

# BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

*How to live the Christian life*

**EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 15**  
*“Commitment to the Church” - Ephesians 2:19-22*

*<sup>1</sup>And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup>among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus..<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them <sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup>having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup>and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup>And He came and preached peace*

to you who were afar off and to those who were near.<sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” – Ephesians 2:1-18 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,<sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” -Ephesians 2:19-22

## KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EPHESIANS

To gain a better understanding of the Book of Ephesians, consider the following background information:

1. **Authorship: The Apostle Paul** - Traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul.
2. **Date of Writing: A.D. 60-63** - Likely written around A.D. 60-63 during Paul's Roman imprisonment.
3. **Place of writing: Rome** – Paul wrote the book/letter of Ephesians from a Roman prison
4. **Audience: Ephesian Christians at Ephesus and surrounding area** Addressed to the Christian community in Ephesus, a major city in Asia Minor. Ephesians is considered a same 7 churches
5. **Purpose: How to live the Christian life** To strengthen the faith of believers and address issues of unity and spiritual maturity.
6. **Themes: Grace, the church, and holy living** - Key themes include grace, the church as the body of Christ, and the importance of living a holy life.
7. **Structure: Ephesus is divided into two main sections** - Divided into two main sections: doctrinal teachings (chapters 1-3) and practical applications (chapters 4-6).
8. **Cultural Context: Ephesus was center of commerce and religion** - Ephesus was a center of commerce and religion, known for the Temple of Artemis.
9. **Significance: Mystery of the gospel and inclusion of Gentiles** - Emphasizes the mystery of the Gospel and the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan.
10. **Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians' emphasis on the spiritual battle** Concludes with a call to spiritual readiness and the armor of God (chapter 6).

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. I mentioned three ways in which most Christians have an inadequate view of the church. Can you think some ways that unbelievers/non-Christians have an inadequate view of the church? What about some ways Christians have an inadequate view of the church?
2. At what point should a person leave a church that has problems? What criteria should he use to evaluate this?





Now in our passage in Ephesians 2:19-22 there are three compelling reasons that a  
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### **3 Reasons Christians Must Commit Themselves to the Local Church:**

- (1) You must commit yourself to the local church because it is God's **kingdom**
- (2) You must commit yourself to the local church because it is God's **household**
- (3) You must commit yourself to the local church because it is God's **temple**, where He **dwells**

### **YOU MUST COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE LOCAL CHURCH BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S KINGDOM**

***"<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." -Ephesians 2:19***

***"Now, therefore"*** (or "so them") introduces the consequence of the preceding verses, that the Gentiles and Jews have been reconciled to one another and to God through the cross.

***"<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints..."***

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- N (I j i i ( ( ( (K 4 (R ( (O (k ( i 6
  - He revealed Himself to them in a way that He did not do with any other people on earth.
  - He made exclusive covenants and promises with them (Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5).
  - But now God has created a new man, the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles.
  - **The church is presently His kingdom people on this earth.**
  - The Gentiles (you and I) are not second-class citizens in this new people of God, but rather, they are fellow-k ( ( ( i (Ń ( (O ( ( 16

Now here it is again the first part of verse 19, ***"<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners..."***

Note that Paul again reminds the Gentiles of what they once were **strangers** and **foreigners** or aliens (see 2:12). **He does not want us to forget where we would be if God had not graciously brought us near.** The two words are somewhat synonymous, but if there is a distinction

- **"strangers"** = refers to a **foreigner**
- **"aliens"** = refers to the **foreigner** who lives in the **land** as a resident alien

**NOTE: Both words convey exclusion. You're an outsider. Even though you may be living in the country legally, you don't possess the same rights as legal citizens. You're treated differently. You don't really belong. As Gentiles, that was our status before the cross.**

But now, Paul says, ***"<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints..."***

Your spiritual new birth in Christ has made you a natural citizen of His kingdom.

- You now live under His rule.
- You now have certain privileges and responsibilities as a member of this spiritual kingdom.
- You enjoy the benefits that He provides, such as protection from enemies.
- But also, you must obey His sovereign rule.
- If He calls you into battle, you must willingly go and fight.
- If He asks you to represent Him, you gladly do so.
- As a member of His heavenly kingdom of light, you are distinct from those who are citizens of this earthly kingdom of darkness.
- The sovereign of this heavenly kingdom demands your total allegiance.

Paul continues to emphasize that the Jews and the Gentiles, who were formerly alienated from one another, are now ***fellow citizens***" (K ( 6

- ***"fellow citizens"*** = **this means that there are no racial or cultural distinctions among the people of God** (We all have equal standing before God in Christ Jesus. Because the church is His kingdom, you must commit yourself to it)

***"<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."*** -1 Peter 2:9-11

1 Peter 2:9-10 puts it this way, ***"<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. ( ( ( applies it (2:11), <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.***

But because a single analogy is insufficient, Paul adds another:



*“<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” -Ephesians 2:19-22*

Paul uses a third analogy, of a building. But he is not talking about just any building, but rather, the temple, where God manifests His presence in a special way. God is omnipresent, but there is a special sense in which He dwells in His holy temple. The Jews experienced this as the Shekinah, the brilliant manifestation of the glory of God. But now, Paul says, the church is this temple.

Keep in mind that Paul is talking about the church as *people*, not as a literal *building*. In the Old Testament era, the temple was a sacred building. It may have been appropriate then for

the temple now consists of His people. The New Testament sometimes refers to individual members of the church as the temple. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:19, *“<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”* But here Paul is referring to the saints corporately in a given locale. The people of God who gather in that locale are together the temple where God is worshiped and where He dwells.

Paul describes here the church as the temple of God.

### **3 Parts of God’s Temple... The Church:**

(1) **The foundation:** God founded the church on New Testament truth, with Jesus Christ central to everything (Ephesians 2:20) - *“<sup>20</sup> Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”* The church is built *“on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.”* Paul means that the foundation consists of the apostles and prophets, with Christ being the cornerstone.

- *Apostles* refers to the Twelve and Paul, along with James and, perhaps, Barnabas (1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:7-9; 1 Cor. 9:6). They had seen the risen Lord Jesus and He commissioned them with special authority to found the church.
- *Prophets* refers to New Testament prophets in the early church (Eph. 3:5; 4:11). Before the canon of the New Testament was completed, the prophets received direct revelation from God to build up and encourage the church (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:3, 29-32). While there is debate over whether the gift or office of prophet is still operative today, the truth that we now possess in the New Testament, the testimony about Jesus Christ.

*This means that there are some crucial criterion for you to consider before you choose a particular local church...*

## 2 Crucial Criterion in Choosing a Church:

1. Does it emphasize the preaching and teaching of God's Word as the absolute truth?
2. Does it exalt Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and as center of everything?

If the leaders of the church dodge certain doctrines in the Bible because they are not i ( ( (k ( ( k ( ( ( i ( ( ( ( k k ( that do not hold to these truths, you should not commit yourself to that church (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Not only is the church founded on New Testament truth, but also, that truth necessarily puts Jesus Christ in the center of everything. He is the cornerstone. Some argue that this refers to the capstone that finished off a building. But the context here clearly shows that Paul is talking about the foundation stone that was first laid at the corner. It had to be positioned perfectly, because all of the lines of the building came off that corner stone. **Isaiah 28:16** prophesied of Christ, *"Therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.'"* **Psalm 118:22** predicted of Jesus, *"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone"* (see Matt. 21:42). This means that ( ( j ( i ( ( ( ( i ( ( (K 4 with the apostles and prophets elaborating and explaining the mystery, which had been made known to them by the Holy Spirit (3:4-11, € € 1€ J ( i ( j ( (K 4 supported by Christ, and the lie or shape of the continuing building is determined by K 4 (k Thus any church that diminishes the person or work of Jesus Christ is not a true church. Any church that undermines the inspiration and authority of the Bible must be rejected. Such churches are buildings without a solid foundation.

- (2) **The formation: God is fitting and growing the members of the church together into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:21) – <sup>21</sup>*(Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*"**

**"In whom"** (in both vv. 21 & 22) refers to Christ. **Everything depends on being in union with Him.** In Him, *"the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord."* Paul mixes metaphors here in that he first refers to the church as ( ( ( 4 k ( (ki ( ( €J ( k ( i ( ( i ( inadequate picture, he shifts to a living analogy, stating that they are *growing* into a holy temple. So, like Peter, he views the church as *living stones*, an intriguing oxymoron! In (k k ( ( ( 4 ( ( ( i ( i ( i i ( (

the construction site and then brought to the site and fitted carefully together (1 Kings 6:7). It is a picture of the Lord fitting us together with one another, so that each stone contributes a vital part to the entire wall. Individual stones are not of much value apart from the whole, but when they are fit together, the entire structure becomes a beautiful, functional place where God is worshiped. The implication is that it is only in close relationships with one another that God uses us for His purpose and glory. To do that, He often has to chip off our rough edges, which is a painful process! It is often through relational conflicts in the church that we learn where we need to grow and change. If we submit to the process, the end result is worth it!

**(3) The function: God is building the church together to be His own dwelling place in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22) – “<sup>22</sup> (Jesus Christ) In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”** What an amazing truth (God is building us together into His dwelling place in the Spirit! In the Old Testament, the temple was the special place where God met with His people and revealed Himself. But now, not in a physical building, but in the hearts of His people gathered in one locale, knit together in love (Col. 2:2), God dwells. As stated explicitly in verse 21 and implicitly ( : : 4 (k k (i (O ( ( ik ( (j ( Temple refers to the inner sanctuary, the most holy place. God does not dwell where sin is tolerated or excused away. How much of your behavior would you change if you sensed that you were gathering each week in a place where God in all of His holiness dwells? If you had an i i ( (O ( k ( ( ( i 4 ( ( fferently? In one of his books, Watchman Nee says that if you have a small amount of change in your pocket, you can walk along rather carefree. But if you have a large amount of money in ( k 4 ( i ( (ki 4 i ( ( i ( we realize that both individually and corporately, the living God dwells in our midst, we will be careful to walk in holiness. This also means that when we gather as the church, we should come to *meet with God*. We want to sense His presence in our midst. As Moses prayed (Exod. ; ; 14 ( (T ( k ( ( ( ( 4 ( ( i ( ( (i (i )( ( i ( i ( i ( ( i (j ( (i ( ( (i 4 T 4( i ( ( ( (a )( I want Yo ( ( ( ( (a ( ( )

## CONCLUSION

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People today, it seems, are busier than ever, and that does not help the situation. Others have j ( ( ( (j (k k ( ( ( 4 ( ( ( i (i (i( i ( for why they do not attend church often. However, most people just seem to be looking for something better to do on Sunday mornings than go to a church to worship and learn about God and His ways. Golfing, sleeping-in, sports, fishing, visiting family and many other

( ( ( j ( i ( j ( ( ( ( i ( k k 6 And for some any pretext (ruse) works rain, snow, windy, stormy, might rain, might freeze, might, might, might too hot, too cold, to tied

I would like to suggest to you four reasons why church is a big deal a REALLY big deal! Especially a REALLY big deal for a genuine believer if in fact that fits! Let me give you some reasons why you should plan to be in church every single possible moment you can.

### **Why You Should Make a Huge Commitment to Being in Church Whenever the Doors Are Open:**

- (1) **The local church is a central part of God's strategic plan for your spiritual growth**  
 - I hi ( ( i ( ( i 4 \_ 4 ( ( ( ( k k ( j ( i ( k i 6 ( On a slight technicality, that may be true, but it is certainly far- ( ( O ( ( plan. Jesus said, *"On this rock [Peter's statement that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God] I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not be able to stand against it"* (Matthew 16:18) a ( 4 ( k k ( R ( i 4 ( i ( i 6 ( ( ( ( should pay attention to His plan since it came directly from Him. When a person says ( ( ( ( k k 4 i ( i ( i ( O ( i 6 ( ( i ( i i ( that. You, Christian, can t grow apart from it. You can t! You won t! As a matter of fact, it s more serious than that with out the church you not only don t grow you die a little more all the time spiritually apart from God s designed place in His body for you.
- (2) **You are basically a composite of the five people with whom you spend the most time**  
 - \_When I was a youth pastor, I could easily see how friends (peer pressure) could k ( ( ( ( ( ( ( j i 6 V ( i ( i ( i ( ( j ( ( 4 ( I can see that tendency is true for them as well! Even adults are influenced by their friends and the people with whom they spend the most time. I have come to believe that we are basically a composite of the five people with whom we spend the most time. It is important, therefore, that we choose those people well. That is why it is so valuable for us to be in church every time the doors are open. We need to expose ourselves as much as possible to other followers of Christ who will draw us nearer to God. Paul said it like this: *"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."* (Hebrews 3:13 NIV) We need the support of other believers if we are truly going to grow in Christ.
- (3) **You need the voice of the church to counteract all of the deception that is crammed into your mind all throughout the week** - Paul warns believers in Colossians 2:8, *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."* (NKJV) The word for *"cheat"* in this passage refers to kidnapping another person. We need to be careful that we (our mind/thinking) are not i by false ideologies, by wrong thinking. The term *"traditions"* refers to teachings. Do you realize how many ungodly teachers are speaking into your life every week? Internet. Social

Media. News media. Hollywood. Music. Co-workers. Friends and family. The list seems never ending. With so many messages streaming into your life every week that can much time in church as possible to fill your mind with godly wisdom and **discernment**. Soak in all you can whenever you can!

- (4) **Weekly ministry in a local church helps to build up your spiritual muscles -** In **Ephesians 4**, Paul says that we all are gifted in different ways. When we use our own particular gifts to serve within a church, it is a like a body with many body parts that all work together for a common goal. As Paul discusses serving in this chapter, I find it interesting that he threw in the comment in **Ephesians 4:14** in which he says, *“... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...”* In other words, when we use our spiritual gifts by serving within the local church community, we somehow become better-grounded theologically. It will be more Word. I am sure how that works, but I do know that I have observed it to be true in my own life as well as in the lives of so many I have watched to grow in their journey with the Lord.

Commitment certainly isn't what it used to be. But I **hope** for you, you will go all out in your commitment to Christ and His church. Begin this Sunday!