

CHRYSTON PARISH CHURCH

MADE NEW

Life in Christ
changes everything

EPHESIANS

A GUIDE TO
THE LETTER

KEEP / READ / REFLECT



Welcome to Ephesians

Discovering what it means to be made new

What if God's plans for your life were far bigger than you had ever imagined?

Ephesians opens our eyes to something extraordinary. God is working out his great purpose through Jesus Christ — a purpose that includes our salvation, the creation of a new people, and ultimately all things brought under Christ.

Three discoveries for our journey

WHO AM I?

A new identity in Christ.

WHO ARE WE?

A new family brought together by Christ.

HOW DO WE LIVE?

A new way of life shaped by Christ.

This guide is for everyone — whether you've followed Jesus for years or are just beginning to explore faith. Use it alongside the Sunday sermons or read it at your own pace.

OUR HOPE

Not simply that we will know more **about** Ephesians, but that through Ephesians we will come to know **God** better.

The world behind the letter

A prisoner with an extraordinary hope

Who wrote it?

The letter identifies **Paul** as its author (1:1). He also calls himself a prisoner for Christ (3:1; 4:1). His circumstances were difficult, yet the letter overflows with praise, confidence and hope.

What was Ephesus like?

A major Roman city in what is now western Turkey, Ephesus was prosperous and influential. It was famous for the temple of Artemis and was shaped by many spiritual beliefs and competing loyalties. **Acts 19** describes the gospel taking root there.

Who received the letter?

Paul addresses God's holy people in Christ, paying particular attention to **Gentile believers** — those from outside the Jewish nation who had been welcomed into God's family. Some early manuscripts omit "in Ephesus" (1:1), so the letter may have circulated among several churches.

Why was it written?

To help believers grasp God's purposes in Christ, understand their new identity and unity, and live in a way that reflects his grace.

READ FOR YOURSELF

Acts 19:1–20 and Ephesians 1:1–2.

God's extraordinary plan

Ephesians 1:9–10

In a divided and uncertain world, Ephesians gives us a bigger perspective: **God has made known his purpose to bring all things together under Christ.** Paul calls it a “mystery” — a purpose once hidden, now revealed in Jesus.

The Bible's story in six movements



CREATION

God makes a good world.



FALL

Sin brings alienation and death.



PROMISE

God promises blessing to the nations.



CHRIST

Jesus brings redemption and reconciliation.



CHURCH

God gathers a new people in Christ.



NEW CREATION

God's purposes reach their fulfilment.

The world's brokenness has not yet disappeared. This promise does not mean everyone will automatically be saved: it reveals Christ as the centre and Lord of God's ultimate purposes.

THE MESSAGE TO REMEMBER

In a world coming apart, **God is bringing all things together under Christ.**

One letter. Three discoveries.

Ephesians has six chapters, but one unfolding message.

01 MADE NEW IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:3–2:10

WHO AM I?

God gives us a new identity through grace: chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven and made alive in Christ.

02 MADE NEW TOGETHER

Ephesians 2:11–3:21

WHO ARE WE?

Christ breaks down dividing walls and welcomes us into one new people: the family of God.

03 MADE NEW FOR LIFE

Ephesians 4:1–6:20

HOW DO WE LIVE?

The gospel reshapes our character, words, relationships and everyday choices.

REMEMBER THE ORDER

God's grace comes **before** our response. We do not live differently to earn God's love; we live differently because of what Christ has done.

Made new in Christ

A new identity / Ephesians 1:3–2:10

“Who am I?” is one of life’s great questions. We often define ourselves through achievements, possessions, failures or the opinions of other people.

Ephesians begins somewhere else: **with what God has done for us in Jesus**. In Christ, believers are chosen, adopted, redeemed and forgiven (1:3–14).

Then Paul describes an even deeper change. We were spiritually dead through sin, but God, rich in mercy, has made us alive with Christ (2:1–5).

GRACE

God’s undeserved kindness. Salvation is a gift, not a reward for being good enough (2:8–10).

Questions to carry with you

- What usually shapes my sense of identity or worth?
- How might God’s grace change the way I see myself?

READ: EPHESIANS 2:1-10

A THOUGHT TO KEEP

Made new together

A new family / Ephesians 2:11–3:21

We live in a world where differences can become barriers. In Paul's day, a deep division separated Jews and Gentiles.

Through his cross, Jesus has broken down the dividing wall of hostility. He reconciles people to God and to one another, creating **one new humanity** (2:14–16).

Those who were once outsiders are welcomed as citizens and members of God's household. Paul pictures the church as a dwelling place for God by his Spirit (2:19–22).

CHURCH IS MORE THAN A BUILDING

The church is a people brought together by Jesus. Our unity is both a gift to celebrate and a calling to live out.

Questions to carry with you

- Do I see church as somewhere I go, or people to whom I belong?
- How can I make Christ's love visible in our church family?

READ: EPHESIANS 2:11–22

A THOUGHT TO KEEP

Made new for life

A new way to live / Ephesians 4:1–6:20

Does following Jesus make a difference on an ordinary Monday? Ephesians answers yes. At 4:1 Paul turns from God's saving work to our response: **live in a way worthy of the calling you have received.**

Where should new life become visible?

- **CHARACTER** — Humility, gentleness, patience and love.
- **WORDS** — Honesty, kindness and encouragement.
- **RELATIONSHIPS** — Forgiveness, unity and self-giving love.
- **EVERYDAY LIFE** — Faithfulness at home, at work and in community.
- **SPIRITUAL STRENGTH** — Standing firm in the strength of the Lord.

AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

We do not live differently **to earn** God's grace. We live differently **because of** his grace.

Some instructions on household relationships require careful interpretation in their original setting and in the light of Christ's self-giving love. They must never be used to excuse abuse or domination.

READ: EPHESIANS 4:1–6

A THOUGHT TO KEEP

How to read Ephesians

Six habits that make a difference

01 READ SLOWLY

Return to a paragraph more than once. Give rich ideas time to settle.

02 LOOK FOR JESUS

Notice the repeated phrases “in Christ”, “through Christ” and “in him”.

03 SEE THE BIG PICTURE

Ask how the passage fits God’s purpose in Ephesians 1:9–10.

04 READ IN CONTEXT

Ephesians is a letter: notice what comes before and after each passage.

05 REMEMBER THE CHURCH

Paul writes to believers together, not just to isolated individuals.

06 TURN READING INTO PRAYER

Ask God to help you understand, trust and live out his Word.

Three common mistakes

- Thinking good behaviour earns God’s acceptance.
- Forgetting the importance of the church.
- Assuming Christians will never experience difficulty.

ONE READING HABIT I WILL TRY

Six stops through Ephesians

No dates. No deadlines. Read at your own pace.

☐ **Ephesians 1:1–14**

Our blessings in Christ

☐ **Ephesians 1:15–2:10**

God's power and saving grace

☐ **Ephesians 2:11–3:21**

God's new family and extraordinary love

☐ **Ephesians 4:1–32**

Living as God's new people

☐ **Ephesians 5:1–6:9**

Following Jesus in daily relationships

☐ **Ephesians 6:10–24**

Standing firm in the Lord

Ask as you read

- What does this passage reveal about **God**?
- What does it reveal about **who we are in Christ**?
- What difference should it make to **how I live**?

A VERSE OR THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

My discoveries

Use this page whenever you wish during the series.

Passage / date

Something that surprised or encouraged me

A question I still have

One way I want to respond or pray

A prayer for our journey

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your extraordinary purposes in Jesus Christ — for love greater than we imagine and grace richer than we deserve.

As we explore Ephesians together, open the eyes of our hearts. Help us to know you better and understand the hope to which you have called us.

Show us who we are in Christ, teach us what it means to belong to your people, and help us live lives shaped by your grace.

By your Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith and make us more like Jesus.

Amen.

