



Memory Passage

Ephesians 4:25-32

FOUNDATIONAL OVERVIEW: EPHESIANS 4:25

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

LESSON ONE: EPHESIANS 4:26-27

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

LESSON TWO: EPHESIANS 4:28

Let 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.

LESSON THREE: EPHESIANS 4:29

Let 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.

LESSON FOUR: EPHESIANS 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

LESSON FIVE: EPHESIANS 4:31

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

LESSON SIX: EPHESIANS 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



Walk in Christ

Focus Scripture:

Ephesians

by Laurie Aker

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Walk In Christ

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An Important Note:

Information about our lecture audios and videos,
including their online passwords,
can be found on the last page of this workbook.



Welcome to a Thistlebend Discipleship Study

*What is more important than our
relationship with the Lord?*

Thistlebend studies are designed for women who want to know Jesus more fully, love Him more deeply, and follow Him more closely. Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner commends, “*The whole aim of Thistlebend: to assist women to love Christ in the practical, nitty-gritty of everyday life.*” Therefore, the nature of the approach and the type of questions we ask may differ from other Bible studies on the same subject. Nevertheless, women participating in Thistlebend studies often share that they experience authentic growth and spiritual intimacy.

Real and lasting heart transformation takes place by God’s grace. We integrate biblical disciplines into every Thistlebend lesson where we ask women to “Take the Truth to Heart” and “Bring the Truth to Life.” These practices train women to *believe* God’s Word in their hearts, *apply it* in their thinking, and *live it out* in their lives. Our deepest desire is to see women cultivate hearts of righteousness, grow in their love for God and others, be equipped to overcome sin, walk by grace, live in the joy of the Lord, and glorify Him.

Many blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie".

Laurie and the Thistlebend Team

Are you ready for a fresh encounter with the Lord and His Word?

This workbook is your traveling companion on an exciting journey with the Lord! There is plenty of room to journal your thoughts and prayers and a spiral binding for ease of use. The appendix provides note pages for each week's teaching session. Each day, find a quiet cozy, corner to meet with God in His Word, pour yourself a cup of coffee, light a candle, and open your Bible.

The Workbook

- Weekly lessons each containing six days of homework.
- A Scripture Memory Passage for the study is located on the first page of the workbook for those who desire to practice this discipline. Prompts are given throughout each lesson as a reminder to practice the Memory Passage.

The Weekly Lessons

Day One

- Day One in each lesson begins with a devotional to provide direction for the week while preparing your heart and mind to receive the Lord's teaching throughout the remainder of the lesson.

Days Two-Five

- On Days Two through Five you will read Scripture and answer questions to help you think according to the Word of God and let the Lord search your heart.
- Throughout the study, you are often asked to copy Scripture word for word even when it is printed in your Bible or on the page. In our busy and task-oriented world, we tend to spend so little time really pondering or meditating on what God has to say in the Bible. Writing out Scripture helps you slow down and think about what you are reading so it will sink deep into your heart. This practice will increase your knowledge and shape your heart and mind to God's word.
- Each day you are prompted to work through the "Take the Truth to Heart" process.
- *Note:* While you are working through your daily homework, you may have questions. There is an opportunity to discuss homework when your small group meets. However, Thistlebend encourages you to contact your small group leader any time during the week for help. If you are not in a group, feel free to ask questions at info@thistlebend.org.
- Online participants may communicate directly with their online group leader.

Day Six: “Bring the Truth to Life”

- This day provides a way for you to review, assimilate, and apply the truths God revealed to you during the week.
- The “Bring the Truth to Life” section (see Day Six, page vii) is completed by reviewing the “Take the Truth to Heart” boxes from days Two through Five. This section is to be completed before you come to class (even if you did not complete the homework from other days). Be prepared to share your answers with your “Bring the Truth to Life” group.
- The “Bring the Truth to Life” chart is on the last page of each week’s lesson (see an example of the chart on page vii). This chart is used during the small group time to write out what each person shares so you can be praying for each other. Leave the chart blank until class time.

Daily Homework Time Options

- Choose the amount of time appropriate for your walk with the Lord in your current season of life. We encourage you to seek Him and His guidance as you make this choice.

Option 1: 15-20 minutes

Option 2: 20-30 minutes

Option 3: 30-45 minutes

Option 4: Complete the lesson regardless of the time it takes.

Important Note: Keep in mind, you may not be able to complete the day’s homework in your allotted time choice. When you begin your homework the following day, begin with the next day’s homework. Do not try to finish the previous day’s work. Your goal is to set a pattern of consistent Bible study and to trust the Lord with what is left undone. Regardless, make sure you leave enough time to complete the first two pages of the “Bring the Truth to Life” section on Day Six.

If you need anything or have any questions please email us at info@thistlebend.org.

Please view the video lectures or listen to the audio that accompany each weekly lesson on the app (Thistlebend Discipleship app/Discipleship Studies/Study Specific Name) or on our website, ([www.thistlebend.org/Resources/Study Specific Companion Resources](http://www.thistlebend.org/Resources/Study%20Specific%20Companion%20Resources)).

You can find the lecture passwords on the last page of this workbook.

Church and Neighborhood Small Group

Suggested Study Schedule

(Online study schedule is in the following section)

Weekly Gatherings:

Large Group Discipleship

Small Group Discipleship

Bring the Truth to Life Group

Large Group Discipleship Time

- Fellowship
- Gather for announcements, praise song, and opening prayer
- Teaching time by the group leader or Laurie's teaching video for the corresponding week
- Large group discusses how the Lord used the teaching time to speak to their hearts.

Small Group Discipleship Time

- Following the teaching time, participants move to small groups. The small group leader begins by reading the prayer at the beginning of the Discussion Questions.
- Next, the small group leader reads the lesson summary for the week from the Discussion Questions. Then, the group will discuss the lesson's main themes and review questions for each day.
- Finally, small group members are asked to fill out a Care Card (see Care Card on page vii) so the leader can pray for them and assist them as needed.
- The small group concludes by reciting in unison the Scripture memory verse(s) for that lesson.

Bring the Truth to Life Group Time

- After discussing the homework, group members divide into smaller groups (3-4 women). This may vary depending on the size of the initial group.
- Each group member will have an opportunity to share from their completed "Bring the Truth to Life" pages. To allow time for all women to share, the group should set a time limit of three minutes for each person. Holding to a strict time limit helps the focus remain on God and His Word. The purpose of this time is not for women to "fix" one another, but to learn to confess their sin to one another while fixing their eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of their faith.

Therefore, each group member simply reads what they have written in their workbook. The other group members record what each woman shares on their “Bring the Truth to Life” chart (see Bring the Truth to Life Chart, page vii). This allows group members to pray specifically for one another throughout the week.

- Group members are encouraged to remember God’s love through the gospel as they share transparently.
- If you have any questions about these steps, please contact your group leader as soon as possible. She will be happy to help you with any questions you may have.

What to Bring

- Bible
- Workbook
- Pen

Important Note:

The Week One Class is an introduction to the study which includes fellowship and icebreaker, praise song and prayer, introductory teaching and discussion, and a workbook orientation. Following the first day of class participants begin working on Lesson One.

The Week Two Class includes fellowship, praise song and prayer, the teaching on Lesson One, small group discipleship, and the “Bring the Truth to Life” group time. The following day, participants begin the next lesson in their workbook. Continue to follow this pattern each week throughout the study.

May the Father pour out His love as you experience the grace of Jesus in fellowship with your sisters through the Spirit!

Online Participants

Suggested Study Schedule

Weekly Study:

Audio/Video Time

Daily Study in the Workbook

“Take the Truth to Heart”

“Bring the Truth to Life”

Begin with Teaching Video/Audio (available online or on the app)

- Each week, schedule a day and time to watch or listen to the teaching lecture.

Daily Study in the Workbook

- Begin your homework in the workbook with Lesson One the day after you watch or listen to the introductory lecture.
- There are six days of homework in each lesson.
- Days Two through Five include a “Take the Truth to Heart” box.

Bring the Truth to Life Pages

- At the end of each lesson, on Day Six, complete the “Bring the Truth to Life” pages (see Day Six, pg vii).
- Share an image of your “Bring the Truth to Life” pages with your online group leader via email or text. The purpose of this section is to enable women to identify their sin and confess it.
- Your online group leader will respond to you and pray for you specifically.
- If you have any questions about these steps, please contact your online group leader as soon as possible. She will be happy to help you.

Optional:

Review Discussion Questions (available online)

- Pray, reflect and note how the Lord spoke to you through the teaching.
- Read the main point of the lesson and answer the Discussion Questions.

These documents and more are available on our app (Begin Here) and website (Resources).



Care Card

Name & Cell _____
Date & Lesson Title: _____

Thistlebend Homework
____ I completed the homework I committed to do each day
_____ I only completed _____ days of homework.

The reason I did not fully complete my homework is:

Personal Spiritual Prayer Request:

Prayer Requests for Family & Friends:

Questions or Concerns:

Feedback

1. What was most helpful to you personally about the lecture?

2. Was there anything that was confusing or that you did not understand?

3. What was most helpful to you about the homework?

4. Was there anything that was confusing or that you did not understand?



Thistlebend Affirmation and Commitment

Our Affirmation

We love because God first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). We want to follow God, trust His will for our lives, and no longer live for ourselves. *"And He did call for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:15).*

We want to love the Lord and others as He commands in His Word. Jesus said,
"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. 37 The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mk. 12:29-31).

Having witnessed the destructive power of sin in our hearts and lives, we desire to learn how to repent of our sins and walk forward by grace through faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We desire to lay down our pride and humbly admit that we cannot do this on our own. We desire the support of fellow Christians and are willing to allow others to speak truth into our lives. James 5:16 clearly says, *"Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." Our relationship with God is not private. Because, as Christians, we are a part of the body of Christ, what we do in our personal affairs affects our brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore, we speak the truth to one another in love (Eph. 4:25, Col. 3:9). Confessing our sin to another believer strips away the mask of hypocrisy. Confession humbles us, which uproots pride.*

We want to seek the Lord's grace to enable us to walk humbly and carefully, denying ungodliness and every worldly thing (Eph. 4:15-21; 1 Tim. 2:15-17).

As true disciples of Christ, we want to follow Jesus' commands to take up our cross and follow Him in obedience. *"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.' (Mk. 16:24-27).*

We want to love our lives in the light of the gospel by grace through faith.

We want daily labor to be, by grace through faith, "Take the Truth to Heart" and "Bring the Truth to Life."

We want to share each other's joys and bear each other's burdens and sorrows with love, joy, compassion, and prayerfulness.

We want to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We desire to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, as our spiritual form of service and worship (Rom. 12:1).

Remembering God's love for us, we want to forgive others as we have been forgiven. *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).*


Day Six

Bring the Truth to Life

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

2 Peter 3:18

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Looking Back

In what areas has the Lord given you wisdom, grace, repentance, or encouragement this week?

STEP ONE: Take the Truth to Heart

Review the Take the Truth to Heart sections from each day. Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from the week that the Lord is using to renew your mind and transform your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, or train you (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

Bring the Truth to Life Chart

This chart is to be filled out on class day.

1

Step One
*Take the Truth
To Heart*

>

2

Step Two
*Put the Flesh
To Death*

>

3

Step Three
*Bring the Truth
To Life*

NAME	SCRIPTURE	SIN	ACTION



Day One

God's Plan of Love

FOUNDATIONAL OVERVIEW: EPHESIANS 1-6:9

Beloved, the LORD God Almighty loves you and longs to have a deep, loving, intimate relationship with you. This can be hard to hold onto in the throes of daily life. Even though we are in Christ, we face many trials, challenges, and pain of living in a sinful world and with our remaining sin. Myriad thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and distractions assail our minds and penetrate our hearts every day. The battle rages on. We need Jesus. We need His help, His power, and His hope; we need Him! Be encouraged. This very reason is why Paul writes this letter. It is why Paul prays as He does and why he considers it a great honor and blessing to be a prisoner of Christ. As we open this study in Ephesians, we find ourselves in the third chapter. A vast ocean of doctrine is packed into this short letter, so we must take it one step at a time. Therefore, we will do a review this week and cover some historical background information to set the stage for Paul's grand reveal of God's mystery hidden for ages.

I encourage you to pause and pray for a moment before you continue. Look to the Holy Spirit to teach, encourage, and equip you. Ask God to grant wisdom as you study, there is much to take in. Thoughts and feelings may flood your mind and heart. Even when God reveals the mystery He has hidden for ages, it is more than we can wrap our minds around. God stretches us and our imaginations. His eternal plans are hard for us to comprehend. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, we are very short-sighted. Consider the wonder of God's magnificent ways as Isaiah describes, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Is. 55:8-9).

God's ways and thoughts are much different and higher than ours. This truth about God's infinite and perfect wisdom brings to mind my memories as a young teenager. My limited and faulty perspective frequently impacted how I responded to difficult or unpleasant circumstances. I recall sitting in Algebra I and then much to my dismay, Algebra II. Thoughts repeatedly ran through my mind like, "why in the world do I need to know this and when will I ever use it?" Thankfully, the Lord knows far better what we need to grow and mature than we do. He sovereignly ordains or permits all

that forms our development and foundation for our future. He is our heavenly Father and His plans are perfect. Today, I see parenting with a fresh perspective as we watch our adult children navigate the mountain of considerations, plans, and preparations as they seek God's wisdom to raise their children and prepare them for adulthood as Christians in an increasingly secularized society.

The possibilities they faced were more than they could wrap their minds around at first. Hopes and dreams came with a multitude of questions. They wondered, "How do we train up our children to love the Lord? How do we approach family devotions? What type of education or curriculum would best fit each child? What academic level or potential career path would they choose? What preparatory education did they think would be appropriate to establish their children's beliefs, character, and academics? Did they want Christian, public, private, home, or charter schooling? What about extra-curricular activities?" There was so much! And of course time and resources had to be factored into these considerations. This was only the tip of the iceberg—there are many decisions that present themselves long before children even form their first words or approach school age. Some must be answered immediately while others can wait.

Young children do not care about these things. They cannot possibly comprehend the wide world, its intricacies, challenges, and complexities, nor its delights and discoveries. Parents must look ahead, choose a plan, and prepare for their children's future but they will not share many of these with them when they are in pre-school or early elementary. Most plans remain unspoken or "hidden" until children become of age—which vary from child to child. Immaturity, naivete, and self-centeredness often prevent many children from understanding or being interested in the future. All they can see is the present. They may observe their friends granted freedoms, privileges, or possessions they want but have been denied. They may become confused or even resentful. Mom or Dad can explain that there is a plan in place for their future but the words go right over their heads. They pray that their children will one day understand their intent, but ultimately parents must trust God with the outcome. They are not in control!

As children of God, can be much like little children and miss the bigger picture—we, too, can be focused on our way of thinking and the here and now. It can be very difficult to grasp the bigger picture. The LORD God Almighty had a plan from before the foundation of the world to be in relationship with His people. He desired to have loving, intimate communion with His most precious creation and dwell amongst them (Gen. 1:27-28). And this good, omniscient, almighty, and omnipresent God is able to accomplish *all* that He wills. Many of the details of His plan were not revealed until the coming of Christ. This mystery, hidden for ages, was entrusted specifically to Paul, to reveal it to the saints—both Jew and Gentile. Many might question the importance of reviewing the historical details of the mystery that God had hidden for ages, just as I doubted the necessity to study Algebra. However, God wants us to press in to seek knowledge and understanding of His plan for the ages. He says, "For

whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). We can and should ask God for His grace to give us the capacity *and* the desire to dig deeper to see things from His eternal perspective. We want to comprehend more fully all He has done in the past so we have much deeper appreciation for the vast spiritual blessings we enjoy right now and have to look forward to in heaven.

God spoke to Moses almost thirty-five hundred years ago, as recorded in the book of Exodus, commanding him and the people of Israel to construct a temple, a tabernacle—a tent of meeting, where He would meet with His people and dwell in their midst. He gave them very intricate and explicit instructions. Moses and the people followed them down to the very last detail, just as God instructed. When the tabernacle was erected, it and all its contents were anointed with holy oil and then a cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

Nearly five hundred years later, God directed his people, to build a magnificent, permanent temple of stone in Jerusalem. God would no longer dwell in a tent. Through King David and his son, King Solomon, God gave His people intricate and detailed instructions as to what items to collect and how to construct and furnish the temple. Solomon brought the things that David, his father, had dedicated: the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasuries of the house of the LORD. After seven years of construction, the Temple was completed; the priests brought the ark into the temple and into the Holy Place. King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel assembled before the ark, sacrificing and worshiping with song, cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets, and the house of the Lord was filled with the majesty and magnificence of His presence. We read in 1 Kings, *"And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord"* (1 Kgs. 8:10-11).

An ongoing cycle of sin and rebellion, trial and tribulation followed. Then, at just the right time, after hundreds and hundreds of generations had passed, God, in His mercy, sent His Son just as He promised through the prophet Isaiah, *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)"* (Mt.1:23). In the Gospel of John, we read, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (Jn. 1:14). Our mighty and holy God unfurled His magnificent plan of redemption. He had made a way where there seemed to be no way to dwell amongst His sinful, rebellious people. The mystery of His will, which He set forth in His Son, was far beyond anyone's wildest imagination! God now dwells within us—His people—through the Holy Spirit. He no longer dwells within an earthly tent or a building—He dwells in His holy temple—the body of Christ! When Jesus ascended into heaven, the Father sent the Spirit in His name. God the Father, God the Son, and God

the Holy Spirit came to dwell within us! Christ has broken down every barrier and limitation. God has made a way for all His people to meet with Him. We are His temple now, but God is not finished. There is still ongoing construction; we are growing into a holy temple and being built together. *And* as believers, each of us is a holy temple—a living stone in the temple of God being built up into a spiritual house to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus (1 Pt. 2:5). God's Spirit dwells in us (1 Cor. 3:16)!

We wonder, “How can this be? How can I be a temple? How can I be a sacred place of worship?” Life is filled with so many pressures and distractions. We are faulty and frail human beings overwhelmed by the demands and stresses of everyday life, caring for children, managing a household, navigating difficult relationships, concerns about our unsaved family members, and constant news headlines. We think, “How does this work?” We see our sin and feel our weakness. Can we really be God's holy temple, His dwelling place? Why would He possibly want to dwell within us? It is not only hard to fathom, it is impossible to fathom, but it is true. We are a dwelling place for God in Jesus Christ. We are His holy temple created to worship Him. We do not just have a new *identity*; we are a new *entity*—profoundly different from what and who we once were. God had a plan, a perfect plan. In Christ, you are a part of His perfect plan of love. God the Father loves you . . . He loves you . . . He loves you . . . with an everlasting love He loves you! He has chosen you for Himself and to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

As you begin this study, I am praying you will be unexpectedly moved by God's Spirit and hear His call to you through Paul. We can ask the Lord that we might grow in faith and love and every grace, beyond that which we can imagine ourselves. He tells us to ask. He is greater and mightier than we. Earnestly continue to seek Him, draw near to Him, rest your head upon His breast and allow Him to wrap His loving arms around you. Look to Him to answer your every need. He is the One who has taught us to pray. Ask that God would grant you His amazing grace as you pray the following suggested requests. (Write a prayer below each in your own words)

Abba Father,

Grow my understanding of your love for me and grow me more and more in my love for you.

Grant me your grace that I would be overwhelmed by your loving glorious plan for us and your church.

May I be compelled to follow in Paul's faithful footsteps no matter where you lead.

May I abide in you and along with other fellow believers in unity.

May I fervently seek to know you more fully, dwell with you more closely, enjoy you more completely, and bring the gospel to life to all those around me

Glorify yourself in and through me, your holy temple, and may many see, have holy fear, and know that you are God.

Other.

I encourage you not to skip the following, powerful, age-old hymn by John Newton, the slave trader who by God's amazing grace was redeemed by God, became a faithful minister, and wrote many hymns, including Amazing Grace.

I asked the Lord that I might Grow
by John Newton (1779)

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and ev'ry grace,
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once He'd answer my request
And, by His love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in ev'ry part.

Yea, more with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Humbled my heart and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this," I trembling cried;
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
That thou may'st find thy all in Me."



Day Two

Paul's Love

Paul writes a once in a lifetime letter overflowing with his great love for the Ephesians and for all the saints. He opens with a warm greeting but immediately bursts into praise expounding upon all the spiritual blessings we have received in the heavenly places, marveling at how God chose us before the foundation of the world, predestined us for adoption through Jesus, His Son, and redeemed us through His blood. As we begin this study of Ephesians 3-6:9, we want to stop for a moment, review and reflect upon what Paul shared in Ephesians 1-2. We need God's power and love to comprehend what God has done for us in Christ and who we are in Him. While it will take more than a lifetime for us to assimilate all Paul has shared, by God's grace we can live today in these glorious truths. Let us pray and ask God to help set the context and illumine our minds. I would like us to use this prayer to prepare our hearts, often used by John Calvin, renowned 16th century French theologian and pastor, before he taught God's Word.

We call upon you, our good God and Father, beseeching you, since all the fullness of wisdom and light is found in you, in your mercy to enlighten us by the Holy Spirit in the true understanding of the Word. Teach us by your Word to place our trust in you and to serve and honor you as we ought, so that we may glorify your holy name in all our living and edify our neighbors by our good example. May we render to you, O God, the love and obedience which children owe to the parents, since it has pleased you graciously to receive us in Christ as your children. Amen.

Read Ephesians as a recipient of this letter from Paul written almost 2000 years ago but fully applicable today. As a believer in Christ who desires to live for Him, this epistle is written to you. It is a letter from your heavenly Father. Ephesians is a heavenly, priceless treasure that stirs in our hearts the effectual, irresistible call of God that raised us from the dead—the call that compels us to live lives set apart to Christ because we are in Christ. Today we will focus on Ephesians 1. Take notes as you read the following passages. Record the key points with Scripture references. Include the ways you are encouraged, challenged, or edified.

Ephesians 1:1-2 Paul's Greeting

Remember that as a believer in Christ, this epistle is written to you. It is a letter to you from your heavenly Father.

Ephesians 1:3-6 Paul Praises God and Extols Him for All Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Paul is overcome with awe and thanksgiving. His heart overflows with an abundant outpouring of gratitude and praise as he contemplates what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. This is the overflow we want to pour forth from the depths of our hearts each day. In His great love and mercy, God our Father redeemed us and blesses us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He extols God and all the blessings He has given to us in Christ.

Ephesians 1:7-14 Paul's Praise Continues

Take a moment to reflect on your redemption in Christ and note your thoughts and say a prayer of thanks to your loving Father and Jesus Christ His Son.

Ephesians 1: 15-23 Paul's Prayer for the Saints

Where do you need strengthening, wisdom, or compassion to love others more like Christ?

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Meditate upon this Scripture today. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out. Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Three

Before Christ. After Christ

Before Christ, we were all dead in our trespasses and sins, following the course of this world, and living in our passions. We were destined for destruction, awaiting the wrath of God. We were part of the dark kingdom with its dark lord, and we never would have found freedom unless God had intervened. The only way to freedom would be deliverance provided by someone or something far more powerful. All of us were born imprisoned and addicted to sin, unable to respond and unable to save ourselves, deserving of death as Paul boldly proclaims in Ephesians 2:4-6, *“But God, being rich in mercy; because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* Only because of the great love with which God loved us have we been saved.

Now, because of Christ, we are alive!

Today, we are going to read the first half of Ephesians 2. Take notes as you read. Record the key points and Scripture verses. Include the ways you are encouraged, challenged, or edified.

Ephesians 2:1-3 Before Christ

Ephesians 2:4-10 After Christ**TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART**

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Meditate upon this Scripture today. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out. Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Four

One Holy Temple

We Gentiles once were outsiders, ignorant to grace, separated from Christ, alienated from God's family, strangers to the promise, and without hope. However, God provided all that was needed for our access into the gates of His kingdom. God the Father offered His one and only Son to purchase our entrance into heaven with His precious blood. Anyone who, through grace by faith, trusts in Christ's sacrifice as atonement for sin is granted free access to God. Christ has torn down the great wall of the law that prevented all from entering. Knowing our weakness and inability, Jesus Christ stepped forward and perfectly fulfilled each and every ordinance and command on our behalf.

Today we will read the second half of Ephesians 2. Take notes as you read. Continue as you have been doing on days two and three. Record the key points and Scripture verses. Include the ways you are encouraged, challenged, or edified.

Ephesians 2:11-19a One in Christ

Now in Christ, those who were near *and* those who once were far off have been brought in by His blood. The mystery is that in Christ, God chose to make His greatness known also among the Gentiles through His Gospel, that they too would receive Christ and the hope of future glory.

Ephesians 2:11b-22 A Dwelling Place for God

According to God's perfect plan, He has made a people for Himself who are holy and set apart to Him alone, a people for His glory to magnify His name. We are the living stones in His spiritual house. Christ unites us together as one and dwells among His people. This temple of the living God is an amazing mystery accomplished by His amazing grace for His glory!

What are some of the reasons it is important for us to understand that we are God's holy temple? Write your answer in the space provided.

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Meditate upon this Scripture today. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out. Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Five

Living in Christ

Today, we will read Ephesians 3, 4, 5, and 6:1-9. Pray before you begin. Ask the Lord to help you engage with the text and grant you an overall picture of the content we will be covering during the study. The Holy Spirit will give you the understanding you need of what God is communicating.

When you have completed each chapter reflect on what you have read. Write down your thoughts, reflections, and questions. This can help you process the information and be prepared for the study. Include the ways you are encouraged, challenged, or edified.

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6:1-9**TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART**

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Meditate upon this Scripture today. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out. Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Six

Bring the Truth to Life

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Looking Back

In what areas has the Lord given you wisdom, grace, repentance, or encouragement this week?

STEP ONE: Take the Truth to Heart

Review the Take the Truth to Heart sections from each day. Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from the week that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

STEP TWO: Put the Flesh to Death

What sin (wrong thinking or ungodly thought, belief, attitude, action, or inaction) is being addressed by the Scripture you wrote? Confess this in writing. Also, include an example of where you saw the evidence of this sin in your life this week. Ask for the Lord's forgiveness. Receive His mercy and grace (1 Jn. 1:9-10).

What do you need to "put off" from your old self or adjust in your thinking, beliefs, attitude, or behavior to submit to God? Apply His truth to your mind and heart (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5-9).

STEP THREE: Bring the Truth to Life

Walking forward in repentance and faith by God's grace, what will you "put on" (Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10, 12, 14)? How are you going to do this? Be specific in your plan of action and be encouraged by what the Lord is going to do.

Remember God's love in the gospel. You have died, and Christ now lives in you. Walk in love. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it, and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to practice your weekly memory verse. Write it below.

Bring the Truth to Life Chart

This chart is to be filled out on class day.

1

Step One

*Take the Truth
To Heart*

2

Step Two

Put the Flesh To Death

3

Step Three

*Bring the Truth
To Life*