



For the week of August 28

Monday, August 29 — Ephesians 3



Chapter Summary: Paul explains that even though he is the least of all the saints, God has given him the job of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul likens this to explaining a mystery to people. God showed His grace in making Paul a minister of the gospel and allowing Him to preach to the Gentiles. He expresses his deep gratitude to God for this glorious calling and glorifies Him for all the results.

Devotional: Paul devotes this entire chapter to the idea that some things about the will of God are a mystery. When Paul uses the word mystery he doesn't mean a puzzle you can't solve. A Bible mystery means something about God that you didn't know but you have learned it. Paul gives God all the glory and credit for revealing this mystery to him. He then says that it is his job to tell others the mystery. Can you think of a time in your life when you learned something about God that made you see other things more clearly? Maybe there was a time in your life that had always seemed like a mystery but as you grew in your understanding, it cleared up. How does this idea of a godly mystery deepen our faith?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- In verses 1-7 Paul explains how God designed the gospel to be communicated. Where do we fit in this timeline?
- Paul says he is the "least of all the saints." What does he mean?
- How is the "manifold wisdom of God" shown in the church (v. 10)?



Tuesday, August 30 — Ephesians 4

Chapter Summary: Paul urges the Ephesians to walk worthy of the calling they have received from God. He reminds them of the unity we have in Christ. Though each Christian has different spiritual gifts, they are all for the purpose of edifying the church. The Christian life is a new life which means leaving the old life behind.

Devotional: Paul urges Christians to walk worthy of the calling they have received. As Christians we are called to live a godly and holy life. Knowing that none of us are worthy of the salvation God has offered us, how can we walk worthy of our calling? Paul says the key to walking worthy is found in lowliness (humility) and gentleness in our personal life and in bearing with one another as church family. When we put these into practice, we will live the Christian life that God intends us to and we will demonstrate the love and unity that Christ prayed all Christians would have. Talk about what it means to you to live a life worthy of the gospel. How can you put these qualities into practice in your life?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Paul says that Christians should be angry but not sin (v.26). How can Christians express anger in a godly way? What sins can anger lead to for a man or woman of God?



Wednesday, August 31 — Ephesians 5

Chapter Summary: Christians must live a life marked by love for others. True love does not condone sin, but seeks to walk in the light. A Christian is wise in how they handle the world. Paul makes an extended illustration about how the home and specifically marriage is designed to reflect Christ and the church.

Devotional: Christians should be known for their holy lifestyle but Paul explains that this is motivated by our love for God and love for others. When a Christian struggles with holiness, it is a violation of God's will and a result of poor practice, but it also reveals a problem of the heart. How does love for God motivate a holy life? How does that help us deal with the inevitable failures that will happen as we try to live a holy life?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- What does Paul mean when he encourages Christians to understand the will of the Lord (v.17)?
- Why do people struggle with applying what Paul says about husbands and wives today?
- How does our love and respect for our spouse model the relationship that the church should have with Christ?



Thursday, September 1 — Ephesians 6

Chapter Summary: Paul talks about how being a Christian changes how children relate to their parents and also changes our relationships in the workplace. He encourages all Christians to put on the whole armor of God to be ready for everything we will face before he concludes the letter with some personal greetings and a prayer for the church.

Devotional: Can you imagine a football player who decided to play without his helmet? Or a soccer player who chose not to wear cleats? What would happen to a volleyball player who didn't put on elbow and knee pads? Many sports have protective clothing that is required for athletes to be able to play. In the same way, Paul urges us to put on the whole armor of God. Each piece is designed to protect the Christian from specific attacks of the devil. As you read verses 10-20, think about why Paul would recommend that and what it might guard against. The overall goal of the armor of God is to enable the Christian to stand firm and endure the attacks of the devil. As you look at your own life, can you see times when the armor of God has protected you?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Why does Paul say that “Honor your father and mother” is the first commandment with a promise (v.2)? What is the promise?
- What does it mean for a child to be “exasperated” and why should father (and mothers) seek to avoid this?
- In a society without slavery, how do we interpret and apply Paul's words to servants and masters today (vs. 5-9)?
- How is our faith a shield against the devil?



Friday, September 2 — Philippians 1

Chapter Summary: Paul offers a prayer of thankfulness for the Philippian church before updating them on some of his struggles. He gives thanks that the gospel is being preached and that he can glorify Christ in his life. As he explains that he is ready to go to heaven whenever his time on earth is done, he also explains why he will be faithful to the Lord until death. He encourages the church to follow his example of faith.

Devotional: Imagine working on a project for your boss only to have someone else step in at the last minute and take credit for it. What if a coworker decided to try and make trouble for you by continually pointing out problems with your ideas? How hard would it be to maintain a positive attitude? Paul had enemies who preached the gospel just to try and discredit him. Instead of getting bitter, Paul rejoiced that the gospel was being preached and those who criticized him just made him better because he was more vigilant in his preaching. What an attitude! What could possibly enable him to have such a selfless approach? Paul says it was the fact that he knew God's opinion of him was more important than any man's opinion. And if more people obeyed the gospel, that was Paul's overall goal, too. What is the most important goal for Christians?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- What do we learn about church government from Paul's greeting to the church in v. 1?

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