


# Studies in the Epistles

## Unit A - Ephesians

### Study 1. Blessings in Christ

#### READ: Ephesians 1 & 2

 **KEY VERSE: Ephesians 2: 22**  
**"In whom (Christ) you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."**

Paul, the Apostle, went to Ephesus during his third preaching tour and stayed there for about three years. (See Acts 19: 1, 8 - 10; 20: 17, 18 & 31)

During that time, many people became Christians, and a church came into being. This letter, however, was written towards the end of his life while in prison in the city of Rome, because of his faith in Christ. It tells us why we need to become Christians and also how God wants us to live the Christian life.

#### A. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST:- 1:1 - 14

Without Christ, we have nothing and are nothing. But the moment we receive Christ as our Lord and Saviour the following become ours:-

1. We are blessed by God with SPIRITUAL THINGS. (Verse 3) They are 'spiritual' blessings, because they deal with 'heavenly' issues which apply to our 'inner' life for our enjoyment.
2. These blessings were all planned for us by God, long ago. (Verse 4)
3. His purpose was that those who were His enemies might be brought into His family with all the status and privilege of being His children. (See 1 John 3: 1 - 3)
4. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and had our sins forgiven because of the "*riches of His grace*". (v. 7) The word 'grace' tells us we did not deserve to be so blessed nor could have achieved them by our own efforts.
5. We have an understanding of God's plan for the future. The Lord Jesus Christ will, ultimately, have control of things in Heaven as well as on earth. (Verses 9 - 10)

These things happened to them when they "*heard the word of truth ... having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit*". (1: 13)

#### B. PAUL'S FIRST PRAYER for the Christians at Ephesus:- 1: 15 - 23

Verse 17 ... that you may know the Lord better.

Verse 18 ... that you may know the hope to which He has called you.

Verse 19 ... and "*the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.*"

In verses 20 - 23 Paul states that this is the same power which was demonstrated in the literal resurrection and enthronement of the Lord Jesus in Heaven.

#### C. A BACKWARD LOOK:- 2: 1 - 3

This is a real, simply stated, factual description of people before Christ saved them.

Verse 1 "*In the past you were spiritually dead because of your sins.*"

Verse 2 "*walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.*"

Verse 3 "*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*"

Verse 3 "*by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*"

Verse 12 "*without Christ, ... having no hope and without God in the world.*"

The mighty power, which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, and enthroned Him in Heaven, 2000 years ago, is the power available to change the situation from one of spiritual death to spiritual life! Note the very important "**BUT**" in verses 4 and 13!

#### D. THE EMPHASIS IS UPON GOD, intervening and changing everything:- 2: 4 - 10

Verses 4 - 5 tell us of God's great love, rich mercy, and grace. He "*made us alive together with Christ*". We are no longer spiritually dead!

He has "*raised us up*" and "*saved*" us. (Verses 6 & 8) We now enjoy a new life far better than the previous one. No longer under the condemnation of God, we are able to fulfil the purpose of our salvation. (Verse 10)

#### E. BROUGHT NEAR THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST:- 2: 11 - 22

Verses 11 - 17 They are reconciled and now at peace with God.

Verse 18 They are brought into a new relationship with God.

Verse 19 They are members of the household of God.

Verse 20 They are built on a wonderful foundation.

Verse 21 They are a "*holy temple*". A dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

Without Christ we are dead, separate from God and without hope. Think of all the blessings we have, if we are "*In Christ*"!

**Study 1. Blessings in Christ**

**1** GOD HAS A PLAN TOWARDS WHICH HE IS WORKING. WHAT IS IT? (SEE 1: 10)

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**2** EXPRESS IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT THE LORD JESUS DID TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR OUR SINS TO BE FORGIVEN. (READ 1: 7)

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**3** WHAT THREE THINGS DOES PAUL WANT THE CHRISTIANS TO KNOW? (SEE 1: 18 - 19)

1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

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**4** IN CHAPTER 2 PAUL CONTRASTS THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN AND A NON-CHRISTIAN. CHECK THE COLUMN TO WHICH THESE DESCRIPTIONS BELONG:-

	A CHRISTIAN	A NON-CHRISTIAN
Dead towards God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alive towards God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saved through faith in Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depending on 'good works'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having no hope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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**5** WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN WHEN HE SAYS "YOU ...WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS"? (SEE 2: 1)

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**6** THE EPHESIANS WERE GENTILES (NON-JEWS). THEY WERE REGARDED BY THE JEWS AS NOT BELONGING TO GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE, WITHOUT GOD AND WITHOUT HOPE.

WHICH VERSE IN CHAPTER 2 TELLS US THIS? Verse .....

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**7** WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THE DEATH OF CHRIST MADE TO THE JEWS WHO WERE "NEAR" TO GOD AND THE GENTILES WHO WERE "AFAR OFF" FROM GOD? (SEE 2: 16 - 19)

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**8** IN THESE CHAPTERS, THE CHURCH, IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST, IS VIEWED IN TWO WAYS.

a) What are they? (See 1: 22 - 23 and 2: 20 - 22 Clue! Both begin with B!)

1. .... 2. ....

b) In what way is Christ related to each of these?

1. ....  
2. ....

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#### Study 4. Relationships and Warfare

READ: Ephesians 5: 22 - 6: 24



**KEY VERSE: Ephesians 6: 18**

**"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints".**

**A. A CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIPS:- 5: 22 to 6: 9**

**1. Wives (5: 22 - 24 & 33)**

**"Submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."** These are not man's ideas but God's instructions. As Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, so the man is the head of the woman. As the Church should submit to the Lord Jesus, so wives should submit to their own husbands. Christ cares for, and protects His people. A man who does this for his wife fulfills God's will, and will gain his wife's respect. (Verse 33)

**2. Husbands (5: 25 - 33)**

**"Love your wives."** This thought is emphasized three times! (Verses 25, 28 & 33) Five active words are used of Christ's commitment to the church. He loves her, gave Himself for her, sanctifies and cleanses her, that He might present her to Himself. How often there is a lack of thoughtful consideration and of understanding on the husband's part! This results in much unhappiness in the home. A husband's love must operate in every part of matrimonial, domestic and social life. The standard God sets is very high! Husbands are to love their wives in the same committed way that Christ loved the Church.

**3. Children (6: 1 - 3)**

**"Children, obey your parents in the Lord."** Here is God's order for the Christian home. The very opposite marks **"the last days"**. (2 Timothy 3: 2) At 12 years of age, the Lord Jesus was obedient to Mary and Joseph, setting for us the perfect example. (Luke 2: 51)

**4. Parents (6: 4)**

**Negatively** - Don't exasperate your children. Hasty actions can be harmful.

**Positively** - Train and instruct them in the Lord. Rejection of discipline in the home cannot be supported by thoughtful Christians.

**5. Slaves (6: 5 - 8)**

**"Be obedient to those who are your masters."** Many households had slaves in those days. A high standard was expected from slaves who were Christians. As employees we should always seek to do our best, as if we were doing each task for the Lord Himself!

**6. Masters (6: 9)**

**"Do the same things to them."** Employers should give the same consideration to their employees as they would expect if they were in their position!

**B. A CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE:- 6: 10 - 24**

**(i) The Enemy (6: 10 - 12)**

There is an abrupt change from home duties to a real enemy. Christians are engaged in conflict with God's enemy - Satan! The Christian challenge is tough and we can only be victorious **"in the Lord, and in the power of His might"**. (Verse 10)

It is not against human beings, but against spiritual powers that we fight. (See verse 12)

The Bible uses a variety of names for this powerful enemy. He is **"the devil"** (verse 11), **"Satan"** (Mark 1: 13), **"the god of this age"** (2 Corinthians 4: 4), and **"the prince of the power of the air"**. (Ephesians 2: 2)

**(ii) The Christian's Armour (6: 13 - 20)**

**1. The belt of truth. (Verse 14)** The Christian standard is absolute - Christ is the Truth. There should be no hypocrisy, insincerity or compromise.

**2. The breastplate of righteousness. (Verse 14)** Protection for the heart - not open to negotiation. The devil cannot touch those resting in God's righteousness.

**3. The sandals of peace. (Verse 15)**

Military sandals supplied a good grip for steady walking. If we have received the good news and enjoy peace with God and others, we should be ready to share the gospel with anyone.

**4. The shield of faith. (Verse 16)**

Manoeuvrable to combat arrows. It can protect each part of the body. Faith in God must operate in each part of our lives.

**5. The helmet of salvation. (Verse 17)**

An un-protected mind is a ready prey to Satan's deceptions, delusions and defilements.

(See Philippians 4: 6 - 9)

**6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. (Verse 17)**

The only offensive weapon mentioned here. Recall how effectively our Lord Jesus used **"the sword of the Spirit"** in His temptation! Three times He repelled Satan by saying, **"It is written..."** (Matthew 4: 4, 7 & 10)

Finally, Paul stresses the need for prayer. This will be effective in the use of all the armour.

**"Prayer and supplication in the Spirit." (Verse 18)**

This means being prompted and guided by Him, praying at all times - regularly and constantly! Keep alert - don't give up!

**"For all the saints." (Verse 18)** This means for all your fellow Christians.

Paul wrote this letter as a prisoner who hadn't committed a crime. How would you fare in similar circumstances? It has been asked - "Would there be enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?" So Paul ends one of the most uplifting documents of all history.

**Study 4. Relationships and Warfare**

**1** SUM UP, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, HOW EACH PERSON SHOULD BEHAVE IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING RELATIONSHIPS:-

WIVES AND HUSBANDS .....

CHILDREN AND PARENTS .....

SLAVES AND MASTERS .....

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**2** IN GIVING TEACHING TO WIVES AND HUSBANDS, PAUL USES AS AN EXAMPLE CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. (5: 22 - 26)

(i) In this example who is the 'husband'? .....

(ii) What did this 'husband' do? .....

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**3** HOW COULD THIS TEACHING ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES AND PARENTS AND CHILDREN AFFECT FAMILIES OF TODAY, IF THEY FOLLOWED PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS?

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**4** WE DO NOT HAVE SLAVES AND MASTERS TODAY, BUT THE PRINCIPLES OF *EPHESIANS 6: 5 - 9* ARE GOOD PRINCIPLES FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS. HOW COULD A CHRISTIAN APPLY THEM TO THE WORKPLACE, IN TODAY'S WORLD?

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**5** READ THE SHORT LETTER OF PAUL TO HIS FRIEND PHILEMON. (SEE *PHILEMON*) EXPRESS, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, HOW PAUL ASKED THE MASTER, PHILEMON, TO BEHAVE TOWARDS HIS FORMER SLAVE, ONESIMUS, IN *VERSES 15 - 19*.

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**6** THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A BATTLE.  
(i) ACCORDING TO *VERSE 12*, AGAINST WHAT DO WE FIGHT?

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(ii) FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS:-

(a) breastplate of ..... (b) shield of .....

(c) helmet of ..... (d) sword of .....

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**7** IN YOUR OWN WORDS, EXPRESS WHAT PAUL WANTED THE CHRISTIANS AT EPHESUS TO PRAY FOR, ACCORDING TO *6: 19 & 20*.

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100  
Total marks  
for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:  
PBS Centre or to:

25  
Total marks  
for this study

READ: Ephesians 3 - 4: 16

#### B. CHAPTER 4: 1 - 16

 **KEY VERSES:** Ephesians 3: 20 & 21  
**“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory...”**

#### A. CHAPTER 3: 1 - 21

##### (i) PAUL EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY:- Verses 1 - 6

By 'mystery' is meant, NOT something mysterious, BUT something previously hidden but now revealed for all to understand.

In *verses 1 - 5*, Paul is saying that teaching never heard before was revealed to him by God. *“In other ages”* it was not made known to the sons of men *“but it has now been revealed by the Spirit”*. (Verse 5)

*Verse 6* explains this particular mystery. It is the fact that Gentiles who become Christians have the same privileges as Jews who become Christians and are united in the body of Christ.

##### (ii) PAUL IS ENABLED TO PREACH:- Verses 7 - 13

In *verse 8* he states that God has appointed him to preach *“among the Gentiles (i.e. non-Jews) the unsearchable riches of Christ”*. He has spoken about *“riches”* of mercy and grace in *Chapter 2*. Christ never makes poor those who put their trust in Him! *Verse 10* explains that even the angelic beings and heavenly powers are learning about *“the manifold wisdom of God”*. The Church is an object lesson to these unseen beings! (See also *1 Corinthians 11: 10*) The people who were enemies of God and of each other, are now displaying the wisdom of God in an ungodly world, and to *“principalities and powers in the heavenly places”*. (Verse 10)

##### (iii) PAUL ENGAGES IN PRAYER A SECOND TIME:- Verses 14 - 21

He turns from preaching to prayer, from instruction to intercession. The substance of his prayer:-

1. For strength (*verse 16*) - in the inner man, i.e. where God is working.
2. For love (*verse 17*) - a sure foundation for life.
3. For maturity in the love of Christ. (*Verses 18 & 19*)

These things should have priority in our prayer life!

##### (i) THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH:- Verses 1 - 6

Here is a seven-fold unity made and sustained by God. It is a spiritual unity. It is not man made and cannot be broken by human beings.

1. *“There is one Body”*. The old distinctions between Jews and Gentiles are abolished. All true believers, from every race and colour, are ONE in Christ. They are joined to Him as the Head, and are under His control, rule and guidance. This Church has no headquarters upon earth.

2. *“And one Spirit”*. All are personally indwelt by the same Holy Spirit.

3. *“You were called in one hope of your calling.”* All share one inheritance. All will one day share the same eternal glory. (*Philippians 3: 20 and 1 Peter 1: 4*) Natural hope sometimes dies but Christian hope never can!

4. *“One Lord.”* All serve one Lord. See *Acts 2: 36 and Acts 9: 6*

5. *“One Faith.”* All possess a great treasure in *“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”*. (*Jude 3*)

6. *“One Baptism.”* Baptism is Christ's command, and has been practised by Christians ever since. (*Matthew 28: 19*)

7. *“One God and Father of all, who is above all,* (His pre-eminence) *and through all* (His power) *and in you all.”* (His presence)

##### (ii) GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH - THE BODY OF CHRIST:- Verses 7 - 16

✧ The provider of spiritual gifts is Christ. (*Verses 7 - 10*)

✧ The gifts are varied. (*Verse 11*)

(Foundational / Pastoral / Evangelistic)

✧ They are for building up the Church, equipping it and bringing it to maturity. (*Verses 12 & 13*)

As each member of the church operates according to the 'gift' or 'ability' that God has given, so the Church develops and becomes strong. (See *verses 14 - 16*)

## Study 2. Unity in Christ

### Chapter 3

1 WHAT IS THE SECRET, OR MYSTERY, ABOUT WHICH PAUL WRITES? (3: 6)

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2 WHAT ARE THE ANGELIC RULERS ("PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES") LEARNING FROM THE CHURCH? (SEE 3: 10)

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3 READ AGAIN PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS. (3: 16 - 19) FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS IN HIS PRAYER USING THE FOLLOWING PHRASES.

*"the love of Christ" "in your hearts" "rooted and grounded" "in the inner man"*

- 1) To be strengthened with might through His Spirit .....
- 2) That Christ may dwell ..... through faith.
- 3) That you may be ..... in love.
- 4) You may know ..... passes knowledge.

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4 LOOK AT 3: 19 - 21. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EXTENT OF GOD'S LOVE, POWER AND GLORY?

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### Chapter 4

5 A) READ VERSE 2 AND MAKE A LIST OF THE QUALITIES WHICH SHOULD CHARACTERIZE CHRISTIANS IN THEIR EVERYDAY BEHAVIOUR.

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B) LOOK AT GALATIANS 5: 22 AND 23. WHAT OTHER CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD CHRISTIANS HAVE?

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6 A) WHAT WORD IS USED IN CONNECTION WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS FROM 4: 4 - 6? BODY, SPIRIT, HOPE, LORD, FAITH, BAPTISM, GOD AND FATHER OF ALL. ....

B) WHY DOES PAUL EMPHASIZE THE IDEA OF UNITY SO MUCH IN THIS LETTER?

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7 SINCE HIS ASCENSION CHRIST HAS GIVEN VARIOUS GIFTS TO THE CHURCH e.g. EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, TEACHERS ETC. IN YOUR OWN WORDS EXPLAIN WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS? (SEE 4: 11 - 13)

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8 PAUL GOES BACK TO THE THOUGHT OF THE CHURCH BEING "THE BODY OF CHRIST." (4: 14 - 15) HOW WILL THIS BODY GROW? (SEE VERSE 16)


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#### Study 3. The Christian's Walk

READ: Ephesians 4: 17 - 5: 21

 **KEY VERSE: Ephesians 5: 8**  
**“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”**

Paul continues to describe the new standards which are expected of those belonging to *“the body of Christ”*. He writes with the authority of the Lord Jesus, as one of His apostles. See **chapter 4: 17** *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord...”*

**A. LIVE A LIFE THAT IS DIFFERENT:- 4: 17 - 32**

**Verses 17 - 19** *“you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk.”* He then describes features of people's lives who live without God. Do you recognize this life style where you live?

Their thoughts are worthless because their minds are dark. They have not the life which God gives; they are ignorant and stubborn, and have lost all sense of shame; they give themselves over to vice and all kinds of wickedness. (Read **verses 17 - 19** again.)

For so many people this description is simply 'the norm'.

Christians must be different! They follow Christ's way, for He is their Lord. All this calls for a radical change in life style!

Therefore, you must **“put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man...”** (**verse 22**) **“and put on the new man...”** (**verse 24**) The following verses explain what this means in everyday living.

- \* No more lying. (**Verse 25**)
- \* Deal with your anger correctly. (**Verse 26**)
- \* No more stealing - be honest and useful. (**Verse 28**)
- \* Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. (**Verse 30**)
- \* Get rid of bitterness, passion, evil speaking and wickedness. (**Verse 31**)

**Verse 32** expresses very positively how Christians should live: **“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you”**.

**B. LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE & HOLINESS:- 5: 1 - 21**

- (i) **Verses 1 - 2** Love is to be the main feature of a Christian's life.  
 The love of the Lord Jesus is the great pattern for

us. We can be sure that when God commands (**verse 1**) He provides the strength we need.

- (ii) **Verses 3 - 7** We are to live a life of purity. Instead of living self-indulgent and lustful lives, we are to be marked by self-sacrifice and genuine love.

For a Christian, all sexual intercourse outside the context of a loving marriage is forbidden.

- \* **Verse 3** - Don't joke about sex!
- \* **Verse 4** - Obscene, profane and vulgar talk is out of place for the Christian.
- \* **Verse 4** - All God's gifts, including sex, are subjects for thanksgiving rather than joking.
- \* **Verse 6** - Because many people get away with an immoral life on earth, it doesn't mean they will escape detection, conviction and **“the wrath of God”**.

- (iii) **Verses 8 - 14** Live as children of light.

Light and darkness do not mix. When conversion to Christ takes place, our thinking is illuminated and so is the way we live.

When righteousness, goodness and truth are seen in a person's life, the impact upon those we come into contact with is considerable.

Read **Philippians 2: 15**.

- (iv) **Verses 15 - 21** Live wisely.

**Verse 15** - Wisdom is available - ask for it! (**James 1: 5**)

**Verse 16** - We are accountable for how we use our time.

**Verse 17** - We should make it our aim to do **“the will of the Lord”** in our lives.

**Verse 18** - Drunkenness was a problem at Ephesus and in Paul's world. Drunkenness is still a massive problem in society. The antidote is - Be filled (controlled) with the Spirit of God, not excess of wine.

Being filled with the Spirit will lead to:-

- a. **fellowship**  
*“speaking to one another ...”* **verse 19**
- b. **worship**  
*“singing ... in your heart to the Lord”* **verse 19**
- c. **gratitude**  
*“giving thanks always for all things”* **verse 20**

This Study is full of practical teaching. Paul gives equal emphasis to doctrine and practical Christian living. As James says in his letter, **“faith without works is dead”**. (**James 2: 26**)

**Study 3. The Christian's Walk**

**1** (A) "PUT OFF, CONCERNING YOUR FORMER CONDUCT..." (4: 22) READ VS. 25 - 29 AND LIST THREE ASPECTS OF "FORMER CONDUCT" WHICH A CHRISTIAN SHOULD "PUT OFF".

1. .... 2. .... 3. ....

(B) EXPLAIN, AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN, WHY THESE SHOULD BE "PUT OFF".

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**2** IN WHAT WAYS DO WE GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (OR MAKE GOD'S SPIRIT SAD)?

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**3** IN WHAT POSITIVE WAYS SHOULD WE BEHAVE, ACCORDING TO PAUL IN CHAPTER 4: 32?

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**4** READ 4: 32 AND 5: 2 AGAIN:-

(i) WHAT HAS GOD DONE FOR US, IN 4: 32? .....

(ii) WHAT HAS CHRIST DONE FOR US, IN 5: 2? .....

(iii) HOW SHOULD THESE FACTS REGULATE OUR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR?

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**5** READ 4: 17; 5: 2, 8 & 15:-

(i) WHAT WORD IS FOUND IN ALL 4 VERSES? Word .....

(ii) WHAT DOES THIS WORD MEAN, IN THIS CONTEXT, OR SETTING?

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**6** THIS STUDY DEALS WITH CONTRAST - LIGHT AND DARKNESS - OLD SELF AND NEW SELF.

(i) WHICH VERSE DEALS WITH THE SUBJECT OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS? *Ephesians 5:* .....

(ii) WHICH VERSE DEALS WITH THE SUBJECT OF OLD SELF (OR OLD MAN) AND NEW SELF (NEW MAN)? *Ephesians 4:* .....

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**7** WRITE A VERSE FROM THE PASSAGE WHICH YOU THINK SUMMARIZES HOW CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO BEHAVE, GIVING THE REFERENCE.

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