
One Family in Christ

An EasyEnglish Version with Notes (1200 word vocabulary) of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

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Words in boxes are comments on the text.

A word list at the end explains words with a star * by them.

About Ephesians

Most students of the Bible think that Paul wrote this letter from Rome, about the year *AD 62. That was more than 30 years after Jesus died. Paul was in prison at Rome. He wrote to the church (group of Christians) that was at Ephesus. Ephesus was a city in the south and west part of the country that we call Turkey now. But Paul may have sent this letter to other groups of Christians also.

In this letter, Paul explains the very great things that Jesus Christ has done on behalf of all people. Christ has taken away everything that caused people to be enemies to God and to each other. Now all people, both *Jews and *Gentiles, can be united in Christ. They can become God's people. All Christians belong to one family, and Christ is the head (the leader) of that family.

So, we must always try to agree and we must continue to love each other. We must live as God wants us to live. We must learn how to be strong as Christians. And we must always be ready to fight against the *Devil when he attacks us in different ways.

Chapter 1

v1 This letter is from me, Paul. God chose me to be a special worker and teacher on behalf of Christ Jesus. I am writing to you, God's people at Ephesus, who are continuing to believe and to obey Christ Jesus. **v2** I pray that God, our Father, and the *Lord Jesus Christ will continue to be very kind to you. I pray that they will cause you to be without trouble inside yourselves.

God has given so very much to us in Christ

v3 We should thank the God and Father of our *Lord Jesus Christ very, very much! He has been so very good to us! He has given to us every good *spiritual thing in *heaven because we are united with Christ! **v4** This is true because he chose us to belong to Christ. God chose us in Christ before he made the world. He chose us in Christ to be completely good. So now, God thinks that there is nothing wrong with us. God loved us. **v5** So he had already decided to bring us to himself to be his sons by Jesus Christ. He decided to do this because it made him very happy. **v6** We should thank him so very much because he is so great and kind to us. God has been so kind to us by his son, whom he loves so much. **v7** Christ bought us, by his blood, to make us free. In Christ, God has *forgiven all the wrong things that we do. God has done these great things because he is so very kind to us.

v8 He has done so very much on our behalf because he knew everything about us. He understood what we really needed. **v9** God has shown to us the secret things that he himself wanted to do. He has shown his own secret purpose that makes him very happy. **v10** God will finish his purpose when the time is completely right. Then he will bring everything together, the things in *heaven, and the things on earth. God will bring everything together in Christ, with Christ as the head (the leader).

v11 In Christ also, God chose us to be his own people. God had already decided that this was his purpose. And he does all things as a result of what he himself has decided to do. **v12** God wanted us to show how very great and good he is. We show this after we have first hoped certainly because of Christ. **v13** And you also became united with Christ after you heard the true message. You heard the good news about how God saves you. Then, when you believed, God gave his Spirit to you. He gave his own Spirit, as he had promised to do. He gave his Spirit to you to show certainly that you belong to him. **v14** God's Spirit is the first part of what God will give to us. God has bought us to be his own people. God gives his Spirit to us until he makes us completely free. And then we will thank God. We will show how very great and good he is.

Christ is the head of his body

v15 People have told me about how you continue to believe the *Lord Jesus. They have told me that you love all God's people. So, since I have heard these things about you, **v16** I never stop thanking God because of you. And when I pray, I remember to pray on your behalf. **v17** I pray to the very great and good Father, who is the God of our *Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that he will cause you to understand things by his Spirit. I ask God to show things to you by his Spirit, so that you can really know him. **v18** I pray that God will open your minds. So then you will understand what he has chosen to give to you. You will know the good things that he has caused you to hope for certainly. You will know what very rich and great things he has prepared for his people. **v19** And you will know how very, very powerful God is to us.

He is more powerful than anyone or anything else in us who believe him. God works in us by the same strong *power **v20** as he did in Christ. He worked powerfully to raise Christ, so that he became alive again after his death. God worked powerfully so that he caused Christ to sit at his right side in *heaven. **v21** There, Christ rules over every other ruler and over everything else that has any authority. Christ is much, much greater than any other *power or any other master. He rules over every name that any person or *spirit uses to have authority. Christ rules over them now, in this world. And he will rule over them in the world that will come. **v22** God has put all things under Christ's feet (authority). God has made Christ the leader, the head over all things to his people, the church, **v23** which is Christ's body. The church is full of Christ, who fills all things everywhere.

Chapter 2

God has made us alive with Christ

v1 Before, your *spirits were dead. You were doing wrong things and you were not obeying God. **v2** You were doing the same kinds of wrong things as other people in this world do. You were like all the other people in the world who do not obey God. You were obeying the *spirit who rules the *spiritual *powers in the air. That *spirit is working now in everyone who refuses to obey God. **v3** In past times, all of us were like those other people. We did whatever things our own bodies and minds caused us to want. God was angry with us, as he was angry with everyone else. And, as a result, he would have had to *punish us.

v4-5 But God is so very good and kind! Our *spirits were dead and we were doing wrong things. But still God loved us so very much that he made us alive with Christ. God has saved you only because he himself is so very kind. **v6** Also, God raised us up with Christ and he caused us to sit with Christ in *heaven. God has done these things because he has joined us with Christ Jesus. **v7** God did these things to show, for all future time, how very good he is to us. He wanted to show how very great and kind he is to us by Christ Jesus. **v8** God has saved you only because he himself is so very kind. He has saved you because you believe him. You could not save yourselves, but it is God's gift to you. **v9** He has not saved you as a result of any good thing that you yourselves have done. So, nobody has any reason to say how good they themselves are! **v10** It is God who has worked in us. He himself has made us what we are. He had already prepared good things for us to do. And he has joined us with Christ Jesus so that we can do those good things.

Christ has brought *Jews and *Gentiles together

v11 So, remember what you were before. You were born *Gentiles, whom the *Jews call 'those people that nobody has circumcised'. But the *Jews call themselves 'we whom somebody has circumcised'. They say that because of what men themselves do to their bodies. **v12** Remember that, at that time, you were separate from Christ. You did not belong to Israel's people. You did not belong to the people that God had chosen. You were strangers. God had made no agreements with you, by which he promised certain things to you. You were living in this world with nothing good to hope for. You were living without God. **v13** You were far away from God. But now, because you are united with Christ Jesus, God has brought you near to himself by Christ's blood.

Verse 11 To 'circumcise' means to cut the skin from the end of a boy's or man's sex part. God told Abraham to do this. (See Genesis 17:9-14.) They circumcised men and boys like this to show that Israel's people belonged to God. It was like a picture, to show that they were separate from bad things.

Verse 12 An agreement is when two or more people, or God and people, agree about something.

v14 It is Christ himself who has stopped us from being enemies. He himself has brought the two separate groups of people, the *Jews and the *Gentiles, to be one group. In his own body, he has broken down the wall between them that made them separate. He has taken away the thing that made them enemies. **v15** He has brought to an end the *Jews' rules. Those rules told them what they ought to do. In this way, he stopped the two groups of people from being enemies. **v16** By his death on the cross, Christ stopped the *Jews and the *Gentiles from being enemies to each other. In one body, he brought both groups of people back to God, to be God's friends. **v17** Christ came and he told people God's message. He told them about how they could be friends with God and with each other. He told it to you *Gentiles, who were far away from God. He told it also to the *Jews, who were near to God. **v18** By Christ, all of us, both *Jews and *Gentiles, can come to the Father by the same Spirit.

v19 So now, you *Gentiles are not strangers any more. You are not foreign any more. But now, instead, you belong with God's people. You belong to God's family. **v20** You belong to the building that is God's house. God's special workers, and the people who spoke his messages, are like strong stones under this building. They are like strong stones that hold the building up. And Jesus Christ himself is like the most important stone in the building. **v21** He holds the whole building together. And he makes it grow into a house that belongs only to the *Lord. **v22** He himself is building you together also into a house where God lives by his Spirit.

Chapter 3

God has chosen Paul to help the *Gentiles

v1 I, Paul, am in prison because Christ Jesus has sent me to help you *Gentiles. **v2** Certainly, you must have heard that God has chosen me to help you. He has chosen me to work on your behalf because he is so very kind. **v3** God has caused me to know his secret because he has shown it to me. I have written a few words about this already. **v4** When you read these words, you will be able to understand that I know the secret about Christ. **v5** God never showed this secret to the people who lived before this time. But now God's Spirit has shown it to the special workers and teachers that God has chosen. He has shown this secret also to the people who speak God's messages. **v6** This secret is that the *Gentiles, together with the *Jews, will receive good things from God. The *Gentiles can belong to the same body as the *Jews. By the good news, the *Gentiles can receive what God promised in Christ Jesus.

v7 I became a servant, to tell the good news, because God gave that special work to me. God himself worked powerfully in me because he is so kind. **v8** I am the least important of all God's people. But still, God has given this special work to me because he is so kind. He has sent me to tell the *Gentiles about the great things that are ours because of Christ. God gives such good things to us in Christ because Christ is so very rich. These things are more valuable than anyone could ever know.

v9 God sent me also to make clear to everyone how he would cause his secret thing to happen. God, who made all things, hid this secret during past times. **v10** His purpose was to show now, at this time, how completely he understands everything. He wanted the *spiritual rulers, that have authority in the *heavens, to know this. They would know it by the church (God's people). **v11** This had always been God's purpose. And he made it happen by Christ Jesus, our *Lord. **v12** Because we are united with Christ, we are sure enough to come near to God. We do not need to be afraid, but instead we can be sure. We can come to God because Christ himself has caused us to believe. **v13** I have troubles and pain on your behalf. But I ask you not to let yourselves become afraid or weak because of that. No, but instead be happy, because my troubles and pain will help you.

Paul prays for the Christians at Ephesus to be strong

v14 For this reason, then, I bend my knees to pray to the Father, **v15** from whom every family gets its name. Every family, in *heaven and on earth, receives its true name from him. **v16** I pray that he will work powerfully by his Spirit to make you strong inside yourselves. I ask him to do this because he is so very great and rich. **v17** I pray that Christ will live inside you, because you believe him. I pray that your roots will go down deep into God's love. So then you will be strong. **v18** You will be strong to understand, with all God's people, how very much God loves. You will be able to understand how wide and long and high and deep God's love is. **v19** You will know how very, very much Christ loves. He loves us more than anyone can ever really know. And then, because you know this, God will fill you completely with himself.

Verse 16 Roots are the parts of a plant that grow under the ground. They help to hold the plant up. Also, they supply water and other good things from the ground that help the plant to grow well.

v20 God is able to do so much more than we could ever ask. He is able to do so very much more than we could even think. He does such great things because he works so powerfully in us. **v21** So certainly, the church (God's people) should show always how very great and good God is. The church should show this, by Christ Jesus. They will never stop showing it.

Chapter 4

God's people must continue to be united

v1 So I, who am in prison for the *Lord, ask you something strongly. God has chosen you to be his own people. So, I ask you to live as God's own people should live. **v2** Do not think that you are better or more important than other people. Always be kind and patient. Love each other, and do not become angry with each other quickly. **v3** Do your best to let God's Spirit keep you united as friends, without any trouble between you. **v4** There is one body and there is one Spirit. God has chosen you to be his own people, and all of us wait certainly for the same good things. **v5** There is one *Lord. There is one true message that we must believe. There is one baptism. **v6** There is one God, who is the Father of all of us. He is over all. He works by all, and he is in all.

Verse 5 Christian baptism is when they put a believer into water (or sometimes they put water on a believer). Baptism by water is very important. It is like a picture of what God does in our *spirits. Baptism means 'to put a person or a thing completely into something else (for example, into water)'. When God 'baptises' us into Christ, he 'puts us into' Christ. He makes us completely united with Christ in our *spirits.

v7 Christ has given special gifts to each one of us, as he has chosen. He has made each one of us able to do certain things well. **v8** This is why it says in the *Old Testament:

‘When he went up to the highest place,
he led many prisoners with him.
And he gave gifts to men.’

[Psalm 68:18]

Verse 8 A prisoner is a person (or a *spirit) who is not free.
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v9 It says: ‘He went up.’ So, it must mean that first Christ came down, to the lower parts of the earth. **v10** So, the man who came down also went up. The same man went up, high above all the *heavens, so that he would be able to fill all things.

v11 It was Christ who gave some of his people the gift to be special workers and leaders on his behalf. He gave to some people the gift to speak messages from him. He gave to some people the gift to bring other people to himself. He gave to some people the gift to be pastors (leaders who help Christ’s people to follow him) and teachers. **v12** He gave all these gifts to prepare God’s people, so that they could work together as his servants. So then, as a result, Christ’s body would grow and it would become stronger. **v13** In this way, all of us will become completely united by what we believe. All of us will become united because we really know God’s Son. So, we will be like a man who has grown up properly and completely. We will be like a man who is as tall as Christ himself. We will be completely as God wants us to be.

v14 So then we will not be children any more. Clever people may try to make us believe things that are not true. They may teach different kinds of ideas, to confuse us. But we will not be like children, who are easy to confuse. We will not let those different ideas change what we believe. **v15** Instead, we must speak the true message because we love people. And, as a result, we will grow up in all things into Christ, who is the head. **v16** He holds the whole body together. He joins every part together to make the body strong. So then each separate part can work as it should work. And, as a result, the whole body grows and makes itself stronger by love.

Live a new life in Christ

v17 So, I say this to you. I am sure that the *Lord wants me to say it. You must not live any longer like the people who do not know God. They do whatever their own silly thoughts cause them to do. **v18** They cannot understand because their minds are in the dark. They are strangers to the life that God gives. They do not know him because, deep inside themselves, they are hard. So, they refuse God. **v19** They have stopped knowing the difference between what is right or wrong. They have given themselves to do all kinds of bad and dirty things. And they want very much to do those things more and more.

v20 But you have not learned anything like that from Christ! **v21** And I am sure that you have heard about him. I am sure that people taught you the true message. They taught you the true message that is in Jesus. **v22** So, you must put away the person that you were. That old person belongs to the way that you lived before. It wants to do things that are not really good. And those things are destroying it. **v23** Let God’s Spirit make you think in a completely new way. **v24** You must put on the new person, that God has made to be like him. That person only does what is right. That person is really and completely good, like God.

v25 So, you must stop saying things that are not true. Everyone must speak only true things to every other person. This is because all of us are parts of the same body. **v26** Even if you are angry, you must not let that cause you to do anything wrong. Do not let yourself continue to be angry after sunset. **v27** Do not give any room to the *Devil. **v28** Any person who robbed people before must stop robbing. Instead, he should start to do honest work with his own hands. So then he will have something to give to anyone who needs anything.

v29 Be careful not to say anything that is bad. Say only good things that will help people. Then you will help to make them strong. You will help to give them what they need. And so, your words will be good for those who hear them. **v30** Do not make God's own, completely good Spirit sad. He is like a mark to show certainly that you belong to God. He shows that God will make you completely free, one day. **v31** Do not become angry with people easily. Do not become so angry that you cannot be kind to them. Do not quarrel or fight. Do not shout at anyone or say bad things about them. Stop thinking bad things about anyone. **v32** Instead, be kind to each other and try to understand each other. *Forgive each other, quite as God has *forgiven you. He has *forgiven you because you are united with Christ.

Chapter 5

Live as God's children

v1 You are God's children that he loves. So, you must try to be like him. **v2** Continue always to love other people, as Christ loved you. He loved us so much that he gave himself on our behalf. He offered himself as a sacrifice to God. His sacrifice had a lovely smell that made God very happy.

Verse 2 A sacrifice is a gift to God. The person who gives the sacrifice must pay the cost of it.

v3 So, you must never have sex with someone who is not your own wife or husband. You should not even want to do anything like that. Neither should you want too much of anything for yourselves. God's own people should never even want to think about anything that is bad or dirty. That is not how God's people should live. **v4** Nor should you talk about bad or dirty or silly things, as fools do. It is not right or proper for God's people to talk like that. Instead, you should be thanking God. **v5** Nobody who has sex with someone other than their own wife or husband can belong with God's people. Nobody who does bad, dirty things can belong with God's people. Nobody who wants too much of anything for themselves can belong with God's people. That person is really worshipping something else more than they are worshipping God. None of these kinds of people will ever receive what God has prepared for his own people. These kinds of people cannot belong with those people who accept Christ and God as their king. You can be sure about this.

Verse 5 To worship means to love and thank someone (God) more than anyone else.

v6 Do not let anyone make you believe wrong ideas as a result of the false words that they speak. God will certainly be angry with people who do these bad things. He will *punish people who do not obey him. **v7** So, do not meet with those kinds of people. **v8** Once you were dark. But now that you are the *Lord's, you are light. So, live as people who belong to the light. **v9** The light causes people to be good. It causes people to do what is right. And it causes them to say what is true. **v10** Try to learn what the *Lord thinks is right. **v11** People who belong to the dark do wrong things. Never join in with wrong things like that. Those things have no good purpose. But instead, show how wrong those things really are. **v12** People should be ashamed even to speak about the bad things that those people do secretly. **v13** But when something comes out of the dark, God's light shines on it. **v14** Anything that God's light shines on becomes light. That is why it says:

'Wake up, you who sleep.

Get up from among the dead people,
and Christ will shine on you.'

Verse 14 We think that these words may come from an old Christian song.

v15 So, you must be very careful how you live. Live like people who understand what is right and good. Do not live like people who do not understand anything. **v16** These are bad times, so use every moment well. **v17** Do not be fools. But instead, understand what the *Lord wants. **v18** Do not drink too much wine, because that will cause bad things. It will stop you ruling yourself properly. But instead, let God's Spirit fill you. **v19** Speak to each other with all kinds of *spiritual songs. Sing and make music to the *Lord from inside yourselves. **v20** Thank God, the Father, always for everything, by our *Lord Jesus Christ's name.

Verse 18 Wine is a drink that has alcohol in it. People make it from small, sweet fruits called grapes.

Wives and husbands

v21 Be servants to each other, because Christ is your master.

v22 Wives, obey your own husbands as you obey the *Lord. **v23** Because a husband is the head of his wife, quite as Christ is the head of the church (his people). The church is Christ's body and he saves her. **v24** As the church puts Christ first, so wives should put their husbands first in everything.

v25 Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church (his people). Christ gave himself on behalf of the church, **v26** so that he could make it completely good and clean. He washed it with water by his word. **v27** So then he could bring it to himself as a beautiful church, without any bad or dirty mark on it. He could bring it to himself as a completely good church, with nothing wrong.

v28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives quite as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. **v29** No man ever hates his own body. No, instead he feeds it and he cares for it. He cares for it as Christ cares for the church (his people). **v30** Christ cares for us because we are parts of his own body. **v31** As the *Old Testament says: 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and his mother and he will become united with his wife. Then those two people will become one body.' [Genesis 2:24] **v32** These words show us about important things that are difficult to understand. I am saying that they show us about Christ and the church. **v33** But they are also important for you. Each one of you husbands should love your own wife as you love yourself. And each wife must be ready to obey her husband.

Verses 29-30 To hate means to strongly or completely not like something or someone. To hate is the opposite of when you love something or someone.

To care for something or someone means to be kind and to supply what it or they need.

Chapter 6

Children and parents

v1 Children, obey your parents. This is what the *Lord wants. It is the right thing to do. **v2** The first rule that God gave with a promise says: 'Always remember how important your father and your mother are. **v3** Then, as a result, you will be happy and you will live for a long time on the earth.' [Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16]

v4 Fathers, do not make your children angry. But instead, teach them as they grow up. Teach them about the right way in which the *Lord wants them to live their lives.

Slaves and masters

v5 Slaves, obey your human masters. Remember how important they are. And be afraid of them. Work well for them because you really want to make them happy. Work for them as if you were working for Christ. **v6** Do not work well only when they can see you. Do not work well only to make people happy. But instead, always work well, as Christ's slaves. Work because you really want to obey God. **v7** Be happy to work as well as you can for your human masters. Work as if you were working for the *Lord, and not only for people. **v8** Remember this: anyone who does any good thing will also receive something good from the *Lord as a result. This will happen whether that person is a slave or a free person.

v9 Masters, be good to your slaves in the same way. Do not say things that will frighten them. Do not say that you will *punish them for no good reason. Remember that both you and your slaves have the same Master in *heaven. And everyone is important to him. He is never kinder to one person than he is to another person.

God's soldiers

v10 The last thing that I want to say to you is this. Be strong by the *Lord's great *power, because you are united with him. **v11** Put on the whole armour that God gives to us. So then you will continue to be strong against all the clever ways by which the *Devil attacks us. **v12** You need to be strong because we are not fighting against human enemies. No, but instead we are fighting against the rulers and the powerful *spirits that have authority over this dark world. We are fighting against powerful bad *spirits who live in the *heavens. **v13** So, take the whole armour that God gives. Then you will be able to stand against the enemy when he attacks. And he will not be able to move you from your place. Then, after you have done everything, you will still be standing strongly in your place.

Verses 11 and 13 Armour is special clothes that keep soldiers safe.

v14 So stand. Always remember and obey God's true message. That will be like a belt round you. Always be right with God. That will be like a strong metal plate that you put over the front of your body. **v15** Remember God's good news that makes you friends with God and with each other. That will be like shoes on your feet, to make you ready to fight. **v16** Always continue to believe God. That will be like a shield that you hold in front of you. It will put out all the burning arrows that the *Devil throws at you. **v17** Remember that God has saved you. That will be like a strong metal hat on your head, to keep you safe. Also, remember what God has said. That will be like a strong knife that you can use, by God's Spirit, to fight.

Verse 14 People used belts to hold their long clothes up so that they were ready to fight.

Verse 16 A shield is like a big, strong plate that a soldier holds in front of himself. The shield keeps him safe when an enemy is attacking him. Arrows are sharp sticks. Enemies send them to hurt people that they are fighting against.

v18 To do all of this, pray all the time as God's Spirit leads you to pray. Pray about everything. Ask God for what you need. For this purpose, be careful to continue praying always for all God's people. **v19** Pray for me, too. Pray that God will give me the right words to speak. Pray that I will not be afraid to tell people about the secret of the good news. **v20** God sent me to tell the good news to people. And that is why I am in prison. So, pray that I will not be afraid to speak. I want to speak the good news bravely, as I ought to speak it.

Paul finishes his letter

v21 Tychicus, a Christian friend that I love, will tell you all the news about me. He is the *Lord's good servant, who continues to work well on the *Lord's behalf. He will tell you what I am doing. So then you will know how I am. **v22** This is the reason why I am sending him to you. I want him to tell you how we are. And I want him to help you so that you feel stronger and braver.

v23 I pray that God, the Father, and our *Lord Jesus Christ will be good to you believers. I pray that they will cause you to be without trouble inside yourselves. I pray that they will cause you to love God and other people, as you continue to believe. **v24** I pray that God will be very kind to everyone who continues to love our *Lord Jesus Christ.

Word List

AD ~ AD 50 means the year that was 50 years after Jesus came, and so on.

angel ~ *spiritual being (a being is a person or animal that is alive). Good angels come from God's home beyond the earth. They are God's servants and they bring messages from God to people.

Devil ~ the bad *spirit who is God's enemy.

forgive ~ when God (or another person) chooses to forget completely the wrong things that we do.

Gentile ~ a person who does not belong to Israel's people.

heaven/heavens ~ the place beyond the earth where God lives; the *spiritual places; places beyond the earth where *spirits live.

Jew ~ a person who is born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children (Israel's people).

Lord ~ master; another name for God. It means that he is greater than everyone else.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible, that describes events before Jesus' life on earth.

power ~ what someone is able to do or has authority to do.

punish ~ to hurt someone, or to cause trouble for them, because they have done wrong things.

spirit ~ a being (person) that is always alive, even without a body. A person's spirit is the part of them that will always be alive. It will be alive even after their body is dead. Our spirit is the part of us that receives God's Spirit. There are good spirits, like God's Spirit and his *angels. And there are bad spirits, like the Devil (God's enemy) and his *angels.

spiritual ~ about the *spirit.

Book List

A. Marshall ~ The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament

John Stott ~ The Message of Ephesians ~ IVP

Charles Hodge ~ The Classic New Testament Commentary, Ephesians ~ Marshall Pickering

Various Bible versions

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