do you think "in the Lord" means?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the promise for children who obey and honor their parents?

As a child of God, how can you apply this to your life?

3. In what ways do you think parents can provoke their children to anger?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How is living out your faith a key ingredient in the parenting process?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Whether or not you are a parent, you are a role model for others. Should this affect how you live? Explain your answer.

**Read verses 5-9**

6. Whether at home, at a job, or as a volunteer, describe in what manner you are to work.

7. Define "eyeservice".

*"The true test of a man's (or woman's) character is what he does when no one is looking." ~ John Wooden*

8. Who are you working for?

How should this affect what you do and how you do it?

9. As an employer, manager, or leader, how are you to treat those you oversee?

Why?

10. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What influence does God's Word have in your relationships with others?

### ***Lift Your Heart...***

At times we might grow discouraged or frustrated with the work we do, especially when we receive no thanks or recognition for it. Remember, it is God we are serving. Write a prayer in your journal thanking God for all the opportunities He has given you. Ask Him for the strength to do all for His glory.

### ***Growing Stronger...***

Ephesians 2:8-9 says you are saved by grace, and not by the works you do. Yet we are rewarded for the work we do for the Lord. What do the following verses say about rewards?

Psalm 19:7-11

Proverbs 11:18

Proverbs 25:21-22

Jeremiah 17:10

Matthew 5:11-12

1 Corinthians 3:11-14

Colossians 3:23-24

Revelation 22:12

*Study Notes for Ephesians 6:1-9*




## Ephesians 6:10-24... *Spiritual Warfare*

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Paul begins this section with "finally", but as with many teachers, it doesn't mean he is actually finished teaching. What follows is one of the most important passages in the Bible, teaching us how to be successful in the spiritual battles we face. This world is not our home; sometimes it is a hostile environment. It is essential for us to be armed and ready for the battle.

### **Read Ephesians Chapter Six**

#### **Re-read verses 10-13**

1. When it comes to spiritual warfare, whose strength are you to fight in?

Why do you think this is important?

2. According to verse 12, what are you struggling against?

In what specific ways do you see this struggle in your own life?

3. Why do you need the "full armor of God"?

4. What does it mean to "stand firm"?

*"If you are a Christian, you are at war. But our approach to spiritual warfare usually falls into one of two extremes - either we place an undue emphasis on Satan and his powers or we completely ignore the existence of a personal enemy."*

~ Chip Ingram

**Read verses 14-17**

5. Describe the "full armor of God" you are to wear:

for your loins (waist) –

for your torso –

for your feet –

your defensive weapon –

for your head –

your offensive weapon –

6. Are there pieces of armor that you neglect to "put on"? Explain your answer.

How can you remedy this?

**Read verses 18-24**

7. Write verse 18 in your own words.

8. Why is prayer an essential component in spiritual warfare?

9. Summarize what the following verses teach about prayer:

Matthew 26:41

Luke 18:1

Romans 8:26-27

Philippians 4:6

10. Why is it important to follow up a prayer request with a praise report?

***Lift Your Heart...***

Paul instructs us to "pray at all times". But sometimes, in the midst of life's struggles, it can be the last thing we think of. Some lament, "I guess all I can do is pray." Prayer is powerful! Prayer is necessary! Ask God to help you remember to pray first. Commit to keeping a record in your journal of His answers.

***Growing Stronger...***

Having been made alive in Christ through the riches of God's grace, you are a citizen of heaven! However, you still live in a fallen world. What do you learn in the following verses about this world and its ruler?

John 15:18-19

John 16:33

James 4:7

1 Peter 5:8-9

John 12:31



