

# *Bible Study Guide for New Believers*



## *Book of Ephesians*

New Believer's Bible Study Guide Resource

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## About the Authors

This guide is written by a married couple that wishes to remain anonymous.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ asked us to write this guide together to help new believers understand the Book of Ephesians.

We pray that this guide will be useful to you in understanding God's truth.

## ***Preface***

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16, ESV)*

The Bible has promised blessings to believers, who read, meditate upon and apply its timeless truth and wisdom. This is a Bible study guide that is designed to instill daily habits of prayer, meditation on the word and life application. It is our prayer that this guide be used to build up believers everywhere for the work that needs to be done for the kingdom of God.

# **Book of Ephesians**

## **Introduction**

The letter the Ephesians was written by Paul to the believers in Ephesus. This city was located in what is known today as Turkey. This letter to the Ephesian church defines not only the plan of salvation but also the plan for unity of all believers in Christ.

## **Ephesians 1**

### **Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-14)**

1. As believers, we are considered God's holy people. We have been blessed by God the Father and Jesus Christ with spiritual blessings.
2. The spiritual blessings that are mentioned include being adopted into the family of God, the grace of God, the redemption of the unbeliever's soul and the forgiveness of sins.
3. God has gifted to us His grace, which is His unmerited favor. God's unmerited favor was not given in a small amount; it was given in abundance so that the unbeliever could be a partaker of both the family and promises of God.
4. A question remains; why did God give unmerited favor (grace) to those who did not deserve it? The answer is this: God chose to do so.
5. In giving us the gift of grace, God:
  - a. Demonstrated his love toward us (John 3:16)
  - b. Gave salvation to humanity through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8)
  - c. Exalted the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil 2:6-11)
  - d. Caused his name to be glorified eternally (Eph 1:12)

6. Paul then talks about predestination. This has been a topic of debate in Christianity. Predestination states that God is omniscient (all knowing) and knows the ultimate destination (whether to eternal heaven or hell) of every individual soul. We believe that the predestination of God (especially in regards to salvation) is this: God gave the gift of grace to all of humanity in the hope that all humanity would accept his gracious offer of salvation and eternal life (Titus 2:11). God wishes that all men be saved and that none should choose to go to hell (2 Peter 3:9). However, there will be members of humanity who choose to reject this offer (Heb. 10:29) and God ultimately knows who they are as well.
7. When one becomes saved through hearing and believing the message of the truth (of the Gospel) we are made a part of Christ. We are also marked by the Holy Spirit to be identified as one with Christ.
8. The Holy Spirit seals (or marks) the believing person. This is the believer's guarantee that Christ will come again and fulfill the promise of redemption of His people.

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer (Ephesians 1:15-23)**

1. We should give thanks to God that we are in a community of believers who pray for one another.
2. We, as believers, can ask (from God) for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in reading and understanding God's word.
3. The three things that we should be enlightened about as believers are:
  - a. The hope to which we have been called.
  - b. The riches of the inheritance of the people of God.
  - c. The incomparable power of God.
4. The hope to which we have been called is a hope of an eternal future that can never be taken away from us as God's people. This is the hope of an eternal future in heaven.
5. The riches of the glorious inheritance of God's people refer to the glories of heaven. The glories of heaven are so great that they will outweigh the suffering we have endured as human beings here on this earth (1 Pet. 5:10, Rom. 2:7, 2 Cor. 4:17).

6. The incomparable power of God refers to how God was able to raise Jesus Christ from the dead. The same power is working on our behalf as believers when we go through life and we face difficult circumstances.
  
7. Jesus Christ is also (through the same power of God) exalted to have a seat at the right hand of God the Father. The power of God has exalted Jesus above every name forever. Not only is our Lord Jesus Christ exalted above all at the right hand of the Father, He is also the head of the church who is (figuratively speaking) the body of Christ who are empowered to do His will here on this earth.

## Ephesians 2

### Made Alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10)

1. Being a sinful person means that you are dead (spiritually speaking). When a person becomes born again, they are given a new life (also called being born again, See John 3:3-8).
2. When we were dead in our sin, we were ruled by the kingdom of Satan.
3. The kingdom of Satan forces those who are underneath his rule to do the things that are sinful. Every human being has at one time been ruled by the kingdom of Satan.
4. However, being subjects of the kingdom of Satan, we were enemies of the kingdom of God. We deserved punishment for being an enemy of the kingdom of God.
5. God should have punished us for our allegiance to the kingdom of Satan. He would have been righteous in declaring punishment for all those who were underneath the kingdom of Satan. But we see that God showed us His mercy and did not punish us as we deserved.
6. God has made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in our sins. This gift of unmerited favor from God is called grace. This gift of grace through God has saved us from eternal punishment and damnation.
7. God also resurrected us from our spiritual death. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we have been raised with Him. In addition, we have been seated with Jesus Christ, which shows how our status has changed from being enemies to God to having a place of honor in His home.
8. All that we have read was done so that in the future, God the Father will show how extensive His grace was to us. His grace was so extensive that God the Father was willing to allow Jesus Christ to be crucified so that we may have eternal life.
9. In addition the grace that was extended to us was not because of anything we deserved. It was a gift that was given to us through our faith in how Jesus Christ saved us from our sins.
10. There is nothing that we could have done or performed that could have earned us this great gift of grace; it was freely given.
11. God has created us as His people who have been saved through Jesus Christ to do His will, which He has already planned for us to do.

### **Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22)**

1. Paul was speaking to the Gentiles in this section (a Gentile is one who is not Jewish by birth).
2. A Gentile in the Old Testament was at a serious spiritual disadvantage compared to someone who was Jewish.
  - a. A Gentile was separated from Christ due to their birth status.
  - b. A Gentile was denied citizenship in the nation of Israel.
  - c. A Gentile was excluded from the Abrahamic covenant of promise.
  - d. A Gentile had no hope of salvation could not possibly hope to know God on their own.
3. Jesus Christ changed the spiritual status of the Gentiles.
  - a. Jesus Christ has given the Gentile peace with God.
  - b. Jesus Christ has given unity to both Jew and Gentile so both of them are considered his people.
  - c. Jesus Christ has destroyed the barrier of special status that the Jewish people enjoyed.
  - d. Jesus Christ has set aside The Law (the ritualistic and ceremonial regulations that were given to the Jewish people) and has freed both Gentile and Jew from it's demands.
  - e. Jesus Christ has reconciled the Jew and Gentile through His sacrifice on the cross. (Eph. 2:15-16)
4. Jesus Christ came and preached the Gospel of peace (the salvation of mankind) to all of humanity. Both Jew and Gentile are given free access to God the Father through Jesus Christ.
5. After we have accepted God's gracious offer of salvation, we are no longer strangers to God but are also citizens and members of God's family.
6. All of God's people (in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile) are compared to stones that are being used to make a building (2 Peter 2:4-5). The building symbolically represents the entirety of all humanity who have chosen to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of this building's foundation (meaning that Jesus Christ is the most important aspect of this building). The Apostles and Prophets also helped make up the rest of the foundation on which the building (the entirety of God's people) could be built.
7. Jesus Christ is not only the cornerstone but also the architect of this building. The whole temple of God is constructed (figuratively speaking) underneath his direction in unity. The completed building (meaning the universal unity of all believers) becomes a glorious dwelling in which the Holy Spirit can reside and perform his work here on Earth.

## Ephesians 3

### God's Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1-13)

1. Paul was given the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles.
2. To perform this responsibility to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, Paul was given grace to understand the mystery of salvation.
3. The Gospel of salvation was considered a mystery, especially to the believers in the Old Testament. What was once hidden to generations past was now revealed by the Holy Spirit to God's messengers (Apostles and Prophets). The implication is here clear: Paul would not be able to carry out this responsibility from God without God's grace. As New Testament believers, we also have a responsibility to spread the Gospel to those around us, just as Paul was given grace and wisdom to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentile world.
4. The mystery of the Gospel is that the Gentiles (who we have previously read about), are now part of the same promises that the children of Israel were given. In addition, both Jew and Gentile are part of the same family.
5. Paul became a tireless worker for God in proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul acknowledged that it was through the power of God's grace that he was able to perform this task. The lesson for the modern believer is this: when God's purpose must be done through you, God will give you the grace to complete His purpose.
6. God, has now chosen this time period in history to make plain the mystery of salvation for all humanity. This was accomplished through the church. The revealed mystery of salvation showed the wisdom of God in how He set into motion the plan to save both Jew and Gentile alike into one family. God revealed the mystery of salvation and His wisdom to not only humanity but to also the host of heaven (Luke 15:10).
7. The entire plan of salvation was accomplished through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ to save us from our sins we have the freedom to approach God with confidence.
8. Paul also reminds the believers to not be discouraged when those who are working for God go through difficult circumstances. This is because those who are faithful in doing what God has asked them to do will receive their glorious rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven.

### **A Prayer for the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:14-21)**

1. Paul makes mention of God's family. Paul also makes an important distinction between the earthly family of God and the heavenly family of God. The heavenly family of God refers to the saints who have already gone on to be with the Lord. Their testimonies of their lives are example of God working His purpose in ordinary people to achieve the extraordinary (see Hebrews 11). For us who are part of God's family who are here on earth, we can be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, (who is God), lives in every believer. The Holy Spirit gives us strength to do the will and purpose of God in our lives until our Lord Jesus Christ should come again (Ephesians 1:14).
2. The Holy Spirit is Christ who lives in our hearts through our faith in Him. Our faith in Jesus Christ is based on his gift of grace. We now begin to see how God would save all of humanity and make one family out of both Jew and Gentile. We now begin to understand God's great love towards us who did not deserve it. God's love was so great towards us that He would willingly allow Jesus Christ His Son to die in our place for our sin. God's love for us is without limits and is fathomless. In addition, the love of God towards us is beyond all intellectual knowledge. The love of God must be experienced by a person to truly understand its enormity.
3. When we begin to understand the immensity of God's love towards us, we become acutely aware of how God is able to do more than we could ever imagine or ask for.
4. What God is able to do for each person is dependent on the purpose that God has for that person in life. It also means that He does give us wisdom and grace to do more than we could have ever imagined for our lives. Let us as His children give Him glory both now and forever for all that He has done for us!

## Ephesians 4

### Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16)

1. As followers of Christ, we follow and are directed by Christ Himself. We should always remember as believers, the current state of our spiritual affairs. We were once hopelessly lost from God but now we have been given privileges and responsibilities that are befitting a child of God. When we remember this, we are urged to live a life that is reflective of our position as children of God not as followers of Satan.
2. We are reminded to have characteristics that are associated with believers. We are reminded to be humble, gentle, patient and tolerant of each other as fellow believers. This is in contrast to the world who seeks to assert themselves and make themselves more prominent than others. In their desire to become more prominent, the people of this world are ruthless in their efforts.
3. We are also reminded as believers that we are united through the Holy Spirit in peace with one another. We should make every effort as believers to maintain that peace within the body of Christ.
4. There is one universal body of believers who are led by the Holy Spirit. The same body of believers also has a common origin in that all believers were once outside the faith and were called to the one hope of salvation in Christ Jesus.
5. Paul also makes a point of unity in the Christian church (whether its members are Jew or Gentile). All believers share in following the same Lord (Jesus Christ), the same faith in Jesus Christ atoning sacrifice at the cross, and the universal baptism of the Holy Spirit. All believers are also united in having one God the Father who is sovereign.
6. Even though the body of Christ is united on all these aspects, each person in the body of Christ has a different purpose to complete. For all believers, God gives different gifts to complete His purpose here on Earth.
7. God has given these gifts to various members in the body of Christ to complete these purposes that He wills. The gifts that are possessed by certain members of the church of God were given when Christ was resurrected and ascended into heaven. These gifts were given through the work of the Holy Spirit.
8. Paul notes that Christ came down from his place in heaven to Earth and humbled himself to be born of a woman, to grow up as a human being and to be crucified by his creation (Phil. 2:6-11). Our Lord Jesus Christ was then buried in a tomb and was resurrected to life (Matt. 27: 57-60 and Matt. 28 1-8, Luke 24:1-12, Mark 16, John 19:38-41, John 20:1-9). As Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, he ascended beyond the physical heavens and assumed his rightful exalted place at the right hand of the Father.

9. Paul goes on to note that there are different types of work that the church of God performs. God has gifted (through his Holy Spirit) different individuals for different purposes.

The specific gifts are as follows:

- a. The apostolic gift refers to those who were personally ordained by God to preach the Gospel of salvation.
  - b. The prophetic gift refers to those who declare the will of God, especially in difficult circumstances to the body of Christ.
  - c. The evangelistic gift refers to those who are able to tell others about the Gospel of Christ.
  - d. The pastoral gift refers to those who have a leadership gift to lead the people of God through the direction of the Holy Spirit.
  - e. The teaching gift refers to those who have been given wisdom and understanding God's word and can instruct those around them.
10. These gifts that are given to specific members of the body of Christ are not intended for that person to be placed in a position of prominence. The point of having these gifts being given to certain members in the body of Christ is to build up the body of Christ and to exalt Jesus Christ.
11. The body of Christ must grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and be united in their faith. A spiritually mature body of believers reflects Christ in all their thoughts, words and actions.
12. A spiritually mature believer is not easily deceived in spiritual matters. A spiritually mature believer is aware of false teachings and deceitful doctrines and can easily separate that which is false from that which is true (2 Timothy 2:15).
13. As a mature Christian, we are able to speak the truth in love. This means that we do not proclaim a (holier than thou) attitude. We understand as mature believers that we were once far from God and did not deserve His grace or mercy. Our maturity in Christ comes from growing in our relationship with Christ both individually and corporately as the body of Christ. In so doing, we truly reflect our Lord Jesus in everything that we say and do.
14. Paul also makes mention of how the whole body of Christ is held together by the bond of unity. A comparison is made to the human body, where the skeleton is held together by ligaments. The ligaments of the body stabilize the skeleton and allow the muscles, nerves and tendons to cooperatively work together and to produce purposeful movement. Similarly, when the whole body of Christ is held together in the unity of faith, the body of Christ is able work cooperatively and achieve the fulfillment of God's purpose here on Earth.

### **Instructions for Christian Living (Ephesians 4:17-32)**

1. As new believers, we must not live as the world does. We must not be conformed to the way of thinking that the Gentiles have. Paul gives several examples of how the world is apart from God in their thoughts.
  - a. First, their understanding is darkened. This means that they do not comprehend what is right and pleasing to God.
  - b. Second, the world is separated from the life that God would wish them to live because they are ignorant of God's call for repentance, salvation and righteous living.
  - c. Third, the people of this world are hardened in their positions against God. This means that they are resistant to anyone who approaches them and tries to tell them of the Gospel.
  - d. Fourth, the people of this world are constantly pursuing after activities that are not pleasing to God. The people of this world seek to engage in excesses of gluttony, debauchery and idolatry. Two particular examples that are mentioned are sexual immorality and the love of money. Both of these sins in particular have their own dire consequences.
  
2. This is in contrast to what is the way of life a believer has been taught. Paul gives several examples of how a true Christians lives their lives.
  - a. First, a believer is taught the truth that Christ proclaimed.
  - b. Second, a believer was told to leave their old way of life. This includes the activities and desires of the person prior to being saved in Christ Jesus.
  - c. Third, a believer has a new attitude and gratitude towards the things that are of God. A believer seeks to do the will of God.
  - d. Fourth, a believer will put on the new person, who tries to emulate God.
  - e. Fifth, a believer reflects God in that we have been given the righteousness of God and are declared holy.
  
3. Since a believer is a changed person, we must put off all pretenses of "holier than thou" attitude. We are to be open and honest with each other as Christians. This includes us talking openly about our struggles, our failures, as well as our triumphs. This also means that as believers we do not gossip about one another when another believer is open with us regarding the above.
  
4. A true believer is also given further instructions in how to live their lives.
  - a. Paul reminds us to not let anger get the better of our emotions and cause actions that we will later regret.
  - b. A Christian is reminded that he should not steal or be deceitful.
  - c. A Christian is reminded to be diligent and honest in their work place or business.

- d. A Christian is never someone who turns his hand of generosity away from those who truly need it.
- e. A Christian is reminded to control their words. Often, a careless word that is spoken in haste during a disagreement can cause lasting conflict and disunity. A Christian is reminded to use words to not belittle another believer, but to benefit and encourage all believers.
- f. A Christian is reminded to not grieve the Holy Spirit. Grieving the Holy Spirit means that you take your salvation for granted. It also means that you proclaim or profess the Gospel while simultaneously performing actions that are consistent with those of a worldly person.
- g. The believer is also reminded of the characteristics of the old person prior to Christ. That is why Paul strongly encourages believers to control their emotions and words.
- h. Finally, Paul closes the chapter by encouraging each believer to not exhibit the qualities of a worldly person. Rather, Paul encourages us to be Christ-like to each other: we are reminded to be kind, forgiving and merciful towards each other. In so doing, we strengthen not only our own testimony, but we strengthen the body of believers we interact with.

## Ephesians 5

### Instructions for Christian Living (Ephesians 5:1-20)

1. Paul reminds us that we are to follow God's example as His children. The standard that we as believers, aim to imitate is that of Jesus Christ.
2. There are six major behaviors that should not be associated with a Christian.
  - a. Sexual immorality - engaging in sexual behavior outside of marriage between a man and a woman
  - b. Impure thoughts - having your mind focused on things that are sinful in nature.
  - c. Greed - loving money more than God, which leads to all other types of evil (1Tim. 6:10)
  - d. Obscene behavior - outrageous behavior that is indecent to those around you.
  - e. Argumentative behavior - engaging in pointless arguments to prove that one is smarter or more knowledgeable about a subject. This speaks to the pride of the person who is being argumentative.
  - f. Abusive language - including cursing, gossiping and use of crude humor.
3. Paul reminds us that an immoral, impure or greedy person will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is because these people worship the gods of sex, money and pride. Their main focus of worship is on these false idols, not God.
4. God will always judge those who are disobedient to His will and commandments. We are reminded to not behave like the world does. We as believers should not become associated with the behaviors of those who are not saved.
5. All believers were once children of darkness, but now they have been made into children of light. As children of light, we are known by the fruits of living a godly life. The fruits of living this godly life are goodness, righteousness and truth. We are also reminded as children of light to do what is pleasing to God. The children of light are reminded to not perform the deeds of darkness.
6. When we shine as children of light in this world of darkness, we are a light to those who live in darkness. This does not mean that we judgmentally approach everyone as a sinner. Remember, all believers were once sinners and are now saved by grace. Our behavior and the fruits of our life will always be in contrast to the people of this world.
7. Since we are considered the light of this world, we are reminded to live wisely and to make the most of every opportunity to live out the calling of being God's children.
8. We are also reminded to not consume alcohol to excess. Drunkenness leads to lapses in judgment and behavior that is unfit for a Christian. Paul reminds us to be filled with the Spirit. When one is filled with the Spirit there are characteristics that are noted:

- a. They speak to one another with Psalms, hymns, in songs that reflective of the Spirit.
- b. They are always thankful and filled with gratitude to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for everything that has been given to them.

### **Instructions for Christian Households (Ephesians 5:21-33)**

1. Paul also talks about the behavior that should be present in the Christian home. Above all, there is submission by all to Christ first and then to each other.
2. Wives are instructed to submit themselves to their husbands like they would submit themselves to the Lord. It is important to note however, that this submission by the wife does not mean that she becomes a doormat or has no say in the matters regarding the home. This passage also implies that the wife follows the leading of her husband. Her husband, in turn, is being led by Christ Himself. The husband is the spiritual leader of his home. He should always be the one being led by God. The husband is also instructed to be more prayerful and more mindful of the things of God than the other members in his household.
3. When a husband is fully submitted to Christ and being led by Christ, it is acceptable for the wife to follow her husband's lead. It does not mean, however, that the wife should follow her husband's leading if it leads to obvious sinful behavior or other destructive behavior which would undermine the principles of a Godly marriage.
4. The husband is instructed to unconditionally love his wife. This models the example of Christ who loved the Church gave his own life for it. In so doing, He was able to make the church holy and acceptable to God. The Church has been cleansed and is perfect in Christ. There are three things are mentioned about the church:
  - a. The church is without stain - signifying that sin has been cleansed from every believer.
  - b. The church is without wrinkle - signifying the unity of all believers in their faith in Christ
  - c. The church is without blemish - signifying that the church is fully functioning and performing the purposes of God here on Earth.
5. Paul then makes mention of how a man and his wife are connected spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In so doing, they become part of one body. Both the husband and the wife have an exclusive covenant in which they exclusively belong to each other.
6. God performed the first marriage in human history between Adam and Eve. God designed marriage to be between a man and woman. In addition, a man and a woman were to leave the auspices of their parents care and live together as a family (Gen. 2:24)
7. Paul reveals that a conventional marriage between a man and woman (especially a Christian one) is representative of Christ and the Church.
8. When we understand that a Christian marriage is representing the ideals of Christ and the Church, we are reminded as to why the husband must love his wife and why the wife must respect her husband.

## Ephesians 6

### Instructions continued (Ephesians 6:1-9)

1. Children are commanded to obey their parents in the Lord. This is to say that a child should obey parents who are godly and who are obeying God.
2. The commandment to honor one's parents was the first commandment that was given with a promise for a long life (Exod. 20:12).
3. The reason why godly parents are given this position is because godly parents (in the covenant of marriage) represent (in a symbolic way) the relationship between Christ and the church. In so doing, godly parents can influence their children into leading godly lives.
4. However, in the bringing up of a godly child one can be overzealous. Parents (particularly fathers) are instructed to not be cruel or oppressive in influencing their children to make godly choices. Parents are instructed to raise a child and train them in what is right and wrong in God's eyes (Prov. 22:6).
5. In addition to the familial relationship between parent and child, another relationship is mentioned here between the slave and his master. During the time in which the Book of Ephesians was written, it was not uncommon for people to own slaves. Slaves were not given any civil liberties or economic power. They were quite simply the property of their owners.
6. In today's day and age this would be better understood as the relationship between a worker and his supervisor. We are commanded to demonstrate a strong work ethic. This work ethic should be demonstrated even in taking the humblest of positions or when circumstances are unfavorable. An example of this is Joseph in the Old Testament (Gen. 37 – 45).
7. Thus, we are to become model employees that exemplify the ideals of working hard despite being in a work situation that is less than desirable. We are reminded as Christians to do our jobs as if God himself was our supervisor. We certainly would not want to be slack in concerning the job He would want us to do. Therefore, we should not be slack in any earthly position that we hold as well.
8. Christian employers are also admonished to not take advantage of their employees. A Christian employer should pay his employees fairly and not try to cheat them. An honest Christian employer understands that God is the master of both the employer and the employee. God will hold the employer accountable who chooses to cheat his employee.

## Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20)

1. A believer is compared to a soldier that has been given orders by an officer.
  - a. We have been given orders to be strong with the strength that God gives us.
  - b. We are commanded to put on the full armor of God (this will be discussed in more detail shortly).
  - c. We are commanded to resist against the powers of the dark world and spiritual forces of evil (1 Pet. 5:8-9, James 4:7, Eph. 6:12).
  - d. We are commanded to stand our ground and fight for the things that God considers important.
  - e. We are commanded to never retreat from or surrender to the forces of evil.
  - f. We are also made aware that none of the above is possible without the mighty power of God who allows us to stand strong against the enemy. We would not be able to resist the enemy (Satan) in our own strength.
  
2. There are various components of the armor of God that are described.
  - a. We are to understand that the armor of God is symbolic of the various aspects of our faith that should be exercised so that we may be able to fulfill our commandment to live for God.
  - b. The belt of truth is the first part of the armor to be mentioned. In olden times, a soldier's belt helped hold up the rest of his armor. His belt kept his sword at his side. It also secured his breastplate and kept other items within easy reach. Similarly, the truth of God's word secures every aspect of our Christian walk. This is because God reveals to us (in truth) our true nature as sinful and fallen humanity. God's truth also reveals to us our need for repentance, forgiveness, salvation and sanctification.
  - c. The breastplate of righteousness is the second part of the armor to be mentioned. In using our example of the soldier in olden times, the breastplate was the main part of a soldier's armor that protected his most vital organs in his chest and abdomen. Without a breastplate, a fatal injury could be inflicted upon the soldier with one blow from the enemy. A Christian's breastplate is the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God covers our most vital aspects of our Christian walk. If it were not for God's righteousness that we obtained through Jesus Christ, we would fall short of God's standards and we would be susceptible to judgment (Rom. 3:23).
  - d. The gospel of peace is the fourth part of the armor of God. A soldier's shoes were important as they allowed him to travel on different types of terrain. If he had poorly fitted or poorly made shoes, the soldier would not be able to march or travel to where he was needed. Similarly, as a believer, we should be able to go where are needed for the sake of the Gospel. This means that we should be ready to speak about the Gospel to those who need to hear it. We should also be ready as believers to go "out of our comfort zone" if God commands us to do so to preach the Gospel.

- e. The fifth item that is mentioned is the shield of faith. A soldier would use a shield in tandem with his sword to block the strike of the enemy and to help counterattack with a strike of his own sword (more on this soon). Similarly, a believer's faith in Christ is his/her shield. The believer's faith in Christ protects him/her from the lies of the enemy (the flaming arrows) (Jer. 9:8). The lies of the enemy usually involve doubt (of God's intentions and plans), temptation (strong urge or desire to sin), fear (of the unknown or current circumstances) and intimidation (that one can never overcome the shame or guilt of sin).
  - f. The sixth item that is mentioned is the helmet of salvation. The helmet was an obvious piece of the armor of a soldier. It would protect both his skull and his eyes and ears from injury. As a believer, we understand that when we receive salvation as a gift from God, it changes us. It protects and changes our thought processes, our mind, as well as how we perceive the world around us.
  - g. The seventh item that is mentioned is the sword of the Spirit. The sword that is mentioned here (along with prayer) are the only two offensive weapons that are mentioned in this part of scripture. A soldier would use his sword to kill and or incapacitate his enemy. As believers, we cannot kill our enemy. However, we can incapacitate the enemy's ability to attack us when we know and use the Word of God in our daily life. This involves that we spend time to become intimately familiar with the Word of God and its many promises to us as believers.
  - h. The last item that is mentioned is something that is not a physical part of the armor of a soldier. This is prayer. Whenever we face our enemy as believers, we should always remember that we are fighting a spiritual battle. In our own will and strength we will never be successful in winning this battle. That is why a strong prayer life of a Christian is necessary to achieve success in one's Christian life. Remember this: a strong prayer life leads to a victorious life. In addition to praying for ourselves, we are also reminded to pray for all of God's people.
3. We are to also be praying for our brothers and sisters so that they would have the wisdom, courage and strength to proclaim the Gospel. We should also pray for our persecuted brethren in particular as they need a special grace to proclaim the Gospel fearlessly in their situation.

### **Final Greetings (Ephesians 6:21-24)**

1. Paul sends his greetings to the churches that are reading this letter. He sent a brother called Tychicus to inform the other brothers about his work for the Gospel. This was not done in a boastful way. This was done to encourage the other believers in their walk with Christ. As modern day believers, we are reminded that our testimony and the things that we do for Christ should be done for the encouragement of our fellow believers. Doing God's work is for God's glory and not ours.
2. Paul closes this letter with a blessing to all believers. Paul gives a blessing of peace, love, faith and grace to all his fellow believers both then and now.