

# Ephesians

## Listed Scriptures

Ephesians

## Lesson Aim

- 1) To re-examine our faith and standing with Christ.
- 2) To renew our spiritual life so we may live to give glory to God.
- 3) To walk in unity and obedience to His good will.

## Memory Verse

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”  
(Eph 4:4-6)

## Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Eph 1-6

## B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



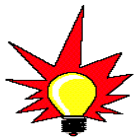
Ephesians was written around 61 AD while Paul was a prisoner in Rome (Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Written mainly to the gentile converts that formed the core of the Ephesian church, Paul sought to further explain the wonders of the salvation given by our Lord Jesus Christ and shed light on the mystery of the Gospel.

Though Paul was not able to visit and pastor the church in Ephesus, he instructed, taught and encouraged the believers through a letter that Tychicus delivered—the epistle of Ephesians. During his life, Paul was able to fully utilize times of imprisonment to continue pastoring the churches. The letters to Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse and Philemon were written during his imprisonment in Rome. Subsequently, these letters were grouped and collectively known as the Prison Epistles. After his release, Paul traveled and wrote letters to Timothy and Titus before he was arrested again. It was this second imprisonment that led to another letter to Timothy and ulti-

mately his martyrdom in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero.

The book of Ephesians is also called the “Joshua of the New Testament.” While there are many parallels in the teachings between the two books, the main similarity lies in their central theme: receiving the promised inheritance. The book of Joshua records how the chosen people obtained the promised land of Canaan, while the epistle of Ephesians describes how a believer receives the heavenly inheritance.

## W A R M U P



Often when we live in a comfortable and relaxed environment, we tend to let complacency get a hold of us. When we allow our spirituality to slacken, even our precious memories—those of how we came to know God and all the blessings and graces He has given us—become distant memories.

While everybody enjoys feasts during times of abundance, few people take time to retrace the origin of those blessings. We know that all the wonderful things in our lives have been given to us by God. So while we bask in the glow of God’s blessings, we must question ourselves: Do we practice our faith and live a life that demonstrates a true appreciation for what God has given us? God gives us a chance to become His masterpiece so that we may glorify Him and benefit the people around us. It would be a pity if we gave up this opportunity. Have we forgotten that we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that we may declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness and into His wonderful light”? (1 Pet 2:9). Do we know our true value and standing with Christ?

## B I B L E S T U D Y



### Part 1 Overview

Ephesus was once a leading center in the Roman Empire in terms of cultural, political, and commercial influence. Located on the western coast of Asia Minor (mod-

ern day Turkey), it offered easy accessibility to the river Cayster and the Aegean Sea. Its mild climate and lush valleys gave the region a reputation for luxury and pleasure. However, the city of Ephesus was primarily known as a center of religion.

Even though Ephesus was located in Asia and heavily influenced by the Greeks and Romans. It was the guardian city of one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world: the Temple of Artemis. The temple for the Greek goddess Artemis (Roman name Diana) was built with 127 grand columns. Standing tall at a height of almost 80 feet, each depicted kings standing on top of one other. Even though this magnificent building was destroyed before Paul’s visit, a dedicated group of Artemis worshippers remained. Paul paid a short visit here while returning to Antioch from his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-22). It was during his third missionary journey that Paul stayed three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31).

During Paul’s first visit, a big riot erupted when a silversmith named Demetrius caused an uproar over loss of business (Acts 19:23-41) because people who had turned to Christ no longer worshiped the great Ephesian goddess Artemis. It was in this city that a great number of sorcerers were converted (Acts 19:17-20), and where many miracles took place (Acts 19:11-12). Here, the twelve followers of John the Baptist were baptized. Afterwards, Paul laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Unlike the books of Romans, and First and Second Corinthians, the letter to the Ephesians did not raise any serious problems within the church. Yet Paul warned the church leaders to be wary of the infiltration of false teachings. At the completion of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:13-35), Paul met with the Ephesian elders at the coastal town of Miletus. Paul told them to be on guard against both the wolves from outside and fallen believers from the inside; these would try to lead the members away by teaching perverse things. Some speculate that this concern was one of the main reasons that motivated Paul to write this letter.

In the book of Revelation, the Ephesian church was complimented for its determination in preventing false teachers and teachings from creeping into the church (Rev 2:2). However, one thing against them was that they failed to maintain their first love for Jesus Christ (Rev 2:4). In 1 Timothy 1:5, Paul encouraged Timothy (who was in Ephesus then) that the “purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” The theme and message of love had to be stressed over and over again to the believers in Ephesus. One interesting side-note is that out of the 107 times Paul used the word “love” in all his epistles, 19 of them are found in this little epistle to the Ephesians. The letter begins

with love (1:4, 6) and ends with love (6:23-24).

The book of Ephesians is similar in content to the book of Colossians, which suggests that both letters were written during the same imprisonment in Rome. Both emphasize justification by faith (2:8). The first half of the epistle (chapters 1 to 3) addresses the central doctrines of the Christian faith as well as the position of Christians as a whole. The second half (chapters 4 to 6) describes how to take these truths and apply them into Christian living. No matter how diverse our backgrounds, we all need to be joined together in Christ. The second half follows with the discussion of spiritual battles that one may encounter when living out Christ-like lives.



## Part 2

### Bible Study of Ephesians



#### A. Greetings & Salutations (Ch 1:1–3)

Paul praised the saints in Ephesus for being faithful to Christ Jesus. He also mentioned that the Lord Jesus had blessed them in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. By Paul's praises and thanksgiving to God, we can sense that he really missed the Ephesian church.



#### B. Grace in Christ

##### a. Eternal Blessings

###### i. Son-ship (1:4-10)

In accordance with His good will and pleasure, God chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ. It is therefore the prerogative and sovereign will of the Adopter and a privilege for us, the adoptee. Such blessing is indeed priceless!

###### ii. Heavenly Inheritance (1:11-14)

Other than becoming God's children, believers ought to believe in the truth and be marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit, which is a guarantee of our heavenly inheritance, and ultimate glory.

##### b. Spiritual Wisdom (1:15-23)

In this passage Paul describes his intercessory prayer. He asks that God, our

glorious Father, may give the members at Ephesus the spirit of wisdom and revelation. This is so that they may know Him better and clearly recognize God's incomparable power and authority as the church's supreme ruler. Likewise, we ought to pray for spiritual wisdom in order to gain a better understanding and knowledge of God, and daily renew our love and committed allegiance to Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 9:24 says, "But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord."

##### c. Grace of Salvation

###### i. Dead in Sins (2:1-3)

Prior to being saved, we lived under the rule of Satan: we followed our fleshly desires and thoughts and gratified the constant cravings of our sinful nature. In the sight of God we were regarded as the sons of wrath, dead in transgression and unqualified for His kindness.

###### ii. After Receiving Grace (2:4-22)

However, due to His great and immense love for us, God delivered us from death to let us know that we can be saved through faith in Him—not by our own works. Through Jesus' precious blood and the Holy Spirit, we who were formerly gentiles and spiritually separated from Christ can now become members of God's household. We are joined together and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. We are all familiar with the expressions "You reap what you sow" and "There is no free lunch." In this life, we learn that we get out of life what we put into it. If we want something, there is always a price to be paid. Thankfully, God does not hold us to this standard. For God declared, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways" (Isa 55:8). God does not demand much from us. As long as we are willing to believe, His salvation will come to us.

By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called and went to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, even though he did not know where he was going (Heb 11:8). By faith, Abraham offered his son Isaac (Heb 11:17). By faith, Moses chose to pass up the pleasures of sin and instead suffered for the sake of Christ (Heb 11:24-29). In contrast, what have we done by faith? Understand that faith is being hopeful in the unrealized, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

#### d. Share in the Mystery and Love of Christ

##### i. Mystery in Christ (3:1-13)

This passage unveils a mystery previously unknown. This mystery is that through the gospel the gentiles are made heirs together with Israel, becoming members of one body and the same partakers in the promise of our Lord Christ Jesus. Paul became a servant of this gospel and a preacher to the gentiles. Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God will be made known, thereby opening the door of salvation to the gentiles.

##### ii. Love of Christ (3:14-21)

The love of God is beyond measure. God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask for or imagine. Paul also prayed for the believers to be strengthened in the Lord not to lose courage just because Paul was in prison. He exhorted the believers to always be rooted and grounded in love, in order to bring glory to Christ.

There is no denying the enormous challenges we face in preaching to the people of this day and age. The prosperity of society and personal achievements reinforce humans' belief in their own ability. Gradually God's existence becomes irrelevant. However, we cannot use all these trends as excuses not to preach. After all, it's our Christian duty to preach in and out of season. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship" (1 Cor 9:16-17). At the end of the day, it is the love of Christ that will compel us (2 Cor 5:14) and dictate our motivation to do His work.

### C. Sainly Conduct

#### a. Corporate Living (4:1-16)

This passage lays down guidelines for Christians living corporately, as in and with the church. The church is the body of Christ and we, the believers, are her individual members. We ought to strive to be joined and held together, growing and building the body up in love, as each member does its work. This is emphasized in verses 2-3: "With all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." For we all belong to the same body sharing in one Spirit, one faith, and one baptism. Every believer ought to utilize his/her own God-given gift to help one another grow in faith, wisdom, character, and love.

#### b. Personal Living

##### i. Do not imitate the gentiles (4:17-32)

We need to put off our old self, which is full of corruption and deceitful desires. We can no longer give ourselves over to lustful gratification, lying, thievery, and unwholesome talk. This means getting rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Then, besides being made new in the attitude of our minds and putting on the new self, we are created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Also, being kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as how Christ forgave us. The Greek word for "new" does not refer to something that is the most recent or the latest thing. Instead, the word refers to something having a different quality or nature. Thus, our new nature is the new humanity created in Christ Jesus.

To be united is to be strong. We also know the adage "unity is strength." Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us that "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." The church is a spiritual body, one that wields the most power when working as one unit or body. Victory or defeat is not immediately determined in a long and drawn-out spiritual warfare. Hence, we need to watch out for each other and support one another by extending timely help. As Joab, the commander of David's army, said to his brother Abishai when fighting the Ammonites and Syrians, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you" (2 Sam 10:11). If there are differences in opinion, do not turn hostile and let it become an argument. Instead, be tender-hearted and accommodating to bring everyone together in peace. Do not let Satan use it to turn us against each other.

This letter details many Christian beliefs in real life settings. Clearly the Bible is not just a Jewish history book, nor is it simply a book on moral codes. The Bible contains numerous practical daily teachings about life. Abiding by such teachings will ensure an endless supply of blessings for us. From Paul's epilogue, one recognizes that Christian life does not end on a note of morality, but of warfare. Nevertheless, upright moral living does lay the essential groundwork for a triumphant spiritual life. Only when we live godly lives at home, at school, in our neighborhood, at church, etc., and depend on God will we be able to stand firm.

- ii. Imitate Christ (5:1-21)  
Remember that Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. How? By having nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, and instead bearing the fruit of light—goodness, righteousness and truth. We need to make the best use of our time, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. By doing so, we distinguish and set apart ourselves as holy from the unbelievers. We should never doubt the goodness of God. Only when we stop our doubting will our trust and faith in Him grow because we realize that God is indeed full of goodness and worth all our worship!

**c. Family Living**

- i. Between Husband & Wife (5:22-33)  
Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies, much as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord.
- ii. Children & Parents (6:1-4)  
Children should obey parents in the Lord, for this is right. Parents are not to exasperate their children; instead, they must bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. A godly family is one of the key factors in the growth and prosperity of the church.
- iii. Masters & Bondservants (6:5-9)  
Bondservants ought to obey their earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as obeying Christ. They ought to serve wholeheartedly, as if they were serving the Lord, not men. Masters should treat their bondservants in the same way. Masters should not threaten their bondservants, since masters and bondservants have the same master in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. Both bondservants and masters need to practice restraint and show each other proper respect.

Paul’s main emphasis in this passage is to show the readers the duty of those who are in authority. Husbands are to imitate Christ. Parents should not provoke their children to wrath. Masters are not to threaten their bondservants. What Paul wants to get across to us is that serving is more important than being in authority over others. Serving is a privilege and we can learn to have a healthy attitude of service in our Lord Jesus. Paul wrote in Philippians 2:5-8, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and

became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

Jesus did not use His privilege and authority as God to boss around and lord over men; instead He humbled and emptied Himself to be a servant for us all. We also read in John 13:12-16 about Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. This is a task that is supposed to be reserved for the lowliest servant of the household. Although Jesus, as God’s Son, could demand obedience from all of us, He did this first to be our example. Thus, we must all the more strive to be obedient in our walk with Him. A lot of times, we tend to allow our emotions and feelings to control or dictate our minds and make decisions for us. This is a recipe for a precarious and disastrous Christian life! We must instead have a spirit-filled and spiritually renewed mind and a steadfast will to help us make godly decisions in this tumultuous stage of our lives. Daniel, for example, purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine that he drank (Dan 1:8).

 **D. Epilogue**

**a. Spiritual Warfare**

- i. The Adversary (6:10-12)  
Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- ii. Spiritual Armor (6:13-18)  
“Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, you must take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Above all, we need to pray in the Spirit in all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests, so that we may be alert and always keep praying for all the saints.”

Paul encourages the members in Ephesus to equip themselves with the spiritual armor of God so that they may withstand the attacks of Satan. At the same time, he also asks the members to pray for him so that whenever he opens his mouth, words may be given to him and he will fearlessly make known the mys-

tery of the gospel (19). Likewise, as believers we must not neglect to support our preachers who are constantly in the spiritual battle-front by praying for them.

**b. Consolation & Benediction (6:21 – 24)**

Paul asked Tychicus to relay how he is doing and give them his blessings so the believers may be encouraged.

**c. Conclusion**

The book of Ephesians centers on the theme of the church as the body of Christ and the how-to in applying these church-related teachings in our lives. There is only one body. The Lord's church must not be divided, as our body parts cannot be divided. The concurrent growth of each part will contribute to church growth and development. We must be diligent to take to heart the principles outlined here regarding church living, family living, and personal living. The church symbolizes the bride of Jesus Christ. Hence, the church must be properly adorned at all times and be ready for the groom's arrival. May we regularly prune ourselves so we are mature to help out the church with our special talents and be prepared to see Jesus Christ.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



- 1 How did Paul use the husband and wife analogy to explain the relationship of Christ and the church?
- 2 What is the full armor of God?
- 3 What do you think it means in Ephesians 4:22 to put off the old self?
- 4 Describe the differences between wisdom and intelligence. Give an example as a contrast and comparison.

## LIFE APPLICATION

### *The Armor of God*



As Christians, we need to wear the full armor of God in order to fight the good fight. The following are testimonies that deal with each part of the armor of God.

**1. Gird Your Waist with Truth (Eph 6:14)**

A newly believing sister was taught the Ten Commandments. As a result, she began to be extra careful in keeping the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shall not steal." At work, she would not use the company's phone or the photocopier for personal use. At home, she refused to use any illegal software. Even when eating out, she would not take extra napkins home from McDonald's.

One summer she took her son to the shopping mall. He saw a dollar bill on the ground and asked her, "Whose money is this?" She told him that it didn't belong to anyone and that he could keep it. As soon as her son picked up the money, she felt a burning sensation in her head. She began to feel very uncomfortable and wondered if this was the Holy Spirit rebuking her, so she told her son to put the dollar bill down.

The following week she went to another shopping mall and saw another dollar bill. Her son saw it and again asked who it belonged to. She gave him the same reply and immediately felt the burning pain again. She began to wonder if this was the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

A month later she learned from her child's RE lesson that the Eighth Commandment in the children's Bible says, "You shall not take what is not yours." This is the simplest explanation of "Do not steal": do not take what does not belong to you. After realizing this, the sister knew that this is what the Lord requires of us—to uphold the truth in all circumstances.

**2. Put On the Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph 6:14)**

Since he was a child, Thomas has known that Saturday is Sabbath, the day of rest established by God. His parents and RE teachers had made it clear to him that he should always try his best to separate this holy day to remember the graces of God and draw closer to Him. He also knows that keeping the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments. For as long as he can remember, he has always avoided activi-

ties on Sabbath; all his non-church friends know that that he is unable to hang out with them on Saturday.

During winter break, one of Thomas' good friends won an all-expense paid ski package for four at a nice resort. His friends were excited and wanted Thomas join them. "Come on, it's only one time. We'll never have an opportunity like this. I'm sure God won't mind if you miss it just once," exclaimed one friend. Another questioned Thomas, "Why do you insist on going to church on Saturday? Isn't it the heart that matters? Going to church is just a ritual. Look, there's so many Christians who go to church every week, but they still cheat people and are a bunch of hypocrites; so going to church won't make you a better person." Even his Christian friend chimed in, "I know that keeping the Sabbath is a big deal for you, but we're not in the Old Testament anymore. Paul said in Romans 14 that it doesn't matter which day you worship God, because the important thing is that you do it every day. So why not come out with us this Saturday? You can think and praise God while you go down the slopes. You know us, we never do anything bad; it's not like we drink, do drugs, or party. This weekend we're going snowboarding. We have this great free package that can only be used this weekend. Everything's paid for and our parents are fine with it, we're just missing one thing: that's you. Come on, come with us. You have every day to worship God, but only this one time to hang out with your best friends."

Upon hearing this, Thomas didn't know how to respond. However, two verses that he memorized a while back popped up in his mind. One was in John 14:21, where Lord Jesus had said that those who love Him will keep His commandments. The other was from Isaiah 58:13-14, where it is written that if you refrain from trampling the Sabbath by pursuing your own interests or your own affairs, but instead delight and honor the holy day of the Lord, God will bless you. Keeping the Sabbath is a commandment of God. If he did go and enjoy the weekend, he'd have to justify it so his conscience would not bother him. But if he did that, who knows what else he might do in the future?

He had seen many of his church friends stop coming to church. It always started with something small and harmless: a recital, SAT prep classes, field trips, sporting events, AP exams. Gradually they all became too busy to come to service. Eventually, even if they weren't that busy, they would rather rest at home. He did not want that to happen to him.

Thomas realized that he had to stand firm to the word of God and not let his own thoughts twist it. After thinking about it, Thomas told his friends that he really had

to keep the Sabbath. If he doesn't, then God would be displeased with him, and that would defeat the whole purpose of being a Christian.

As a result, Thomas' friends never asked him out to do anything again. Although Thomas felt sad because he missed out on a great opportunity to bond with his friends, he felt joyful that he was able to do what was right. He guarded his heart by holding fast to the teachings of the Bible.

### **3. Shod Your Feet with the Gospel of Peace (Eph 6:15)**

In 1981, after an unfruitful missionary effort in Nigeria, a few True Jesus Church preachers were heading back home and transiting through Liberia. While waiting for their flight in Liberia, they decided to pass out all of the flyers they had on hand at the airport. One person, who had taken and read the flyer, wrote to the church to express interest in the gospel. This opened the way for subsequent missionary trips, leading to the establishment of churches in that country. As of today, there are more than 300 believers in Liberia.

One African sister saw a vision of Lord Jesus on the cross. When she saw how much the Lord had suffered and all the blood that He shed, she cried sorrowfully and asked, "Lord, what can I do for you?" Lord Jesus said to her, "You must preach for me."

### **4. Take the Shield of Faith (Eph 6:16)**

There was a sister who was taught a lesson about faith through a dream. In her dream she was cornered by two thugs. As they slowly closed in on her, she felt helpless and lost, so she started to pray to the Lord. Suddenly a man in white garments appeared. He took her hand and brought her into the clouds until they came into the wilderness. There, He sat her on a rock. A voice said, "Trust in the Lord and you shall be delivered." A streak of light flashed up into the sky. She looked at her hands which this man had just held and saw that they were dripping with blood. The dream was explained to her: Jesus had suffered and died for us; He shed His blood for the remission of our sins. God would like us to appreciate this and have faith in Him.

### **5. Take the Helmet of Salvation (Eph 6:17)**

Around 320 AD, Emperor Licinius ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Since his rival, Emperor Constantine, openly tolerated Christianity, Licinius sought to eliminate the Christians for fear of treason in his ranks. He issued an edict banning all Christian practices and forced all his subjects to offer a sacrifice to the Roman gods.

It was during winter in the small, remote Armenian city of Sebaste, that forty soldiers were found to be Christian. When they were commanded to carry out this new order, they refused to obey. As a result, they were stripped naked and brought to the center of a frozen lake to freeze to death. If they simply renounced their beliefs, they would be immediately released. A hot bath of water was kept on the shore to tempt them.

When night came upon them, one gave in to the cold and denied his faith, leaving the 39 men to freeze to death. It was then that one of the guards on the shore saw a vision. He saw a host of angels appear. The angels laid a crown of life on the heads of those who perished for their faith as a chorus sang, "Forty martyrs, forty crowns." Suddenly, he saw one crown left hanging in mid-air. It appeared that this last crown belonged to the soldier that forsook his faith. The guard then said to the soldier, "If you had seen what I had seen tonight, you would never have forsaken your crown. Come, I will take your place and your crown will be mine." Without a thought, the guard immediately took off his clothes and joined the 39 men on the frozen lake. Ironically, according to popular tradition, the man who gave up his crown died the moment he entered the hot tub waiting for him—the temperature difference between the frozen lake and the hot tub was so great that he died of shock.

These 40 soldiers were willing to give up their lives for the sake of the truth because they knew that a crown of life awaited them. Likewise, in times of tribulation, we must always look towards our salvation that awaits us, and draw strength from that helmet of salvation.

#### **6. Take the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God (Eph 6:17)**

For as long as anyone can remember, Tatiana has always been a social butterfly. As a sophomore in high school, she is known for being extremely outgoing and friendly. Tatiana has also made it a point to make her belief in God as much a part of her personality as her social skills. As a result, Tatiana also has a reputation as a fervent Christian. Lately though, standing firm in her faith has become increasingly difficult. Most of Tatiana's good friends on the field hockey team have started drinking and partying on the weekends.

One day after practice, Ellen, a senior varsity team captain and one of the most popular girls in the school, gives Tatiana a personal invitation to a party at her house on Saturday night. Without thinking, Tatiana accepts Ellen's offer. During Sabbath service that week, all Tatiana can think about is the party. She knows that underage drinking is not only dangerous, but it is against God's will. She still

remembers the verse from 1 Peter 4:3 that her RE teacher purposefully drilled into her before she started her freshman year of high school: "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries." Still, Tatiana can't help but think that if she bails out on Ellen, she'll be treated as an outcast by her team. And if she goes, she'll look like a fool if she's the only one not drinking. In fact, will she even be able to resist drinking in the first place? Before service ends, Tatiana finds Lisa, her best friend in Christ, and tells her about the party. Lisa suggests that Tatiana come over to her house instead. She gently reminds Tatiana of the pact they had made to live by 2 Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Thank God.

#### **Questions to think about:**

1. How can we gird our waist with truth so that we will always do what is right and pleasing in the eyes of God?
2. "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20). What does it mean to "exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees"? How can a breastplate of righteousness guard our hearts against spiritual decline?
3. Have you passed out flyers to people before? How did you feel? Have you spoken to your friends or non-believing family members and relatives about Jesus Christ? If not, why?
4. A shield is used to protect us from harm. How can faith act as a shield? How does the death of the Lord Jesus help us in our faith?
5. The 40 soldiers were willing to give up their lives for the sake of the truth because they knew that a crown of life awaited them. Would you be willing to give up your life for the sake of the truth?
6. The word of God is an effective weapon we have in fighting off temptations. However, like a sword, you must be skilled at using it to be effective. How have you trained yourself with the word of God so that you may become a master swordsman?





*Sing hymn 168: Onward, Christian Soldiers*  
 We are the Lord's soldiers fighting this spiritual warfare together with Him. In order to fight it effectively we need to protect ourselves with the full armor of God. Wherever we go in life, whatever we do, we need to ensure that we bring the truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, salvation and the word of God with us. Only by doing so will we be thoroughly equipped and well-prepared to fight this spiritual fight. May the Lord bless each one of us so that we will be strong Christian soldiers.

## Lesson 6

# Philippians

### Listed Scriptures

Philippians; Acts 16:6-40

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To rejoice in the midst of adversity.
- 2) To imitate Jesus Christ.
- 3) To prioritize God as first in our lives.

### Memory Verse

"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ." (Phil 3:8)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Phil 1-4

## BIBLE BACKGROUND



Paul wrote this epistle while first imprisoned in Rome, circa 62 AD. The church in Philippi was abundant in love and often supplied Paul's missionary needs. Upon hearing of his arrest, the Philippians gathered money and other necessities and sent them to Paul. Epaphroditus delivered the Philippians' gifts but fell ill, either along the way or while in Rome. Upon recovery, he was sent back to Philippi and delivered this letter from Paul.

The church in Philippi was the first established in the province of Macedonia, and thus, in Europe. During his second missionary journey, Paul left Troas in the province of Asia and traveled to Macedonia in response to a vision from God (Acts 16:8-10). Normally Paul and Silas would preach at the local synagogue, but apparently none was established in Philippi because they went outside the city gate to find the prayer gathering. This indicates the Jewish population was slight at that