

Ephesians

1. **Who was the writer? Who were the recipients? What was their relationship with the author?**

The writer was the apostle Paul as set forth in Ephesians 1:1. Paul wrote "to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus." When a penitent believer makes the good confession and is immersed into Christ, he is set apart as a saint. Notice that to be considered a "saint" from the Scriptural perspective doesn't require that three miracles be done in your name, but it does require that you be faithful. A consistent theme throughout the Bible is that for a Christian to remain such, he must continue to be faithful. Paul particularly addresses those saints in Ephesus who were faithful in Christ Jesus. Paul's initial interaction with the church at Ephesus is described in detail in Acts, chapters 19 and 20. From the nineteenth chapter of the book of Acts, we know that the church at Ephesus started strong. After Paul straightened out some disciples made by Apollos, Paul got to work in Ephesus for a good two years -- Acts 19:10. Acts 19:20 tells us that "the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing." The church at Ephesus was firmly founded with the help of the apostle Paul.

2. **What do we know about the church at Ephesus from the rest of Scripture?** Even with such a strong start, the apostle Paul gave a dire warning about this congregation as recorded in the twentieth chapter of the book of Acts. In his discussion with the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul warned that "from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Paul urged Timothy to remain at Ephesus that he might "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines." From the book of Revelation, it appears that the congregation at Ephesus had faithfully withstood those tests -- see Revelation 2:2-3. However, it looks like the Ephesian brethren had lost sight of their initial love of Christ and the associated work of evangelism -- see Revelation 2:4. Jesus advised the church at Ephesus that unless they repented and did the deeds they did at first, He would remove the lampstand out of its place. In other words, unless Ephesus made a renewed commitment to seeking and saving the lost, they would cease to exist as the Lord's church.

3. **What different ways is the church represented in this letter?** Throughout the Scriptures, the church is compared to many things to which we can readily relate and make the appropriate application. In the book of Ephesians, God compares the church to:

- The body of Christ -- 1:23, 4:16
- The household of God -- 2:20
- A holy temple in the Lord -- 2:21
- The wife of Christ -- 5:25, 5:32

4. **What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in the Ephesian letter?** The book of Ephesians has much to say about the Holy Spirit including:

- Christians are sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise -- 1:13
- Through Christ both Jews and Gentiles have access in the one Spirit to the Father -- 2:18
- Christians are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit -- 2:22
- The mystery has now been revealed to Christ's holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit -- 3:5

- Paul prayed that we would be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man -- 3:16
- We should be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace -- 4:3
- We should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we were sealed for the day of redemption -- 4:30
- In contrast to getting drunk with wine, we should be filled with the Spirit -- 5:18
- We should take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God -- 6:17
- Christians are to pray at all times in the Spirit -- 6:18

5. What does the book of Ephesians have to say about "power"? Power is one of the minor themes that runs throughout this letter. Primarily Ephesians focuses on the power of God, but it also mentions the power held by the devil and his agents. Here are some key points about "power" in this book:

- The surpassing greatness of God's power is directed toward us who believe -- 1:19
- Jesus has been exalted above all rule and authority and power and dominion -- 1:21
- The devil is the prince of the power of the air -- 2:2
- God's grace was given to Paul according to the working of God's power -- 3:7
- Paul's prayer is that we would be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man -- 3:16
- God is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us -- 3:20
- Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers -- 6:12

6. How is a Christian supposed to walk? The book of Ephesians is very concerned with the "walk" of the Christian. This book is very practical, and implores us to be real Christians. Here are the ways mentioned in Ephesians about a Christian's walk:

- Christians should walk in good works which God prepared beforehand -- 2:10
- We are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling -- 4:1
- Christians should not walk any longer as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind -- 4:17
- We should walk in love, just as Christ loved us -- 5:2
- Christians are to walk as children of Light -- 5:8
- We are to be careful how we walk, not as unwise men but as wise -- 5:15

7. What are the responsibilities of husbands and wives, according to this letter? The book of Ephesians devotes a pretty lengthy passage to the marriage relationship. The overall point is that marriage is to mirror and represent the spiritual relationship between Christ and His church. It logically follows that if we wish to be a great model of Christ to the world, then our marriages should display the relationship of Jesus and His church. Here are the bullet-point responsibilities of both husbands and wives.

Husbands

- Love your wives -- 6:25, 6:33
- Sacrifice for her -- 6:25
- Love her as you love your own body -- 6:28

- Nourish her -- 6:29
- Cherish her -- 6:29
- Cleave to her -- 6:31

Wives

- Be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord -- 6:22
- Be subject in everything -- 6:24
- Respect your husband -- 6:33

8. What are the responsibilities of children and parents? The book of Ephesians gives basic instructions to both children and parents.

Children

- Obey your parents in the Lord -- 6:1
- Honor your father and mother -- 6:2

Parents

- Do not provoke your children to anger -- 6:4
- Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord -- 6:4

9. The full armor of God consists of what battle array? In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Christians are told to put on the full armor of God so that we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil. This armor consists of:

- Belt of truth -- 6:14
- Breastplate of righteousness -- 6:14
- Shoes of preparation of the gospel of peace -- 6:15
- Shield of faith -- 6:16
- Helmet of salvation -- 6:17
- Sword of the Spirit -- 6:17