

## Ephesians



**T**his short book summarizes many of the teachings found in the letters of Paul. A strong emphasis is placed on the unity that Christians have because of the sacrifice Christ made for all and because of the new life God's Spirit gives them.

**1** From Paul, chosen by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

To God's people who live in Ephesus and<sup>2</sup> are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> I pray that God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ will be kind to you and will bless you with peace!

### **Christ Brings Spiritual Blessings**

<sup>3</sup> Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the spiritual blessings that Christ has brought us from heaven! <sup>4</sup> Before the world was created, God had Christ choose us to live with him and to be his holy and innocent and loving people. <sup>5</sup> God was kind<sup>3</sup> and decided that Christ would choose us to be God's own adopted children. <sup>6</sup> God treated us with undeserved grace because of the Son he dearly loves, and so we should praise God.

<sup>7-8</sup> Christ sacrificed his life's blood to set us free, which means that our sins are now forgiven. Christ did this because of God's gift of undeserved grace to us. God has great wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> and by what Christ has done, God has shown us his own mysterious ways. <sup>10</sup> Then when the time is right, God will do all that he has planned, and Christ will bring together everything in heaven and on earth.

<sup>11</sup> God always does what he plans, and that's why he appointed Christ to choose us. <sup>12</sup> He did this so that we Jews would bring honor to him and

be the first ones to have hope because of him. <sup>13</sup> Christ also brought you the truth, which is the good news about how you can be saved. You put your faith in Christ and were given the promised Holy Spirit to show that you belong to God. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit also makes us sure that we will be given what God has stored up for his people. Then we will be set free, and God will be honored and praised.

### **Paul's Prayer**

<sup>15</sup> I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. <sup>16</sup> So I never stop being grateful for you, as I mention you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup> I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God. <sup>18</sup> My prayer is that light will flood your hearts and that you will understand the hope that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God's people.

<sup>19</sup> I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used <sup>20</sup> when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven. <sup>21</sup> There Christ rules over all forces, authorities, powers, and rulers. He rules over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well. <sup>22</sup> God has put all things under the

power of Christ, and for the good of the church he has made him the head of everything. <sup>23</sup>The church is Christ's body and is filled with Christ who completely fills everything.▷

### From Death to Life

**2** In the past you were dead because you sinned and fought against God. <sup>2</sup>You followed the ways of this world and obeyed the devil. He rules the world, and his spirit has power over everyone who doesn't obey God. <sup>3</sup>Once we were also ruled by the selfish desires of our bodies and minds. We had made God angry, and we were going to be punished like everyone else.

<sup>4-5</sup>But God was merciful! We were dead because of our sins, but God loved us so much that he made us alive with Christ, and God's gift of undeserved grace is what saves you. <sup>6</sup>God raised us from death to life with Christ Jesus, and he has given us a place beside Christ in heaven. <sup>7</sup>God did this so that in the future world he could show the true richness of his grace and kindness to us because of what Christ Jesus has done. <sup>8</sup>You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve. This is God's gift to you, and not anything you have done on your own. <sup>9</sup>It isn't something you have earned, so there is nothing you can brag about. <sup>10</sup>God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. That's why he sent Christ to make us what we are.

### United by Christ

<sup>11</sup>Don't forget that you are Gentiles. In fact, you used to be called "uncircumcised" by those who take pride in being circumcised. <sup>12</sup>At that time you did not know about Christ. You were foreigners to the people of Israel, and you had no part in the promises that God had made to them. You were living in this world without hope and without God, <sup>13</sup>and you were far from God. But Christ offered his life's blood as a sacrifice and brought you near God.

<sup>14</sup>Christ has made peace between Jews and Gentiles, and he has united us by breaking down the wall of hatred that separated us. Christ gave his own body <sup>15</sup>to destroy the Law of Moses with all its rules and commands. He even brought Jews and Gentiles together as though we were only one person, when he united us in peace. <sup>16</sup>On the cross Christ did away with our hatred for each other. He also made peace▷ between us and God by uniting Jews and Gentiles in one body. <sup>17</sup>Christ came and preached peace to you Gentiles, who were far from God, and peace to us Jews, who were near God.

<sup>18</sup>And because of Christ, all of us can come to the Father by the same Spirit.

<sup>19</sup>You Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens with everyone else who belongs to the family of God. <sup>20</sup>You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. <sup>21</sup>Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. <sup>22</sup>And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live.

### Paul's Mission to the Gentiles

**3** Christ Jesus made me his prisoner, so that I could help you Gentiles. <sup>2</sup>You have surely heard about God's gift of undeserved grace in choosing me to help you. <sup>3</sup>In fact, this letter tells you a little about how God has shown me his mysterious ways. <sup>4</sup>As you read the letter, you will also find out how well I really do understand the mystery about Christ. <sup>5</sup>No one knew about this mystery until God's Spirit told it to his holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup>And the mystery is this: Because of Christ Jesus, the good news has given the Gentiles a share in the promises that God gave to the Jews. God has also let the Gentiles be part of the same body.

<sup>7</sup>God treated me with kindness. His power worked in me, and it became my job to spread the good news. <sup>8</sup>I am the least important of all God's people. But God was kind and chose me to tell the Gentiles that because of Christ there are blessings that cannot be measured. <sup>9</sup>God, who created everything, wanted me to help everyone understand the mysterious plan that had always been hidden in his mind. <sup>10</sup>Then God would use the church to show the powers and authorities in the spiritual world that he has many different kinds of wisdom.

<sup>11</sup>God did this according to his eternal plan. And he was able to do what he had planned because of all that Christ Jesus our Lord had done. <sup>12</sup>Christ now gives us courage and confidence, so that we can come to God by faith. <sup>13</sup>That's why you should not be discouraged when I suffer for you. After all, it will bring honor to you.

### Christ's Love for Us

<sup>14</sup>I kneel in prayer to the Father. <sup>15</sup>All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from him.▷ <sup>16</sup>God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that his Spirit will make you become strong followers <sup>17</sup>and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in his love.

<sup>18</sup> I pray that you and all of God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep.

<sup>19</sup> I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is.

<sup>20-21</sup> I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

### Unity with Christ

**4** As a prisoner of the Lord, I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own. <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. <sup>3</sup> Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace. <sup>4</sup> All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. <sup>5</sup> We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. <sup>6</sup> There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us.

<sup>7</sup> Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us. <sup>8</sup> As the Scriptures say,

"When he went up  
to the highest place,  
he led away many prisoners  
and gave gifts to people."

<sup>9</sup> When it says, "he went up," it means that Christ had been deep in the earth. <sup>10</sup> This also means that the one who went deep into the earth is the same one who went into the highest heaven, so that he would fill the whole universe.

<sup>11</sup> Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, <sup>12</sup> so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. <sup>13</sup> This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> We must stop acting like children. We must not let deceitful people trick us by their false teachings, which are like winds that toss us around from place to place. <sup>15</sup> Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ, the head <sup>16</sup> of the body. Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love.

### The Old Life and the New Life

<sup>17</sup> As a follower of the Lord, I order you to stop living like stupid, godless people. <sup>18</sup> Their minds are in the dark, and they are stubborn and ignorant and have missed out on the life that comes from God. They no longer have any feelings about what is right, <sup>19</sup> and they are so greedy that they do all kinds of indecent things.

<sup>20-21</sup> But that isn't what you were taught about Jesus Christ. He is the truth, and you heard about him and learned about him. <sup>22</sup> You were told that your foolish desires will destroy you and that you must give up your old way of life with all its bad habits. <sup>23</sup> Let the Spirit change your way of thinking <sup>24</sup> and make you into a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy.

### Rules for the New Life

<sup>25</sup> We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth. <sup>26</sup> Don't get so angry that you sin. Don't go to bed angry <sup>27</sup> and don't give the devil a chance.

<sup>28</sup> If you are a thief, quit stealing. Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need.

<sup>29</sup> Stop all your dirty talk. Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say.

<sup>30</sup> Don't make God's Spirit sad. The Spirit makes you sure that someday you will be free from your sins.

<sup>31</sup> Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

**5** Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup> Let love be your guide. Christ loved us <sup>3</sup> and offered his life for us as a sacrifice that pleases God.

<sup>3</sup> You are God's people, so don't let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy. <sup>4</sup> Don't use dirty or foolish or filthy words. Instead, say how thankful you are. <sup>5</sup> Being greedy, indecent, or immoral is just another way of worshiping idols. You can be sure that people who behave in this way will never be part of the kingdom that belongs to Christ and to God.

### Living as People of Light

<sup>6</sup> Don't let anyone trick you with foolish talk. God punishes everyone who disobeys him and

says<sup>></sup> foolish things. <sup>7</sup> So don't have anything to do with anyone like that.

<sup>8</sup> You used to be like people living in the dark, but now you are people of the light because you belong to the Lord. So act like people of the light <sup>9</sup> and make your light shine. Be good and honest and truthful, <sup>10</sup> as you try to please the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Don't take part in doing those worthless things that are done in the dark. Instead, show how wrong they are. <sup>12</sup> It is disgusting even to talk about what is done in the dark. <sup>13</sup> But the light will show what these things are really like. <sup>14</sup> Light shows up everything.<sup>></sup> just as the Scriptures say,

"Wake up from your sleep  
and rise from death.  
Then Christ will shine on you."

<sup>15</sup> Act like people with good sense and not like fools. <sup>16</sup> These are evil times, so make every minute count. <sup>17</sup> Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do. <sup>18</sup> Don't destroy yourself by getting drunk, but let the Spirit fill your life. <sup>19</sup> When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as you praise the Lord with all your heart. <sup>20</sup> Always use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to thank God the Father for everything.

### **Wives and Husbands**

<sup>21</sup> Honor Christ and put others first. <sup>22</sup> A wife should put her husband first, as she does the Lord. <sup>23</sup> A husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head and the Savior of the church, which is his own body. <sup>24</sup> Wives should always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first.

<sup>25</sup> A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup> He made the church holy by the power of his word, and he made it pure by washing it with water. <sup>27</sup> Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws.

<sup>28</sup> In the same way, a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows that he loves himself. <sup>29</sup> None of us hate our own bodies. We provide for them and take good care of them, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are each part of his body. <sup>31</sup> As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife."<sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I understand it to mean Christ and his church. <sup>33</sup> So each husband should love his wife as much as he

loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband.

### **Children and Parents**

**6** Children, you belong to the Lord, and you do the right thing when you obey your parents. The first commandment with a promise says, <sup>2</sup> "Obey your father and your mother, <sup>3</sup> and you will have a long and happy life."

<sup>4</sup> Parents, don't be hard on your children. Raise them properly. Teach them and instruct them about the Lord.

### **Slaves and Masters**

<sup>5</sup> Slaves, you must obey your earthly masters. Show them great respect and be as loyal to them as you are to Christ. <sup>6</sup> Try to please them at all times, and not just when you think they are watching. You are slaves of Christ, so with your whole heart you must do what God wants you to do. <sup>7</sup> Gladly serve your masters, as though they were the Lord himself, and not simply people. <sup>8</sup> You know that you will be rewarded for any good things you do, whether you are slaves or free.

<sup>9</sup> Slave owners, you must treat your slaves with this same respect. Don't threaten them. They have the same Master in heaven that you do, and he doesn't have any favorites.

### **The Fight against Evil**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, let the mighty strength of the Lord make you strong. <sup>11</sup> Put on all the armor that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil's tricks. <sup>12</sup> We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. <sup>13</sup> So put on all the armor that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm.

<sup>14</sup> Be ready! Let the truth be like a belt around your waist, and let God's justice protect you like armor. <sup>15</sup> Your desire to tell the good news about peace should be like shoes on your feet. <sup>16</sup> Let your faith be like a shield, and you will be able to stop all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Let God's saving power be like a helmet, and for a sword use God's message that comes from the Spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray that I will be given the message to speak and that I may fearlessly

explain the mystery about the good news. <sup>20</sup>I was sent to do this work, and that's the reason I am in jail. So pray that I will be brave and will speak as I should.

### Final Greetings

<sup>21-22</sup> I want you to know how I am getting along and what I am doing. That's why I am sending

Tychicus to you. He is a dear friend, as well as a faithful servant of the Lord. He will tell you how I am doing, and he will cheer you up.

<sup>23</sup> I pray that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give peace, love, and faith to every follower! <sup>24</sup> May God be kind to everyone who keeps on loving our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Notes

- ▷ **1.1** *live in Ephesus and*: Some manuscripts do not have these words.
- ▷ **1.4,5** *holy and innocent and loving people*.<sup>5</sup> *God was kind*: Or "holy and innocent people. God was loving <sup>5</sup> and kind."
- ▷ **1.23** *and is filled with Christ who completely fills everything*: Or "which completely fills Christ and fully completes his work."
- ▷ **2.16** *He also made peace*: Or "The cross also made peace."
- ▷ **3.15** *receive their life from him*: Or "know who they really are because of him."
- ▷ **4.13** *and we will be completely like him*: Or "and he is completely perfect."
- ▷ **5.2** *us*: Some manuscripts have "you."
- ▷ **5.6** *says*: Or "does."
- ▷ **5.14** *Light shows up everything*: Or "Everything that is seen in the light becomes light itself."