

Ephesians

English Versions

NASB

NRSV

ESV

NIV

HCSB

CEB

NLT

The Message

The Blessings of Redemption

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are ^aat Ephesus and *who are faithful* in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before ^bHim. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in ^cChrist would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

¹⁵For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and ^dyour love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸*I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

a Three early mss do not contain *at Ephesus*

b Or *Him, in love*

c i.e. the Messiah

d Three early mss do not contain *your love*

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful^a in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ^b before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,^c having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this^d is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Paul's Prayer

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love^e toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God^f put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has

a Other ancient authorities lack *in Ephesus*, reading *saints who are also faithful*

b Gk *in him*

c Or *been made a heritage*

d Other ancient authorities read *who*

e Other authorities lack *and your love*

f Gk *He*

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful^a in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us^b for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight⁹ making known^c to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee^d of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,^e to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love^f toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet

a Some manuscripts *saints who are also faithful* (omitting *in Ephesus*)

b Or *before him in love, having predestined us*

c Or *he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known...*

d Or *down payment*

e Or *until God redeems his possession*

f Some manuscripts omit *your love*

NIV

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To God's holy people in Ephesus,^a the faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he^b predestined us for adoption to sonship^c through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he^d made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen,^e having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^f of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name

a 1 Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus*.

b 4,5 Or *sight in love*. ⁵He.

c 5 The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.

d 8,9 Or *us with all wisdom and understanding*. And *he*.

e 11 Or *were made heirs*.

f 17 Or *a spirit*.

HCSB

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will:
To the saints and believers in Christ Jesus at Ephesus.^a

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Rich Blessings

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, in Christ; ⁴for He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight.^b In love^c ⁵He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, ⁶to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹He made known to us the *mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He planned in Him ¹⁰for the administration^d of the days of fulfillment^e—to bring everything together in the *Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

¹¹In Him we were also made His inheritance,^f predestined according to the purpose of the One who works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will, ¹²so that we who had already put our hope in the Messiah might bring praise to His glory.

¹³In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—in Him when you believed—were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. ¹⁴He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession,^g to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Insight

¹⁵This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father,^h would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸[I pray] that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His vast strength.

a 1:1 Other mss omit *at Ephesus*

b 1:4 Vv. 3–14 are 1 sentence in Gk.

c 1:4 Or *In His sight in love*

d 1:10 Or *dispensation*; lit *house law* (Gk *oikonomia*)

e 1:10 Lit *the fulfillment of times*

f 1:11 Or *we also were chosen as an inheritance, or we also received an inheritance*

g 1:14 *the possession* could be either man's or God's

h 1:17 Or *the Father of glory*

CEB

Greeting

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will.

To the holy and faithful people in Christ Jesus in Ephesus.^a

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The believers' blessings

³Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven. ⁴God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God's presence before the creation of the world. ⁵God destined us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love. This was according to his goodwill and plan ⁶and to honor his glorious grace that he has given to us freely through the Son whom he loves. ⁷We have been ransomed through his Son's blood, and we have forgiveness for our failures based on his overflowing grace, ⁸which he poured over us with wisdom and understanding. ⁹God revealed his hidden design^b to us, which is according to his goodwill and the plan that he intended to accomplish through his Son. ¹⁰This is what God planned for the climax of all times:^c to bring all things together in Christ, the things in heaven along with the things on earth. ¹¹We have also received an inheritance in Christ. We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to his design. ¹²We are called to be an honor to God's glory because we were the first to hope in Christ. ¹³You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ. ¹⁴The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance, which is applied toward our redemption as God's own people, resulting in the honor of God's glory.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁵Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, this is the reason that ¹⁶I don't stop giving thanks to God for you when I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call, what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, ¹⁹and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers. This power is conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength. ²⁰God's power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God's right side in the heavens, ²¹far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be

a The location of Ephesus was added in some later manuscripts, probably to make the opening of this letter similar to the others in the collection of Paul's letters.

b Or *mystery*

c Or *the fullness of times*

Made Alive in Christ

2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together ^awith Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

¹¹Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," *which is performed in the flesh by human hands*—¹²remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into one* and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances*, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus establishing peace*, ¹⁶and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

From Death to Life

2 You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ^a—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

One in Christ

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth,^b called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body^c through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.^d ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.^e ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;

a Other ancient authorities read *in Christ*
 b *Gk in the flesh*
 c Or *reconcile both of us in one body for God*
 d Or *in him, or in himself*
 e Or *keystone*

and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

By Grace Through Faith

2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body^a and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.^b ⁴But^c God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

One in Christ

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^d but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by^e the Spirit.

a *Greek flesh*
 b *Greek like the rest*
 c Or *And*
 d Or *sojourners*
 e Or *in*

a Two early mss read *in Christ*

NIV

that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Made Alive in Christ

2As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^a and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

¹¹Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in

a 3 In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

HCSB

God’s Power in Christ

²⁰He demonstrated [this power] in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens—²¹far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given,^a not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And **He put everything under His feet** and appointed Him as head over everything for the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way.

From Death to Life

2And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ²in which you previously *walked according to this worldly age, according to the ruler of the atmospheric domain,^b the spirit now working in the disobedient.^c ³We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and by nature we were children under wrath, as the others were also. ⁴But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us,^d made us alive with the *Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. By grace you are saved! ⁶He also raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavens, in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace in [His] kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—⁹not from works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are His creation—created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

Unity in Christ

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh—called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” done by hand in the flesh. ¹²At that time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, with no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. ¹⁴For He is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In His flesh, ¹⁵He did away with the law of the commandments in regulations, so that He might create in Himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. ¹⁶[He did this so] that He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross and put the hostility to death by it.^e ¹⁷When [Christ] came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints,

a 1:21 Lit every name named

b 2:2 Lit ruler of the authority of the air

c 2:2 Lit sons of disobedience

d 2:4 Lit love with which He loved us

e 2:16 Or death in Himself

CEB

named not only now but in the future. ²²God put everything under Christ’s feet and made him head of everything in the church, ²³which is his body. His body, the church, is the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way.

Saved from sin to life

2At one time you were like a dead person because of the things you did wrong and your offenses against God. ²You used to act like most people in our world do. You followed the rule of a destructive spiritual power. This is the spirit of disobedience to God’s will that is now at work in persons whose lives are characterized by disobedience. ³At one time you were like those persons. All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else. ⁴⁻⁵However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God’s grace! ⁶And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. ⁷God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

⁸You are saved by God’s grace because of your faith.^a This salvation is God’s gift. It’s not something you possessed. ⁹It’s not something you did that you can be proud of. ¹⁰Instead, we are God’s accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

The reconciliation of God’s people

¹¹So remember that once you were Gentiles by physical descent, who were called “uncircumcised” by Jews who are physically circumcised. ¹²At that time you were without Christ. You were aliens rather than citizens of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of God’s promise. In this world you had no hope and no God. ¹³But now, thanks to Christ Jesus, you who once were so far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴Christ is our peace. He made both Jews and Gentiles into one group. With his body, he broke down the barrier of hatred that divided us. ¹⁵He canceled the detailed rules of the Law so that he could create one new person out of the two groups, making peace. ¹⁶He reconciled them both as one body to God by the cross, which ended the hostility to God.

¹⁷When he came, he announced the good news of peace to you who were far away from God and to those who were near. ¹⁸We both have access to the Father through Christ by the one Spirit. ¹⁹So now you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God’s people, and you belong to God’s household. ²⁰As God’s household, you are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹The whole building is joined together in him, and it

a Or through his faithfulness

Paul's Stewardship

3For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; ³that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶*to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. ⁸To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord*, ¹²in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. ¹³Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

²²in whom you also are built together spiritually^a into a dwelling place for God.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

3This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for^b Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery^c was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see^d what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in^e God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.^f ¹³I pray therefore that you^g may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

Prayer for the Readers

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,^h ¹⁵from whom every familyⁱ in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

a Gk in the Spirit

b Or of

c Gk it

d Other ancient authorities read to bring to light

e Or by

f Or the faith of him

g Or I

h Other ancient authorities add of our Lord Jesus Christ

i Gk fatherhood

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

3For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is^a that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in^b God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family^c in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

a The words *This mystery* is are inferred from verse 4

b Or by

c Or fatherhood; the Greek word *patria* is closely related to the word for *Father* in verse 14

NIV

him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

God's Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

²Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family^a in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now 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, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

a 15 The Greek for family (*patria*) is derived from the Greek for father (*patēr*).

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and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. ²¹The whole building is being fitted together in Him and is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

3 For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—you have heard, haven't you, about the administration of God's grace that He gave to me for you? ³The *mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. ⁴By reading this you are able to understand my insight about the mystery of the *Messiah. ⁵This was not made known to people^a in other generations as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partners of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷I was made a servant of this [gospel] by the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of His power.

⁸This grace was given to me—the least of all the saints!—to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of the Messiah, ⁹and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. ¹⁰This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. ¹¹This is according to the purpose of the ages, which He made in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness, access, and confidence through faith in Him.^b ¹³So then I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Power

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father^c ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. ¹⁶[I pray] that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. [I pray that] you, being rooted and firmly established in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and width, height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think—according to the power that works in you—²¹to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. *Amen.

a 3:5 Lit to the sons of men

b 3:12 Or through His faithfulness

c 3:14 Other mss add of our Lord Jesus Christ

CEB

grows up into a temple that is dedicated to the Lord. ²²Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit.

Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

3 This is why I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles.

²You've heard, of course, about the responsibility to distribute God's grace, which God gave to me for you, right? ³God showed me his secret plan^a in a revelation, as I mentioned briefly before ⁴(when you read this, you'll understand my insight into the secret plan^b about Christ). ⁵Earlier generations didn't know this hidden plan that God has now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit. ⁶This plan is that the Gentiles would be coheirs and parts of the same body, and that they would share with the Jews in the promises of God in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷I became a servant of the gospel because of the grace that God showed me through the exercise of his power.

⁸God gave his grace to me, the least of all God's people, to preach the good news about the immeasurable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. ⁹God sent me to reveal the secret plan^c that had been hidden since the beginning of time by God, who created everything. ¹⁰God's purpose is now to show the rulers and powers in the heavens the many different varieties of his wisdom through the church. ¹¹This was consistent with the plan he had from the beginning of time that he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In Christ we have bold and confident access to God through faith in him.^d ¹³So then, I ask you not to become discouraged by what I'm suffering for you, which is your glory.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴This is why I kneel before the Father. ¹⁵Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by him. ¹⁶I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. ¹⁷I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, ¹⁸I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. ¹⁹I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.

²⁰Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; ²¹glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

a Or mystery

b Or mystery

c Or mystery

d Or through his faithfulness

Unity of the Spirit

4 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

⁷But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

⁹(Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) ¹¹And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

¹⁷So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it is said,

"When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive;
he gave gifts to his people."

⁹(When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended^a into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The Old Life and the New

¹⁷Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰That is not the way you learned Christ! ²¹For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. ²²You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

a Other ancient authorities add *first*

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men."^a

⁹(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?^b ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^c and teachers,^d ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^e to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The New Life

¹⁷Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self,^f which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

a The Greek word *anthropoi* can refer to both men and women

b Or *the lower parts of the earth?*

c Or *pastors*

d Or *the shepherd-teachers*

e Greek *to a full-grown man*

f Greek *man*; also verse 24

NIV

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it^a says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”^b

⁹(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?^c ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Instructions for Christian Living

¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

a 8 Or God.

b 8 Psalm 68:18.

c 9 Or the depths of the earth.

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Unity and Diversity in the Body of Christ

4 I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting^a one another in love, ³diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds [us]. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope^b at your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the ⁸Messiah's gift. ⁸For it says:

**When He ascended on high,
He took prisoners into captivity;^c
He gave gifts to people.**

⁹But what does “He ascended” mean except that He^d descended to the lower parts of the earth?^e ¹⁰The One who descended is the same as the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill^f all things. ¹¹And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, [growing] into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. ¹⁶From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Living the New Life

¹⁷Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.^g

²⁰But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, ²¹assuming you heard Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus: ²²you took off^h your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; ²³you are being

a 4:2 Or tolerating

b 4:4 Lit called in one hope

c 4:8 Or He led the captives

d 4:9 Other mss add first

e 4:9 Or the lower parts, namely, the earth

f 4:10 Or fulfill; see Eph 1:23

g 4:19 Lit with greediness

h 4:21–22 Or Jesus. This means: take off (as a command)

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Unity of the body of Christ

4 Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from God. ²Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, ³and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. ⁴You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

⁷God has given his grace to each one of us measured out by the gift that is given by Christ. ⁸That's why scripture says, *When he climbed up to the heights, he captured prisoners, and he gave gifts to people.*^a

⁹What does the phrase “he climbed up” mean if it doesn't mean that he had first gone down into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰The one who went down is the same one who climbed up above all the heavens so that he might fill everything.

¹¹He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. ¹²His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ ¹³until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son. God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we aren't supposed to be infants any longer who can be tossed and blown around by every wind that comes from teaching with deceitful scheming and the tricks people play to deliberately mislead others. ¹⁵Instead, by speaking the truth with love, let's grow in every way into Christ, ¹⁶who is the head. The whole body grows from him, as it is joined and held together by all the supporting ligaments. The body makes itself grow in that it builds itself up with love as each one does their part.

The old and new life

¹⁷So I'm telling you this, and I insist on it in the Lord: you shouldn't live your life like the Gentiles anymore. They base their lives on pointless thinking, ¹⁸and they are in the dark in their reasoning. They are disconnected from God's life because of their ignorance and their closed hearts. ¹⁹They are people who lack all sense of right and wrong, and who have turned themselves over to doing whatever feels good and to practicing every sort of corruption along with greed.

²⁰But you didn't learn that sort of thing from Christ. ²¹Since you really listened to him and you were taught how the truth is in Jesus, ²²change the former way of life that was part of the person you once were, corrupted by deceitful desires. ²³Instead, renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit ²⁴and clothe yourself with the new person created according to God's image in justice and true holiness.

a Ps 68:18

NASB

²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. ²⁶BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR ANGER, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity. ²⁸He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. ²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Be Imitators of God

STherefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; ²and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹²for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

NRSV

Rules for the New Life

²⁵So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, ^a as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. ^b ¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us ^c and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Renounce Pagan Ways

³But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving. ⁵Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be associated with them. ⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

ESV

²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Walk in Love

STherefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

^a Two early mss read *us*

^b One early ms reads *us*

^a Other ancient authorities read *building up faith*

^b Other ancient authorities read *us*

^c Other ancient authorities read *you*

NIV

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶“In your anger do not sin.”^a Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸Those who have been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form **S** of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. ¹Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.^b ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

a 26 Psalm 4:4 (see Septuagint).

b 5 Or *kingdom of the Messiah and God*.

HCSB

renewed^a in the spirit of your minds; ²⁴ you put on^b the new man, the one created according to God’s [likeness] in righteousness and purity of the truth.

²⁵Since you put away lying, **Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor**, because we are members of one another. ²⁶**Be angry and do not sin.** Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and don’t give the Devil an opportunity. ²⁸The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need,^c in order to give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit, who sealed you^d for the day of redemption. ³¹All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. ³²And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you^e in Christ.

S Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children. ²And •walk in love, as the •Messiah also loved us and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. ³But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of^f among you, as is proper for saints. ⁴And coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. ⁵For know and recognize this: no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God.

Light versus Darkness

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things God’s wrath is coming on the disobedient.^g ⁷Therefore, do not become their partners. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light^h [results] in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—¹⁰discerning what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Don’t participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead, expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. ¹³Everything exposed by the light is made clear, ¹⁴for what makes everything clear is light. Therefore it is said:

Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead,
and the Messiah will shine on you.ⁱ

a 4:22–23 Or *desires; renew* (as a command)

b 4:23–24 Or *minds; and put on* (as a command)

c 4:29 Lit *for the building up of the need*

d 4:30 Or *Spirit, by whom you were sealed*

e 4:32 Other mss read *us*

f 5:3 Or *be named*

g 5:6 Lit *sons of disobedience*

h 5:9 Other mss read *fruit of the Spirit*; see Gl 5:22, but compare Eph 5:11–14

i 5:14 This poem may have been an early Christian hymn based on several passages in Isaiah; see Is 9:2; 26:19; 40:1; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1.

CEB

²⁵Therefore, after you have gotten rid of lying, *Each of you must tell the truth to your neighbor*^a because we are parts of each other in the same body. ²⁶*Be angry without sinning.*^b Don’t let the sun set on your anger. ²⁷Don’t provide an opportunity for the devil. ²⁸Thieves should no longer steal. Instead, they should go to work, using their hands to do good so that they will have something to share with whoever is in need.

²⁹Don’t let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say. ³⁰Don’t make the Holy Spirit of God unhappy—you were sealed by him for the day of redemption. ³¹Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. ³²Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ.

S Therefore, imitate God like dearly loved children. ²Live your life with love, following the example of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. He was a sacrificial offering that smelled sweet to God.

³Sexual immorality, and any kind of impurity or greed, shouldn’t even be mentioned among you, which is right for holy persons. ⁴Obscene language, silly talk, or vulgar jokes aren’t acceptable for believers. Instead, there should be thanksgiving. ⁵Because you know for sure that persons who are sexually immoral, impure, or greedy—which happens when things become gods—those persons won’t inherit the kingdom of Christ and God.

Be children of light

⁶Nobody should deceive you with stupid ideas. God’s anger comes down on those who are disobedient because of this kind of thing. ⁷So you shouldn’t have anything to do with them. ⁸You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. ⁹Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth. ¹⁰Therefore, test everything to see what’s pleasing to the Lord, ¹¹and don’t participate in the unfruitful actions of darkness. Instead, you should reveal the truth about them. ¹²It’s embarrassing to even talk about what certain persons do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed to the light is revealed by the light. ¹⁴Everything that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore, it says, *Wake up, sleeper!*^c *Get up from the dead,*^d *and Christ will shine on you.*^e

a Zech 8:16

b Ps 4:4

c Isa 26:19; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1

d Isa 26:19

e Isa 60:1

NASB

¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

²²Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body. ³¹FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Family Relationships

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

NRSV

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian Household

²¹Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²²Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body.^a ³¹“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³²This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. ³³Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord,^b for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—this is the first commandment with a promise: ³“so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

ESV

¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.^a ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

a Other ancient authorities add *of his flesh and of his bones*

b Other ancient authorities lack *in the Lord*

a Or *holy and blameless*

NIV

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instructions for Christian Households

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing^a her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”^b ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

6Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—³so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”^c

⁴Fathers,^d do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

HCSB

Consistency in the Christian Life

¹⁵Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—¹⁶making the most of the time,^a because the days are evil. ¹⁷So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸And don’t get drunk with wine, which [leads to] reckless actions, but be filled with the Spirit:

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in your heart,

²⁰ giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²²Wives, submit^b to your own husbands as to the Lord, ²³for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives should [submit] to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing^c her in the washing of water by the word. ²⁷He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hates his own flesh, but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰since we are members of His body.^d

³¹ **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.**

³²This *mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. ²**Honor your father and mother**—which is the first commandment^e with a promise—³**that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.**^f ⁴And fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

a 5:16 Lit *buying back the time*

b 5:22 Other mss omit *submit*

c 5:26 Or *having cleansed*

d 5:30 Other mss add *and of His flesh and of His bones*

e 6:2 Or *is a preeminent commandment*

f 6:3 Or *life on the earth*

CEB

Be filled with the Spirit

¹⁵So be careful to live your life wisely, not foolishly. ¹⁶Take advantage of every opportunity because these are evil times. ¹⁷Because of this, don’t be ignorant, but understand the Lord’s will. ¹⁸Don’t get drunk on wine, which produces depravity. Instead, be filled with the Spirit in the following ways: ¹⁹speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; sing and make music to the Lord in your hearts; ²⁰always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹and submit to each other out of respect for Christ. ²²For example, wives should submit to their husbands as if to the Lord. ²³A husband is the head of his wife like Christ is head of the church, that is, the savior of the body. ²⁴So wives submit to their husbands in everything like the church submits to Christ. ²⁵As for husbands, love your wives just like Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. ²⁶He did this to make her holy by washing her in a bath of water with the word. ²⁷He did this to present himself with a splendid church, one without any sort of stain or wrinkle on her clothes, but rather one that is holy and blameless. ²⁸That’s how husbands ought to love their wives—in the same way as they do their own bodies. Anyone who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹No one ever hates his own body, but feeds it and takes care of it just like Christ does for the church ³⁰because we are parts of his body. ³¹*This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two of them will be one body.*^a ³²Marriage is a significant allegory,^b and I’m applying it to Christ and the church. ³³In any case, as for you individually, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and wives should respect^c their husbands.

6As for children, obey your parents in the Lord, because it is right. ²The commandment *Honor your father and mother* is the first one with a promise attached: ³*so that things will go well for you, and you will live for a long time in the land.*^d ⁴As for parents, don’t provoke your children to anger, but raise them with discipline and instruction about the Lord.

a 26 Or *having cleansed*.

b 31 Gen. 2:24.

c 3 Deut. 5:16.

d 4 Or *Parents*.

a Gen 2:24

b Or *mystery*

c Or *fear*

d Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16

NASB

⁵Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

⁹And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that ^ain *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

NRSV

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; ⁶not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, ⁸knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.

⁹And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our ^astruggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, ^btake the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ^c²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

ESV

Slaves and Masters

⁵Bondservants,^a obey your earthly masters^b with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant^c or is free. ⁹Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master^d and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

a Two early mss read *I may speak it boldly*

a Other ancient authorities read *your*

b Or *In all circumstances*

c Other ancient authorities lack *of the gospel*

a Or *slaves*; also verse 6 (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface)

b Or *your masters according to the flesh*

c Or *slave* (for the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface)

d Greek *Lord*

NIV

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

HCSB

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your human^a masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ. ⁶Don't [work only] while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart.^b ⁷Render service with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord. ⁹And masters, treat them the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their and your Master is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.

Christian Warfare

¹⁰Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics^c of the Devil. ¹²For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. ¹⁴Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, ¹⁵and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.^d

¹⁶In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

¹⁸With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and stay alert in this, with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the *mystery of the gospel. ²⁰For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

CEB

⁵As for slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling and with sincere devotion to Christ. ⁶Don't work to make yourself look good and try to flatter people, but act like slaves of Christ carrying out God's will from the heart. ⁷Serve your owners enthusiastically, as though you were serving the Lord and not human beings. ⁸You know that the Lord will reward every person who does what is right, whether that person is a slave or a free person. ⁹As for masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Stop threatening them, because you know that both you and your slaves have a master in heaven. He doesn't distinguish between people on the basis of status.

Put on the armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and his powerful strength. ¹¹Put on God's armor so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. ¹²We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. ¹³Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. ¹⁴So stand with the belt of truth around your waist, justice as your breastplate, ¹⁵and put shoes on your feet so that you are ready to spread the good news of peace. ¹⁶Above all, carry the shield of faith so that you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

¹⁸Offer prayers and petitions in the Spirit all the time. Stay alert by hanging in there and praying for all believers. ¹⁹As for me, pray that when I open my mouth, I'll get a message that confidently makes this secret plan^{as} of the gospel known. ²⁰I'm an ambassador in chains for the sake of the gospel. Pray so that the Lord will give me the confidence to say what I have to say.

a 6:5 Lit according to the flesh

b 6:6 Lit from soul

c 6:11 Or schemes, or tricks

d 6:15 Ready to go tell others about the gospel

a Or mystery

EPHESIANS 6:21

NASB

²¹But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. ²²I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible *love*.

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NRSV

Personal Matters and Benediction

²¹So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus will tell you everything. He is a dear brother and a faithful minister in the Lord. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, to let you know how we are, and to encourage your hearts.

²³Peace be to the whole community,^a and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.^b

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ESV

Final Greetings

²¹So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²²I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

²³Peace be to the brothers,^a and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

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^a Gk *to the brothers*

^b Other ancient authorities add *Amen*

^a Or *brothers and sisters*

NIV

Final Greetings

²¹Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³Peace to the brothers and sisters,^a and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.^b

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HCSB

Paul's Farewell

²¹Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant^a in the Lord, will tell you everything so that you also may know how I am and what I'm doing. ²²I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

²³Peace to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.^{b,c}

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CEB

Final greeting

²¹Tychicus, my loved brother and faithful servant of the Lord, can inform you about my situation and what I'm doing. ²²I've sent him for this reason—so that you will know about us. He can reassure you.

²³May there be peace with the brothers and sisters as well as love with the faith that comes from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴May grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ forever.

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HCSB bullet notes

- Amen The transliteration of a Hebrew word signifying that something is certain, valid, truthful, or faithful; it is often used at the end of biblical songs, hymns, and prayers.
- Messiah Or *the Christ*; the Greek word *Christos* means “the anointed one.”
- Mystery Transliteration of the Greek word *mysterion*; a secret hidden in the past but now revealed
- walk A term often used in a figurative way to mean “way of life” or “behavior”

a ²³ The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

b ²⁴ Or *Grace and immortality to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.*

a 6:21 Or *deacon*

b 6:24 Other mss add *Amen*.

c 6:24 Lit *all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption*

Greetings from Paul

1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus,^a who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Spiritual Blessings

³All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.^b ⁷He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

⁹God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. ¹⁰And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God,^c for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

¹²God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. ¹³And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own^d by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

¹⁵Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,^e ¹⁶I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, ¹⁷asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom^f and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. ¹⁸I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.^g

¹⁹I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²²God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Made Alive with Christ

2 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ²You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.^h He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³All of us used to live that way,

a 1:1 The most ancient manuscripts do not include in Ephesus.

b 1:6 Greek *to us in the beloved*.

c 1:11 Or *we have become God's inheritance*.

d 1:13 Or *he put his seal on you*.

e 1:15 Some manuscripts read *your faithfulness to the Lord Jesus and to God's people everywhere*.

f 1:17 Or *to give you the Spirit of wisdom*.

g 1:18 Or *called, and the rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his holy people*.

h 2:2 Greek *obeying the commander of the power of the air*.

1 I, Paul, am under God's plan as an apostle, a special agent of Christ Jesus, writing to you faithful Christians in Ephesus. ²I greet you with the grace and peace poured into our lives by God our Father and our Master, Jesus Christ.

The God of Glory

³How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. ⁴Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. ⁵Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) ⁶He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

⁷Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! ⁸He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, ⁹letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, ¹⁰a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

¹¹It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, ¹²part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

¹³It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁴This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

¹⁵That's why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the Christians, ¹⁶I couldn't stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. ¹⁷But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, ¹⁸your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for Christians, ¹⁹oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!

²⁰All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, ²¹in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. ²²He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. ²³The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

He Tore Down the Wall

2 It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. ²You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. ³We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. ⁴Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, ⁵he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! ⁶Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.

NLT

following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

⁴But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

⁸God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Oneness and Peace in Christ

¹¹Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. ¹²In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

¹⁷He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

A Temple for the Lord

¹⁹So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²²Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

God's Mysterious Plan Revealed

3When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles^a... ²assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. ³As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. ⁴As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. ⁵God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

⁶And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.^b ⁷By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

⁸Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to

THE MESSAGE

⁷Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. ⁸Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! ⁹We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! ¹⁰No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

¹¹But don't take any of this for granted. It was only yesterday that you outsiders to God's ways ¹²had no idea of any of this, didn't know the first thing about the way God works, hadn't the faintest idea of Christ. You knew nothing of that rich history of God's covenants and promises in Israel, hadn't a clue about what God was doing in the world at large. ¹³Now because of Christ—dying that death, shedding that blood—you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything.

¹⁴The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. ¹⁵He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.

¹⁶Christ brought us together through his death on the Cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. ¹⁷Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. ¹⁸He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father.

¹⁹That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. ²⁰He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone ²¹that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, ²²all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.

The Secret Plan of God

3This is why I, Paul, am in jail for Christ, having taken up the cause of you outsiders, so-called. ²I take it that you're familiar with the part I was given in God's plan for including everybody. ³I got the inside story on this from God himself, as I just wrote you in brief.

⁴As you read over what I have written to you, you'll be able to see for yourselves into the mystery of Christ. ⁵None of our ancestors understood this. Only in our time has it been made clear by God's Spirit through his holy apostles and prophets of this new order.

⁶The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I've been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus. The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone, across the board.

⁷This is my life work: helping people understand and respond to this Message. It came as a sheer gift to me, a real surprise, God handling all the details. ⁸When it came to presenting the Message to people who had no background in God's way, I was the least qualified of any of the available Christians. God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities.

And so here I am, preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. ⁹My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. ¹⁰Through Christians like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!

a 3:1 Paul resumes this thought in verse 14: "When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father."

b 3:6 Or because they are united with Christ Jesus.

them in Christ.⁹ I was chosen to explain to everyone^a this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

¹⁰God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹²Because of Christ and our faith in him,^b we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. ¹³So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Growth

¹⁴When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,^c ¹⁵the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.^d ¹⁶I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Unity in the Body

4 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ²Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.

⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift^e through the generosity of Christ. ⁸That is why the Scriptures say,

"When he ascended to the heights,
he led a crowd of captives
and gave gifts to his people."^f

⁹Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.^g ¹⁰And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

¹¹Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹²Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together

a 3:9 Some manuscripts do not include *to everyone*.

b 3:12 Or *Because of Christ's faithfulness*.

c 3:14 Some manuscripts read *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

d 3:15 Or *from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name*.

e 4:7 Greek *a grace*.

f 4:8 Ps 68:18.

g 4:9 Or *to the lowest parts of the earth*.

¹¹All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. ¹²When we trust in him, we're free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go. ¹³So don't let my present trouble on your behalf get you down. Be proud!

✠

¹⁴My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. ¹⁶I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—¹⁷that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, ¹⁸you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! ¹⁹Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

²⁰God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

²¹ Glory to God in the church!

Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations!

Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!

To Be Mature

4 In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. ²And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, ³alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

⁴You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. ⁵You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

⁷But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift. ⁸The text for this is,

He climbed the high mountain,
He captured the enemy and seized the booty,
He handed it all out in gifts to the people.

⁹It's true, is it not, that the One who climbed up also climbed down, down to the valley of earth? ¹⁰And the One who climbed down is the One who climbed back up, up to highest heaven. He handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with his gifts, ¹¹filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher ¹²to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, ¹³until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

¹⁴No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. ¹⁵God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. ¹⁶He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.

The Old Way Has to Go

¹⁷And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. ¹⁸They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. ¹⁹They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let

NLT

perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Living as Children of Light

¹⁷With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. ¹⁹They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

²⁰But that isn't what you learned about Christ. ²¹Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²²throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

²⁵So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶And "don't sin by letting anger control you."^a Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

²⁸If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

³⁰And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own,^b guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³²Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Living in the Light

Simitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ²Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us^c and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

³Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. ⁴Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. ⁵You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.

⁶Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. ⁷Don't participate in the things these people do. ⁸For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! ⁹For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

¹⁰Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. ¹³But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, ¹⁴for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

"Awake, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."

Living by the Spirit's Power

¹⁵So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

a 4:26 Ps 4:4.

b 4:30 Or *has put his seal on you*.

c 5:2 Some manuscripts read *loved you*.

THE MESSAGE

themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion.

²⁰But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! ²¹My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. ²²Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, ²³a life renewed from the inside ²⁴and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

²⁵What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.

²⁶Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. ²⁷Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

²⁸Did you used to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work.

²⁹Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

³⁰Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.

³¹Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. ³²Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

Wake Up From Your Sleep

SWatch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. ²Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

³Don't allow love to turn into lust, setting off a downhill slide into sexual promiscuity, filthy practices, or bullying greed. ⁴Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, Christians have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect.

⁵You can be sure that using people or religion or things just for what you can get out of them—the usual variations on idolatry—will get you nowhere, and certainly nowhere near the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God.

⁶Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him. ⁷Don't even hang around people like that.

⁸You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! ⁹The good, the right, the true—these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. ¹⁰Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it.

¹¹Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. ¹²It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see.

¹³Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ.

¹⁴ Wake up from your sleep,
Climb out of your coffins;
Christ will show you the light!

¹⁵So watch your step. Use your head. ¹⁶Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

¹⁷Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.

Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

²¹And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²²For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.^a ²⁷He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰And we are members of his body.

³¹As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."^b ³²This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. ³³So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord,^c for this is the right thing to do. ²⁷Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: ³If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."^d

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. ⁶Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. ⁷Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁸Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

⁹Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹²For we^e are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

¹³Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.^f ¹⁶In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.^g ¹⁷Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.^h

¹⁹And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles

a 5:26 Greek *washed by water with the word*.

b 5:31 Gen 2:24.

c 6:1 Or *Children, obey your parents who belong to the Lord*; some manuscripts read simply *Children, obey your parents*.

d 6:2-3 Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16.

e 6:12 Some manuscripts read *you*.

f 6:15 Or *For shoes, put on the readiness to preach the Good News of peace with God*.

g 6:16 Greek *the evil one*.

h 6:18 Greek *all of God's holy people*.

¹⁸Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge draughts of him. ¹⁹Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. ²⁰Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.

Relationships

²¹Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

²²Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. ²³The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. ²⁴So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. ²⁶Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, ²⁷dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. ²⁸And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They're really doing themselves a favor—since they're already "one" in marriage.

²⁹No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That's how Christ treats us, the church, ³⁰since we are part of his body. ³¹And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become "one flesh." ³²This is a huge mystery, and I don't pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. ³³And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honor her husband.

6Children, do what your parents tell you. This is only right. ²"Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise attached to it, namely, ³"so you will live well and have a long life."

⁴Fathers, don't exasperate your children by coming down hard on them. Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.

⁵Servants, respectfully obey your earthly masters but always with an eye to obeying the real master, Christ. ⁶Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. ⁷And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God. ⁸Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free.

⁹Masters, it's the same with you. No abuse, please, and no threats. You and your servants are both under the same Master in heaven. He makes no distinction between you and them.

A Fight to the Finish

¹⁰And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. ¹¹So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. ¹²This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

¹³Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. ¹⁴Truth, righteousness, ¹⁵peace, ¹⁶faith, ¹⁷and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. ¹⁸In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

¹⁹And don't forget to pray for me. Pray that I'll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time, telling the mystery to one and all, the Message that I, ²⁰jailed preacher that I am, am responsible for getting out.

²¹Tychicus, my good friend here, will tell you what I'm doing and how things are going with me. He is certainly a dependable servant of the Master! ²²I've sent him not only to tell you about us but to cheer you on in your faith.

²³Good-bye, friends. Love mixed with faith be yours from God the Father

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alike.^a ²⁰I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

Final Greetings

²¹To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. ²²I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

²³Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters,^b and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness.²⁴ May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

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THE MESSAGE

and from the Master, Jesus Christ. ²⁴Pure grace and nothing but grace be with all who love our Master, Jesus Christ.

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a 6:19 Greek *explain the mystery of the Good News*; some manuscripts read simply *explain the mystery*.

b 6:23 Greek *brothers*.