



# UNITED

## United in Christ: A Study in Ephesians

August & September 2024

If you received a present with the promise of something amazing inside, would you set it unopened on a shelf? No way! Most of us get really excited about gifts. We'd rip off the wrapping paper, tear open the box, and begin enjoying what was inside. If the contents were something really good, we'd tell everybody about it and even share it.

God has given us many beautiful gifts. One of the most precious is Scripture—His words found in our Bibles. In Scripture, God tells us who He is and why we can trust Him. He shows us who we are and reveals the ways we need Him. He's wrapped guidance and wisdom and truth in Scripture too, all things we desperately need in our lives. Yet, we often neglect this incredible gift from our loving Father. We leave it sitting on a shelf instead of opening it up to uncover the treasures inside.

Pastor Bill Rose has shared that it's common for us to have "so much church and so little change." Part of experiencing change in our lives starts with saturating ourselves in God's Word. Growing in our knowledge of God through Scripture and implementing His truths helps us to fully embrace our new life in Christ.

In our study of Ephesians, we want to give you three simple questions that lead to profound insights when you use them. It's our prayer that you would use these questions each week to invite God to speak to you and to show you something new before we dig into the text together as a church on Sunday. Even if you only complete the questions for one verse, that's a step toward our God who loves us, draws us, and empowers us to change. Our hope is that when we gather together and dig into the text together, you would have already done some study and discovery of what God is saying.

Are you ready to rip open the package and discover more? Let's get started.

**First Step:** Gather something to write with, something to write on, and your Bible. Start your time with prayer, thanking God that He is with you and asking Him to teach you as you read His Word.

Then, read the text that will be the focal passage next Sunday. Begin working through it one verse at a time with the three questions below, taking notes along the way. Here are the passages in Ephesians that we'll be covering in church for the next eight weeks.

Week 1 - August 11 - Ephesians 1

Week 2 - August 18 - Ephesians 2:1-10

Week 3 - August 25 - Ephesians 2:11-22

Week 4 - September 1 - Ephesians 3

Week 5 - September 8 - Ephesians 4

Week 6 - September 15 - Ephesians 5:1-21

Week 7 - September 22 - Ephesians 5:22-6:9

Week 8 - September 29 - Ephesians 6:10-20

**Next Step:** Spend some time reflecting on the following three questions. Write down what God is showing you.

- **What does it say?** Instead of diving straight into what you think a verse means, slow down and wrap your mind around what God is saying. With this question, you want to absorb God's literal words and write down what He is saying. This can be a short summary in your own words, or you can simply copy the verse. Pause to think about the text. You can also circle or underline any words that stand out to you or that you want to dig into more later.
- **What does it mean?** Now start asking God to show you the spiritual truths and principles in this passage. The Holy Spirit will speak to you and give you insights.
- **How do I apply this?** This is where the rubber meets the road. When we want to be changed by Scripture, becoming more like Jesus, we apply it to our own life. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to know about Him and see about yourself. Ask Him to give you the steps He wants you to take toward Him and away from sin.

**Last Step:** Once you've finished your study for the day, talk to God again. Praise Him for His amazing gift of Scripture, and ask Him to help you walk in His love and power to change. Remember, don't get discouraged. Even if you don't finish asking the three questions for every verse in the passage, all progress counts. One of the main themes of Ephesians is grace after all! God is on your side and will meet you in your time with Him. In eight weeks, you'll have a new habit and the joy of experiencing deeper life in Him.

