

Ephesians

One Source! One Force!

Lesson 5/Day 1

Loving Our Lord —

Begin your time today meditating on the attitude of Jesus Christ as recorded in **Philippians 2:5-11**.

Learning His Word —

Paul has embraced his call in life. He is 'the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles' (**Ephesians 3:1**). We are Gentiles! We have been recipients of Paul's call. He knows he was 'created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (**Ephesians 2:10**).

1. Now, again Paul identifies himself in **Ephesians 3:7**. What is he saying about himself? _____

2. Think about how opposite these titles are (slave, servant) from what our culture aspires to. The word for servant here has the same meaning as a table waiter who is always at the bidding of his customers. How does this differ from our American dream? _____

3. How did Paul get this privilege according to **verse 7**. _____

 - a. Who else came to serve? (see **Matthew 20:28**) _____
 - b. How is Jesus described in **Philippians 2:7**? _____
 - c. What does Jesus teach in **Matthew 20:26-28**? _____
 - d. What does He state in **Matthew 4:10** as He is being tempted by our enemy? _____
 - e. Who else, or what else might we be tempted to serve? _____
3. _____ Paul aligns himself with the life of Christ. He has chosen Whom he will serve. All of us have that same decision to make. Read the following verses and summarize what they mean to you.
 - a. **Joshua 24:15** _____
 - b. **Colossian 3:23-24** _____
 - c. **Ephesians 6:7** _____
 - d. One time Jesus was telling a parable to illustrate His kingdom. What is His response to the faithful servant in **Matthew 25:23**? Do you want to hear those same words? Share your thoughts: _____
 - e. In **Ephesians 3:7** Paul says being a servant is a gift of God's grace given us through the working of His power. How does this fact diffuse the temptation to be proud or self-effacing when it comes to using our gifts to serve God? _____

Living His Way —

We paused today to think about being Christ's servant. Read **1 Corinthians 12:5** and think about how God has gifted you to serve Him. Are you ready to say "I am His servant?" Are you afraid He will ask you to do something you hate? Remember, He created you in Christ to do works He has prepared in advance for you to do! He formed you in such a way that what He calls you to do will bring you much joy and satisfaction! What do you love to do? Are you doing it for Him? Talk to the Father about how you can do whatever you do for Him.

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Lesson 5/Day 2

Loving Our Lord —

In today's study we will see the mystery of Jesus Christ the Savior has been revealed. Take a few moments and meditate on **Psalm 103:1-5** with the understanding that God's plan was in place to redeem us before the creation of the world.

Learning His Word —

1. Read **Ephesians 3:7-9**. In the New Living Translation (NLT) **verse 8** says, *"Just think! Though I did nothing to deserve it, and though I am the least deserving Christian there is, I was chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ."*

Why is Paul so amazed and how does he view his ministry? _____

a. Again, we see Paul's humility. We also hear his heart. Does he begrudge the fact that this gift of ministry has brought incredible hardship to his life? Read **1 Corinthians 4:9-13** and respond: _____

b. What was Paul's focus in suffering as he stated in his letter to the Romans (see **Romans 8:18**)? _____

2. What is Paul's ministry according to **Ephesians 3:8&9**? _____

3. Read **verse 10** carefully. The NLT says, *"God's purpose was to show his wisdom in all its rich variety to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."* So, the mystery that we examined in question one is now being revealed to whom? _____

a. The angels are actually learning from us! How was this purpose accomplished according to **verse 11**? _____

b. What else did this *mystery* accomplish for us in **verse 12**? _____

c. How is this gift described in **Hebrews 4:14-16**? _____

d. As we approach God's throne of grace, what can we expect? _____

4. In light of **Ephesians 3:1-12**, why do you think Paul said what he said in **verse 12**? _____

Living His Way —

Isn't it amazing to think this mystery of us being united in Christ is being revealed to the heavenly authorities through the church? The NLT says it beautifully when it says 'his wisdom in all its rich variety.' God has made a way for us to know Him intimately through the blood of His Son. Are you embracing this mystery and approaching His throne with freedom and confidence? Jesus, our high priest sympathizes with our weaknesses. Talk to God about your weaknesses and trust Him to provide the grace and help you need.

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Lesson 5/Day 3-4

Loving Our Lord —

In this study we will focus on prayer. **Psalm 5:1-3** records a beautiful request from David to God. Borrow his prayer today and make it your own.

Learning His Word —

For the second time, right in the middle of Paul's letter, he pauses to pray for his readers. He is so overwhelmed with God's grace, he wants everyone to grasp it. **Ephesians 3:14-20** is a beautiful prayer full of insight and meaning. Slowly read the whole passage out loud.

1. Considering all that Paul has said up to this point; for what reason (v.14) does he kneel? _____

a. Why do you think he takes the posture of kneeling (see **Ephesians 1:21**)? _____

b. Paul says to be free in approaching the throne, but what does he imply by kneeling? _____

2. This prayer is packed with treasure. Let's unwrap it slowly allowing each morsel to penetrate our hearts and minds. First of all, Paul identifies the *source* of answers to His requests. How does he describe the wealth of God (v. 16a)? _____

a. What is his first request for his readers (v. 16b)? _____

b. Where does our power come from? _____

3. Paul's prayer may be for us an example of what we may request from God for ourselves. Let's apply this prayer to our lives by rewriting Paul's requests in *first person*. Beginning with **verse 16**, write out the given verses as if you were praying directly to the Father for yourself.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being," _____

The verbal form "strengthen" is the opposite of "be discouraged." Are you discouraged today? Pray specifically that God would strengthen you through the power of His Spirit in you specifically in the area where you are discouraged. If you are can, share with your small group where you are discouraged and need power: _____

4. Personalize **verse 17**. . . ***so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*** . . . _____

Paul prays that we would be empowered so that Christ may dwell (abide) in our hearts through faith. Paul speaks here of an ongoing indwelling of Christ in our hearts (the heart is the focus of the mind, feeling and will; it stands for the whole personality.) He's basically praying that Christ would be evident in us. Yet, from your own experience, do you find that discouragement quenches His spirit in you? _____

5. Next Paul prays that our roots would go deep into the soil of God's love. Rewrite **verse 17b**. ***"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,"*** _____

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Lesson 5/Day 3-4

- a. Look back at Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 1**. What does he pray for in **verses 17 and 18**? _____

- b. How will knowing Christ both relationally in an intimate relationship (v.17) and objectively as you know facts about Him (v.18) establish your roots in Christ? _____

6. **Ephesians 3:18-19** flows together as Paul expresses his longing for us to understand the depths of God's love. *"That you may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* Write out these verses below, making them your personal prayer. _____

- a. How powerful is that love according to **Romans 8:37-39**? _____

- b. If nothing in all creation can ever separate us from the love of Christ, is there anything you can do to cause Him to stop loving you? Share your response: _____

- c. How does this objective fact affect your relationship (intimacy) with God? _____

7. The last sentence of Paul's prayer is truly awe-inspiring. Read verses 20-21 aloud. *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."* Once again, personalize it below: _____

- a. Where is this power found? _____
- b. Who gets all the glory? _____
- c. Do you have a story to share about how God has done immeasurably more than all you ever asked or imagined? Share it! _____

- d. Is there something in your life today that looks impossible to you? Think about the fact that He wants to empower you to reveal His glory in it. Are you willing to pray and trust? Share your thoughts: _____

Living His Way —

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. We can ask for the same thing. Take your personalized prayer from **Ephesians 3** and kneel before the Father. Pray this prayer for yourself. If you have time, pray it for a loved one who is on your heart (spouse, child, parent, friend etc.) End your time of prayer praising God that He is able to do more than we could ever ask or imagine! Praise Him for His glorious grace.

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Lesson 5/Day 5

Loving Our Lord—

Today's study has a different format, a different feel. We're going to take some time to sit at the feet of Jesus (**Luke 10:38-42**). You will need about 30 minutes to get the most out of it.

In order for us to walk closely with God, we must learn to listen to Him and obey what He says (**John 14:23**). He longs for you to know His love (as Paul has prayed), and He desires for you to walk in power through His spirit. Quiet times nourish us so that we are aware of God's presence with us every moment of the day.

Today will be a reminder to some and a new challenge to others. Some call this a 'guided quiet time.' Pray that God will meet you in a fresh way today.

Find a quiet place. Take your Bible, a journal if you use one and a scratch pad with you. Use the scratch pad to jot down any thoughts that are distracting to you during this time (phone calls to make, to do lists etc). Use your journal to record any new truths you want to remember, or to write out prayers or thoughts that come to your mind as you sit quietly. Turn off your phones and close the door (**Matthew 6:6**). Take a deep breath and ask God to help you focus on Him now.

Turn to one of your favorite psalms and meditate on the majesty of God. **Psalm 103** is a favorite and a great one to help you focus. Take some time and praise Him for Who He is. Keep in mind this is your relational time with the Lord, not a contest to see how many verses you can read. You may get stuck on just one or two verses. Let them guide you into the presence of God.

Take a few moments and ask the Father to cleanse you from all your sins. You may want to use **Psalm 139:23-24** to guide your prayer, or **1 John 1:8-10**. God desires truth in the inner parts (**Psalm 51:6**). Be honest with Him now. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. During this time He may impress upon you the need to correct something in your life. Write down what you plan to do.

Next, take a small portion of Scripture and meditate on it. Meditating is simply reading it several times slowly, thinking carefully about what it says and allowing the truth to penetrate your heart. You may want to choose a passage from Ephesians that you've already studied. God wants to plant His Word deep in your heart. As you meditate on the passage you've chosen, ask yourself these questions:

Is there a new truth for me to remember?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is there a sin I need to repent of?

