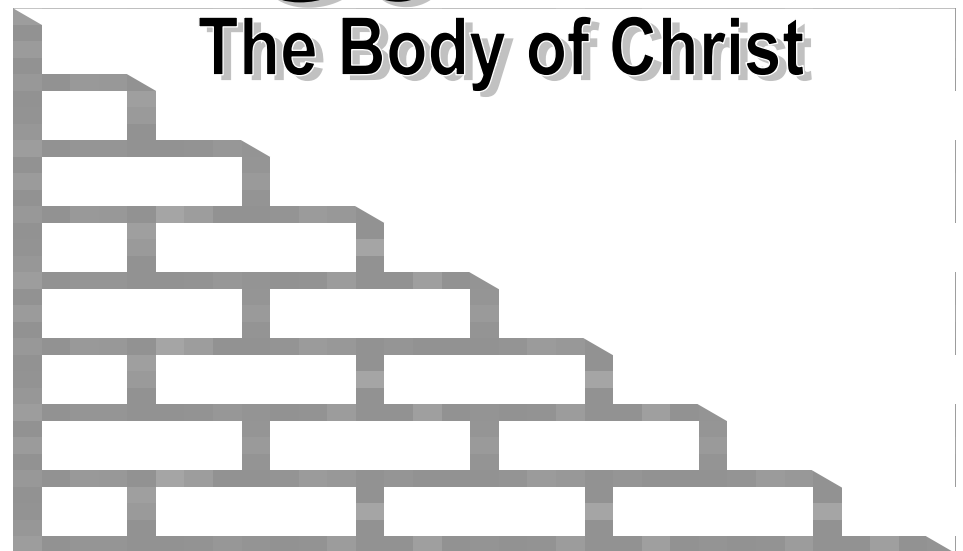




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Building The Body of Christ



BIBLESTUDY GUIDE

BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

STUDY ONE

CHOSEN BY GOD

Ephesians 1: 1 - 23

Introduction

God tells us that we are his chosen people; he predestined us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Divine election and human responsibility are not conflicting subjects; rather, there are two rails that a believer as a train must walk on because it is basically one path. To ignore election leads to salvation by works and fearful insecurity and ignoring human responsibility leads to fatalism.

STUDY

Chosen by the Father

Eph. 1 : 1 - 6

1. (a) How did Paul introduce himself and how did he describe God?
(b) in this passage, what did Paul say that God had done for the believer?
2. What did Paul mean by saying that God had chosen them before the creation of the world? What is the significance of this?
3. For what purpose did God chose us? How is this purpose fulfilled in your life?

Redeemed by the Son

Eph. 1 : 7 - 12

4. According to this passage, what has God done for us through Christ?
5. Discuss the meaning of the following words and phrases

- a) Redemption
- b) Riches of God's grace
- c) The mystery of his will

6. Share how God's grace expressed through Christ has changed your life.

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

Eph. 1 : 13 - 14

7. What did Paul say was the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers?
8. What do you think Paul meant by saying that the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of our inheritance?
9. Share what excites you most about your relationship with God.

God's incomparable power for believers

Eph. 1 : 15 - 23

10. Mention the things that Paul was praying for the believers in Ephesians?
11. What do you think Paul meant with these phrases
 - a) The Spirit of wisdom and revelation?
 - b) The hope to which you were called?
 - c) The riches of his glorious inheritance?
12. God has given us incomparable power through Christ. What is the implication of this in your life today?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 1:4-5

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world
to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us
to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ,
in accordance with his pleasure and will.*

STUDY TWO

SAVED BY GRACE ALONE

Ephesians 2 : 1 - 10

Introduction

The catchwords for the reformation popularized by Martin Luther were sola gratia (grace alone), sola fide (faith alone), sola scriptura (scriptures alone). This helped to reinforce the truth that salvation is by grace alone and not by works. It is received as God's gift but not achieved by human effort. This rebukes any tendencies towards self-righteousness. It is when we admit how helpless we were that grace becomes the amazing grace that brings hope to the hopeless.

STUDY

Dead in sins

Eph 2 : 1 - 3

1. (a) How did the author describe the former life of the believers?
(b) why do you think he reminded them of their former life?
2. Why did the author say that by nature the Ephesians were objects of wrath? What do you think he meant?
3. How would you describe your former life?

Alive in Christ

Eph. 2 : 4 - 7

4. According to this passage how does new life occur? How does the new life contrast with old life described in vs 1-3?
5. What is the source of our salvation? Does it mean that we play no role in our salvation? Discuss.
6. What is the significance of understanding that salvation is God's gift and how has this helped you live the Christian life?

By grace alone

Eph. 2 : 8 - 10

7. What did the author say about salvation in this passage?
8. We are saved by grace and created to do good works. How are these two phrases harmonized in this passage?
9. According to this passage, why should we not boast about our salvation. How does this apply to you?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 2 : 8 – 9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

STUDY THREE

WE ARE ONE IN CHRIST

Ephesians 2 : 11 – 22

Introduction

Social barriers, ethnicity, denominational tensions and other divisions are evident in our society today. For the Christians, it should be different because God has saved and reconciled individuals to Himself and to each other. Christ broke down the barriers through his own death on the cross and has united us into one body, the church. We are now citizens of God's everlasting kingdom and members of God's extended family.

STUDY

Once separated from Christ

Eph. 2: 11 – 13

1. What was the state of the Gentiles before they came to Christ?
2. What did it mean to be foreigners to the covenants of the promise?
3. What could have been your category before you knew Christ and what difference has it made after coming to Christ?

Now made one body

Eph 2: 14 - 18

4. According to this passage, describe what God has done through Christ concerning
 - a) Our relationship with Him
 - b) Our relationship with others.
5. Discuss what barrier existed between God and us and how the work of Christ on the cross destroyed it?

6. Why do you think hostility between Christians still exists and how should we resolve them?

Built on one foundation

Eph. 2: 19 - 22

7. What is the new foundation of both the Gentiles and the Jews and what is God's purpose through it?
8. a) How is the reconciling work of Christ like new citizenship, a new family, and a new temple?
b) What do you think is the meaning of vs 20?
9. What basis of unity do we find in this passage that is relevant to us today? What barriers of relationship still exists in your life or fellowship that needs to be destroyed and what is your role in that passage?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 2: 19 – 20

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens,
but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

STUDY FOUR

LIVING FOR THE GOSPEL

Ephesians 3: 1 – 21

Introduction

The mystery of Christ was made known to reveal the purpose of God about the body of Christ. To serve and to fulfill the great commission is the call of the church. This is what consumed Paul's passion. The work of the gospel today still demands people to sacrifice their lives in response to God's leading. The church needs to stand in her position and preach good news to the hopeless world so as to fulfill God's internal purpose.

STUDY

The Mystery of the gospel

Eph. 3 : 1 – 6

1. What did Paul say about the mystery of the Gospel and what were its results?
2. What do you think was the significance of the fact that the gospel made the Gentiles heirs together with the Jews?
3. What is the implication of this mystery in our relationships in the body of Christ?

Commitment to the Gospel

Eph 3 : 7 – 13

4. How does Paul view himself in regard to the gospel and what was his responsibility towards the gospel?
5. In which way do you think that the mystery was kept hidden and what was God's purpose in revealing it?

6. How can we effectively take the responsibility of preaching the gospel in our campus/community?

Established in love

Eph. 3 : 14 - 21

7. What did Paul pray for the Ephesians in this passage?
8. What was the significance of believers to be rooted and established in love?
9. In which areas do you think the believers have failed to express love to one another?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 3 : 10 – 11

*His intent was that now, through the church,
the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and
authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he
accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

STUDY FIVE

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4 : 1 – 16

Introduction

In order for the human body to grow smoothly, each organ must work along side other parts, not against them. What is true of the human body is also true of the body of Christ, the Church. In this passage, Paul teaches that if the Church is to grow smoothly, each member must work in cooperation with other members. Despite the strong temptation to turn

against each other, members must live and work interdependently, making every effort to maintain the unity of all believers. May we come to realize that maintaining the unity of all believers is God's will for us as we study this passage.

STUDY

Keeping the unity

Eph. 4: 1 – 6

1. a) According to this passage, what exhortations did Paul give concerning the believers' calling and unity?

b) What reasons did Paul give for this way of life?
2. What is the significance of the beliefs mentioned in vs 5 and vs 6 to the unity of believers and how do they contribute to living out true unity?
3. a) Why do you think it is sometimes difficult for believers to identify with each other as members of the same body?

b) What can you do to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"

Gifts for service

Eph 4: 7 - 13

4. Mention the gifts outlined in this passage, their source and the purpose for which they are given for?
5. How do the gifts mentioned in this passage help to build the body of Christ?
6. "Your gifts can be a source of good as well as harm to the Body of Christ" Discuss.

Growing to maturity

Eph. 4: 14 - 16

7. What importance of spiritual growth do you observe in this passage?
8. How does this passage help us understand the relationship between personal spiritual growth and the growth of the body of Christ?
9. In what ways do you play your part in promoting the growth of the body of Christ? How does spiritual infancy differ from spiritual maturity?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 4: 2 – 3

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of Spirit through the bond of peace.

STUDY SIX

LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

Ephesians 4: 17 – 5: 20

Introduction

To live undefined life as a Christian disturbs many, especially those who do not identify the life in Christ. The one whose allegiance is to Christ cannot be neutral or silent with respect to the work of darkness. He must shun evil and live a new life in Christ. Our lives need to shine in the way we live our lives.

STUDY

Living the new life

Eph. 4 : 17 – 24

1. In this passage,
 - a) How did Paul compare the new life with the former life?
 - b) What did Paul say about living the new life?
2. What is the implication of the phrase “must no longer live as Gentile do” in verse 17, in respect to the new life?
3. Share some of the struggles you go through as you pursue to live the new life?

Putting off the old self

Eph. 4: 25 – 5:7

4. Which aspects of the old-self did Paul ask the Ephesians to put off?
5. Discuss how the exhortations given in verses 4:32, 5:1- 2. And 5:7 would help in living the new life.
6. Share some practical things that has helped you to forsake your former life and live the new life.

Living in the light

Eph 5: 8 – 20

7. What practical things did Paul ask the believers to do as a testimony of living in the light?
8. Explain how the guidelines given in verses 11 and 19 help in living in the light?
9. In which ways has your life been influenced or has influenced others to live the new life?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 5: 1- 2

*Be imitators of God, therefore,
as dearly loved children and live a life of love,
just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us
as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

STUDY SEVEN

NEW RELATIONSHIP IN CHRIST

Ephesians 5: 21 – 6:9

Introduction

God's new society must relate with each in the light of new allegiance to God. Obedience to God brings new a new perspective on our relationship with other people. Specifically, our families need to be a witness of Christ's transforming love. Submission to another in Christ is a general spiritual principle, which is to be applied first and foremost in the Christian family. Paul asked for submission, love, respect, obedience and understanding among different members of a Christian household.

STUDY

Husbands and wives

Eph. 5:21 – 33

1. a) What did Paul say about the husband and wife relationship in this passage and what responsibility did he outline for each of them?
- b) Why did he give such counsel and how did he relate it to Christ and the church?

2. Discuss the significance of submission, love and respect in this kind of relationship.
3. In what ways is the nature of the relationship between husbands and wives described in this passage violated today? How has this affected the families and the society at large?

Children and Parents

Eph. 6:1 - 4

4. What does this passage say about child/father relationship and the responsibility of each of the two?
5. What do you think is the obligation of parents in bringing up children? Ref. Eph 6:4, Col 2:21?
6. In the contemporary world today, what are some of the difficulties of bringing up children in the way of the Lord? What are your suggestions about what the Christians should do?

Slaves and Masters

Eph 6:5 – 9

7. What did Paul say about slaves and masters in this passage?
8. What was the significance and implication of v8 to both slaves and masters respectively?
9. How does your attitude to duty and authority compare to that described above? In which ways is the relationship between the employer and the employee today fail to meet the standards set in this passage?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:7 – 8

*Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,
because you know that the Lord will reward everyone
for what ever good he does, whether he is slave or free.*

STUDY EIGHT SPIRITUAL WALFARE

Ephesians 6:10 – 24

Introduction

The Christian life is a life of joy and peace but it is also a life of spiritual conflict. The Christian is hence always on duty as a soldier and called to stand their ground with a weapon at hand. Paul analysed and described the nature of spiritual warfare and encouraged the believers to arm themselves for this spiritual conflict.

STUDY

Against spiritual forces

Eph 6:10 – 13

1. What did Paul say about the nature of the war the Christians are called to fight? Why is it necessary for them to put on the full armour of God?
2. Why do you think Paul said that the warfare is not against flesh and blood?
3. In verse 10, Paul talked of being in the Lord and in his mighty power. Why and how should a Christian depend on God's power to fight the spiritual forces of darkness?

With spiritual weapons

Eph 6: 14 – 17

4. Mention all the spiritual weapons that Paul asked the Christians to put on.
5. What is the significance of all these weapons in the spiritual warfare?
6. Looking at the weapons mentioned above, which of them are you yet to utilize and what do you plan to do about it?

Through spiritual strategy

Eph. 6:18 – 24

7. a) what did Paul ask the Ephesians to pray for and in which manner?

b) what did Paul say about Tychicus and what was the purpose of sending him to the Ephesians?
8. What does it mean to pray in the spirit? What is the role of prayer in the spiritual warfare?
9. Paul ended this letter with an exhortation to love the Lord with an undying love. How do you think loving the Lord with undying love relate to spiritual warfare?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:11 – 12

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesus was a major commercial, political and religious centre that boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana. Paul preached and taught in Ephesus for about three years and the church flourished. Later while in prison at Rome, Paul wrote the epistle about the same time with Colossians in AD 60. Ephesians was probably a circular letter, intended for other churches in addition to the one in Ephesus, hence there is no doctrinal controversy addressed.

The theme of this letter is God's eternal purpose to establish and complete the church, the Body of Christ. Paul emphasized both the privilege and the responsibilities of the church. God has chosen us and reconciled us to Himself through Christ. Thus the Christians are God's new society with new standards and new relationships.

This study reminds us that we are chosen by God and saved by grace and hence, we cannot boast of anything. Salvation is not achieved by human effort but is received as God's gift. On the other hand, the Christian life is not passive but active and we must be strong and ready for the spiritual conflict with the powers of darkness.

In addition, the study challenges us to forfeit our individualistic tendencies and realize that God is building the Body of Christ in which every Christian is a part. When we understand who we are and what God has done for us, we learn to appreciate each other more. This calls us to cultivate harmony and unity with each other though diverse in ourselves.

TAFES Bible Series

Thy word is a lamp to my feet

Psalms 119:105