



EVERY NATION
BRISBANE

Blessed be
the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed
us in all spiritual blessings in the heav-
enly places, even as he chose us in his
love before the world, that we should be
holy and blameless before him. He chose us
in himself, that we should be holy and
blameless before him, by the word of the
truth, that we should bring forth the
fruit of good works. He chose us in himself,
that we should be holy and blameless before
him, by the word of the truth, that we should
bring forth the fruit of good works.

E P H E S I A N S

IN CHRIST



Prayer, Fasting, and Consecration

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EVERY NATION
B R I S B A N E

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#ENBfast2018

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DAY 6

LEARNING FAITHFULNESS

READ: Ephesians 1:15-23

Have you ever felt like a failure or of no use to God, or thought that God wouldn't answer your prayers? Many of us struggle with a low self-image and a wrong perception of who we really are. The answer to this problem is found in the book of Ephesians where we find out who we are in Christ Jesus. Today we will look into the calling that God has called us to, how fasting brings us fresh revelation of our identity in Christ, and how we can live our lives for Christ.

In Ephesians 1:1, Paul describes himself as an apostle and claims the same title Jesus had given to his twelve disciples. An apostle is someone who has been chosen and designated, sent to speak and act with special authority. Paul had not volunteered for this ministry, nor had the church appointed him. On the contrary, it was God's will to call him an apostle and to commission him. Like Paul, we, too, have been called in Christ to be apostles wherever God places us to serve and speak on His authority the good news of the Gospel. Whether you are a new believer, or someone who has been walking with Jesus a long time, in ministry or in the marketplace, God wants to use all of us.

When Paul refers to his readers as the saints, he is not referring to the spiritual elite, but to *all* God's people. To be a saint is to be someone who is set apart as holy and belongs to Him. The expression was first applied to Israel as the Holy Nation, but it was extended to the international Christian community, which includes all of us. As saints, we are called to be faithful to Christ and to live holy lives set apart to be used by God. On a daily basis, this involves us committing our days and decisions to Jesus so that we will honour Him in all areas including our relationships, work, time, and finances.

Paul's message of grace indicates God's free, unmerited favor bestowed on all of us, which saves us. Through this grace, we experience His peace and redemption through forgiveness of our sins. This is a message that should

be proclaimed wherever we go. How loving and abounding in grace our God is! God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, which means He will not withhold good from us as we continue to walk in relationship with Him. As God's chosen people, the Jews were heirs of the blessings promised to Abraham (Gen 17:4–8; Rom 9:4–5).

Through Christ, non-Jews also become heirs of God's promise, which means that we, too, have access to the blessings and promises of God. He has chosen us and predestined us for great purposes and plans in our lives that are impossible to achieve on our own. That's why as we learn to walk closer with God, He helps us know who we are and how to navigate through our lives.

APPLY

In your life, what does it mean for you to be faithful in Christ? How does this affect the way you live your life?

Knowing that you are chosen and predestined for great things, how are you positioning yourself to be used by God in 2018?

What is God revealing to you about the blessings he has in store for you this year? Take a moment now to pray and ask Him.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me through Jesus who I am and for choosing me before the foundation of the world to be in a relationship with you. Remind me, God, to continue to seek a life of holiness and faithfulness to the call you have on my life.

Help me to pursue you with all my heart and to live a life pleasing to you. Rid me of any wrong mindsets about who I am apart from you and help me to trust you more in 2018 and to seek your Kingdom first in my life. I long to experience more of you and to hear your voice clearer, so I may know where I am to go this year.

Thank you for blessing me with every spiritual blessing so that I am positioned to be used by you for greatness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 7

OUR INHERITANCE

READ: Ephesians 1:11-14

If we have assets or property, we may wish to write a will as to who will inherit them once we pass away. How wonderful to know that God has written us into His will! When Christ died, he included us in the inheritance of forgiveness and eternal life.

Inheritance is not just limited to belongings, but it can also include something we derive genetically from our family, whether it is a quality or a characteristic. This also happens when we are born again into God's family, when we receive the Holy Spirit, and when the Fruit of the Spirit begins to permeate our lives. These changes can be seen by others when we walk in the Spirit, and being sealed with the Spirit is the promise of our inheritance.

Since we were written into God's will and we will have an inheritance in Christ, let us also inherit and walk in the Fruit of the Spirit, living lives that reflect our royal inheritance as God's children.

APPLY

How does knowing that you are a child of God “who works all things according to the counsel of his will” affect how you view life’s challenges?

“In Him you have obtained an inheritance...” What are some ways you can steward this inheritance?

What one thing will you change today as a result of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through this study?

PRAY

Father God, you are sovereign and I take comfort and assurance in you. Thank you that you have included me in your will and that you have given me a guarantee of my inheritance by sealing me with the Holy Spirit. I pray that I would live as an heir of the Most High God and that my life would give glory and honour to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

DAY 8

HIS RESURRECTION POWER AS THE HEAD OVER ALL THE CHURCH

READ: Ephesians 1:15-23

Christ so identified Himself with His Church that it is said to be His very body. He is the governing head and we are under His power and authority as a unified body. We are more than a community; we are a body. Unity in the body strengthens the body and glorifies Christ.

Just like a body, where the muscular, skeletal, and nervous system work together to create movement, different parts of the body of Christ must also interact. This unity comes through the Holy Spirit and lives under the lordship of Christ.

His resurrection power works to revive and restore us to God's will and to unify us as His body. Let us press in and pray for his resurrection power to continue to transform our lives and unify our church to His glory.

APPLY

Seeking forgiveness in broken relationships are good ways to strengthen the body. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways you can contribute to strengthening and uniting your relationships.

Prayer is our most powerful resource and corporate prayer is particularly powerful. What do you think the benefits of corporate prayer include? How can you ensure that corporate prayer is a part of your life?

What one thing will you change today as a result of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through this study?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I pray for your resurrection power to work in my life and in my circumstances.

Thank you for continuing to renew me in line with your Word and for placing me within your body. I ask, Holy Spirit, that you would strengthen our church and our prayer lives, and for revelation of how Christ loves and leads His church. In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen.

DAY 9

KNOWING GOD

READ: Ephesians 2:1-7

The late Welsh preacher, Leonard Ravenhill, once said, “Christ did not come to simply make bad men good, but to make dead men live”. We may describe our state before Christ as rebellious, evil, disobedient but never did we think that we were dead. Because of our fallen nature, we are not only unwilling (rebellious) but unable (dead) to save ourselves. We may have heard the illustration, “We were drowning in sin and God threw out a life raft and we clung onto that raft for dear life”. But according to Paul, we were not struggling in the current of sin, we were dead in sin at the bottom of the ocean with no hope.

In verse 3, Paul tells us of the good news, the only hope we have in the most impossible of situations. “But God”. Take a moment and ponder that; say it to yourself a few times. Throughout every impossible situation, this statement is faithful and constant throughout Scripture, “But God”. “But God” being rich in mercy, swam to the bottom of the seabed and brought us back to shore, breathed life into our dead bodies, and seated us with Him no longer as “children of wrath”, but as sons and daughters of the living God. And He does this all as a gift that is received by faith.

We must remember that all of this undeserved kindness extended to us is not *because* of us, it is *despite* us. God did not die for insects and plants; we were worse off than them. We broke God’s law and the debt that we owed was infinite and could only be paid by the one who was infinite: Christ. God’s grace is not a response to our worth, it’s a response to His infinite worth. That’s how God’s grace is; a love that forgives even the worst of sinners, at the greatest of costs, that will give us the greatest of joys forever. It enables us to experience the exceeding riches of His amazing grace and cherish it as infinitely beautiful. His grace truly changes everything.

APPLY

Having reflected on your past outside of Christ, what is your life like now that you are in Christ?

Have you seen the richness of God's grace this past year? In which situations?

What is one thing the Holy Spirit has revealed to you in this study?

PRAY

Set aside some time to thank God for the amount of grace it took to save you and ask Him to continue to show more of his amazing grace this year in all areas of your life.

DAY 10

ONE IN CHRIST

READ: Ephesians 2:11-12

In Ephesians 2, Paul shares with us the testimony of a lost generation that was far from God and caught up in the busy-ness of either seeking religion or other worldly diversions and fulfilment. Much like our journeys today, we see the transforming power that Christ's finished work on the cross had. He not only reconciled His people back into relationship with God, but also provided fresh starting points, a foundation upon which to build their lives, and He ultimately ushered them into the greater family or community they were called to thrive in.

Passionate evangelist and worldwide author, John Piper, once wrote that, "The opposite of wasting your life is living by a single God-exalting and soul-satisfying passion." Now this impressive passion may sound daunting or even aspirational to many, but in reality, how many of us could maintain this 24/7 or even 12/6? Piper's book, *Don't Waste Your Life*, sheds amazing light on the biblical truths of walking fearlessly with Jesus Christ every day. But most of all, it points back to the bare truth: the saving grace of Jesus Christ who is to be the foundation of our lives. With the right foundation, passion can thrive.

Buildings always look a little rough and tough at first. The materials left alone and bare wouldn't create a very nice place to live at all, but that structure is crucial. Build a house without a strong foundation and the slightest storm can shake it to the ground. Jesus shared this first pinnacle truth with us in Matthew 7:24-27. So take the time to check your foundation. What kind of house are you? What are you standing on? Are you fit to weather the storms of life?

Jesus came to us preaching peace and a reconciled relationship with God. Laying the foundations of His people and the church. We are called to become one with Christ and, as a church, we are entrusted to build upon this with Jesus, our cornerstone, and to magnify the Lord in all that we do. Daily, we journey with God and seek the Holy Spirit to receive all the wisdom, guidance, and comfort we need to build faithfully.

APPLY

How does Ephesians 2 describe our relationship with the Father? How did God respond to seeing the fallen nature of His people? In what ways can we respond both individually and as a church?

What foundation are you standing on today? How strong are your foundations in Christ?

How is God actively calling you to respond to his Word today? Take some time now to seek the Lord and write down what the Holy Spirit reveals, so that you might run this calling into action.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I thank you so greatly for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for my past, present and future sins. Lord, reveal my foundations, that you may uproot anything that is not of Christ and pour out a new foundation, stronger than ever before.

I pray that I can build with the help of your Holy Spirit and the power of your Word. Refresh my soul, Lord, and call me deeper and stretch me further so I may hear your calling on my life and thrive in all your will and ways. Give me the strength to seek you when the storms come, that with your Word and amongst your people, I will be confident in my unshakable foundation, Jesus Christ.

I am a child of the Most High God. Jesus has won and I will continue each day to magnify the Lord, for in Him, I cannot be shaken. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 11

UNITY

READ: Ephesians 3:7-13

The very person Paul purposed and pledged his life to was a carpenter who, in His last days on earth, was ridiculed, scorned upon, and made a spectacle of, all without dissent. Jesus - the wisdom and the power of God. This Jesus became Paul's all-consuming passion and purpose in his life so that even hardship did not deter him. He says in Ephesians 3:13, "So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory."

Paul made it his main business in life to make plain that God's heart is for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, to come together equally, united as one, under Jesus as the head. Ephesians 3:6 declares, "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

It is because of Paul's uncompromising sense of calling and purpose to bring the gospel to Gentiles that we have the Church today. How often do we let temporary inconveniences distract us from God's eternal plan? How often do we allow life's challenges to deter us from the bigger picture of God's agenda?

God's eternal purpose is that His 'manifold wisdom' is revealed 'through the church' (v10). He has chosen the Church as the primary avenue through which He will accomplish His plans. When the Church, the Body of Christ, the people of God, pray and work together, united under the headship of Jesus, God is revealed, salvation is received, the kingdom is advanced, and God's purpose is accomplished. How often do we choose comfort and convenience over reaching out in relationships despite our differences?

When you responded by saying YES to Jesus, you are saying YES to:

Lordship: Living as Jesus would through your life.

Higher purpose: Exchanging your personal agenda for His purpose of making Jesus known.

Teamwork: Serving one another and others, together.

We know God will accomplish His purposes. We know the battle is won. As His people, let's join together to put our hands to the plough.

1. Persistently pray, for our battle is spiritual, so that we can stand against the devil's schemes.
2. Persevere through personal trials.
3. Play your part in the Body to make God known to those He has placed around you.

APPLY

How is the manifold, multifaceted wisdom of God evident in your relationships with your spiritual family?

Read Ephesians 3:16-19. How does being filled with the fullness of God cause you to live?

What one thing will you change today as a result of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through this study?

PRAY

Lord Jesus, just as you laid down your life for the sins of the world, I lay aside my personal agenda for your heavenly purpose so that my life is counted worthy of the cross.

Whatever my difficulties and challenges, I stand confident because you know what's best for me and I have peace knowing that when I submit and surrender to you, you cause all things to work together for my good. I accept I have a part to play in your scheme of things and I unite with my spiritual family to believe for my family, friends, and workmates who do not yet know you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 12

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

READ: Ephesians 3:1-6

Paul is writing to the Church in Ephesus while he is in prison, laying a solid foundation for God's plan to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. The excitement and anticipation of learning about this mystery would have left many on the edge of their seats as Paul's letter was being read. Some would have stood pondering this mystery that had been hidden from past generations and to others, like the children's game of Chinese Whispers, may have required several retellings of Paul's letter to comprehend this mystery revealed by the Holy Spirit. A mystery is defined as something undiscoverable by human reason, the knowledge of which can only be attained by revelation.

The Greek word for mystery, *musterion*, is defined as a secret that is no longer closely guarded, but open. It is a revelation or disclosure of something that was formerly hidden. This articulates Paul's intention as he unravels this mystery concerning the inheritance promised to the Jews, now available also to the Gentiles through the Gospel. Up until this point, this privilege was made only to the Jews. But God, in His infinite mercy, tears down the wall of separation and releases His ultimate and sovereign plan for all people.

Like Paul, we have been entrusted to fervently make this mystery known to every person and tribe who have yet to know God's grace and plan for salvation.

APPLY

How was the mystery revealed to Paul? (Ephesians 3:5).
Prayerfully consider if there is anything hindering you from sharing the Gospel with someone from a different background than you.

Can you think of a specific time in your life where God showed you something very specific and you took a step of faith even if it was uncomfortable? What was the outcome?

What is the Holy Spirit showing you in order to take the Gospel beyond your own people?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I pray for more of your Holy Spirit to come upon me. Continue to empower me for every good work and grant me wisdom with every decision and pursuit this year.

I acknowledge my efforts are meaningless and just a noisy gong if done without the love and grace you have shown me. Make me an effective witness for you, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 13

MORE THAN MY IMAGINATION

READ: Ephesians 3:14-21

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 is centered around the Ephesians coming to know the fullness of God and to receive the strength available through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we are well aware that we are not promised a storm-free life and we know life does not suddenly become a bed of roses when we give our life to Christ. God does; however, promise us that we're not powerless, but powerful ("strengthened with might") through the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is through this strength that we are able to endure the tests, trials, and temptations that may come our way.

Paul also speaks of Christ's love for us as immeasurably wide, long, high and deep. As humans, we are not able to fully know the depth of the love of Christ; therefore, it passes our knowledge. But as Paul prayed, by being rooted and established in love, we may have power through the Holy Spirit, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp it and to know this love that surpasses all knowledge. Through this, we will be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Just as Christ's love is hard for us to fully conceive, so it is difficult for us to fully imagine what God can and will do through us. God does more than we can ever imagine ("above all that we ask or think", v. 20). So why do we doubt Him? The very power that works in us is the same power that raised Christ to life at the resurrection. By the power of the Holy Spirit and through faith, we are able to put our full trust and confidence in God. There is nothing too hard for God and there is not one detail of your life that He does not care about. Whatever you are holding onto that is weighing you down, put it in the hands of the one who can do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine.

APPLY

Are you currently facing trials, tests, or temptations? If so, ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen you to persevere through them. What are some practical habits you can implement to ensure you “may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”?

Is there anything currently hindering your faith to believe that God is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine”? If so, write them down and surrender them to God, asking him to strengthen your faith in these areas.

What is one thing that you will change today as a result of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through this devotional?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, just as Paul prayed, I pray that you may strengthen me through the power of the Holy Spirit to persevere through trials, tests, and temptations. I ask, Lord, that you would open my mind to conceive the depth of the love of Christ in order to know you more and that I may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of you and your love.

Forgive me, Lord, for any unbelief I have had towards the immeasurable power that is at work within me and help me to have faith that you can and will do what you say you will. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

DAY 14

GROWING UP

READ: Ephesians 4:1-16

Perhaps as new believers, we didn't know how to walk like Christians. All we might have known was that we loved Jesus. We might have even heard from other professing believers that we didn't have to be active in the church as long as we had personal faith, for that's all that mattered.

But at some point as new believers, we needed to be around mature Christians who could show us what we desperately needed to know. People who could show us how to read the Bible, who could show us how to pray, and who could show us how to share our faith with unbelievers. While our faith is still our own, it is guided by brothers, sisters, shepherds, teachers and evangelists who are on the same walk with us and know the struggles of being a Christian in a secular society.

The best and possibly the only way to mature in the Christian faith is to be united in a type of leadership that practices some of these offices that are mentioned in this chapter of Ephesians. From verses 7 to 16, Paul explains a chain of growth for the church written in plain sight. Christ gives the gifts that qualify people in those offices, people who equip the Body of Christ, and in due course, develops "up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ... so that it [the Church] builds itself up in love" (v. 15-16). There are many of us who have been granted these gifts by the Holy Spirit and have been pressed within their hearts to walk in them, yet for whatever reason, they have not.

If the pressings within your heart aren't enough and you can't find sufficient reasons, here is one: for the sake of the Church. For the sake of the immature Christian who is easily swayed into believing "every wind of doctrine," for the man who may be on the edge of adultery, for the young woman who has been given countless opportunities to share her faith, but is entirely at a loss. For their sake.

APPLY

Has God called you to walk out in these callings? If so, how will you respond?

What practical steps can you take towards using these gifts?

PRAY

Pray for someone who desires the boldness to walk in these callings.

DAY 15

LIVING THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST = NEW BEHAVIOURS

READ: Ephesians 4:17-32

Paul talks about the unconverted Gentiles who are concerned with worldly possessions and passions. The hardness of their hearts leads them to ignorance and destruction. Paul explains that as they continue to dwell in darkness and indulge in lust and boundless sin as a common practice, misery and danger will follow them.

When living in darkness, we become ignorant and alienated from the life of God. It is important that although we live among non-believers, we should not participate in their practices.

Act

When living in Christ, we are saved from darkness and defilement. As we know more of Him, we are obliged to live better. Christ is our lesson and our teacher. What truths have been revealed to you?

Desires

We must undergo the sanctification process to put off our old selves. Sin and fleshly desires deceitfully promise happiness. However, we can see from Paul's writing that the unbelieving Gentiles were miserable, and, if not subdued, were doomed to destruction. Man's fallen state of misery, sinfulness, habits, dispositions, and destruction must be changed. When such things take priority over God, we lose sight and focus of who He is.

Put on the New Self

The new self must be put on by making it known in our hearts, embracing the new way of thinking and living. Being renewed in the Spirit is an ongoing process. The more we practice, the more it becomes a habit.

Through God's grace and almighty power, the new self has a new life that embodies righteousness and holiness. Once we become sanctified in Christ, we become an imitation of Him and we are partakers of His gifts. The continuous process of edification works in every part of our behaviour: our thoughts, our hearts, our speech, and our actions.

APPLY

Do you knowingly practice sin and have fleshly desires that are not pleasing to God? If so, write these down.

What has the Holy Spirit revealed to you?

What changes will you make?

PRAY

Father, I bring forth (your answers from question 1) that are not pleasing to you. Holy Spirit, I thank you for revealing (your answers from question 2).

Lord, I pray that you will grant me strength to bring this to light and I ask that you continue to do a work in me not only inwardly, but also outwardly through my actions.

I ask for your forgiveness and for your amazing grace to help me in changing (your answers from question 3). Strengthen me as I continue to be reconciled and sanctified to be like you. Father, help me to be obedient, to ingrain your truths in my heart, and to put away my old self and embrace my new self in thinking and living like Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 16

DECISIONS DETERMINE DESTINY

READ: Ephesians 5:15 - 17

Perhaps when we wake up in the morning, we have a set routine in place. We take a shower, brush our teeth, get ready for work, and have breakfast. Then we're in the car, making the usual 15 to 20 minute drive to work, using the same routes, passing through the same set of lights and same pedestrian crossings. There may even be times when we end up at our destination without remembering how we got there.

When was the last time we looked carefully at our routine for the day and considered whether we were going to make wise decisions in it? How well do we make use of our time? How often in our walk with God do we live routinely on Autopilot?

Whether we have been walking with God for 15 years or 2 days, the same conditions apply to all of us. It can be good to have a routine, but sometimes that routine can cause us to be absent-minded, complacent, or lazy. Routines can cause us to no longer check with or enquire of God because our relationship with Him is no longer personal, but robotic.

Paul urges us to look carefully at how we live and how to use our time wisely because the days are evil. He encourages us to actively seek after God and understand His will for us. We cannot afford to become lazy or slumber in a time when we should be enquiring of God and following after Him more and more. We must remain alert and not be foolish with our time, because we do not know how long we will have it. Today, choose to change up our routines and enquire and seek God's will and wisdom in how we should spend our days.

APPLY

Reflecting on 2017, what is one area of your life that you want to see God more involved in 2018?

Have there been decisions in 2017 where God has not been the centre? Do you need to repent from being in an Autopilot mode, rather than checking in with God daily for his wisdom and guidance?

PRAY

- Pray for God to re-align you to His will for your life in 2018.
- Pray for God to align our church plans and goals with His.
- Pray for God to refresh, rejuvenate, and revive our spirits. May He strengthen our hands and feet, guard our hearts, and help us to continue to move forward with His will for our lives.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

READ: Ephesians 5:22-33 & Ephesians 6:1-9

The first relationship in a family is the husband and wife and the fruit of that relationship is children. Both these relationships Paul wrote about separately, yet together we see the picture of a 'nuclear family' – a family relationship.

In Ephesians 5:22-33, the husband and wife are likened to Christ and the Church. Christ is the perfect picture of how we should model our marriages after the ways:

1. He loved her;
2. He gave himself up for her;
3. He sanctified her by the washing of water with the Word;
4. He nourished and cherished her; and
5. He left His Father to hold fast to her and they became one flesh.

If Christ has done all these things for his bride, the Church, how should the Church respond?

1. She should submit everything to Him; and
2. She should respect Him.

Jesus won the victory with what He did for us on the cross, which far outweighs anything that anyone could do, so He could present us to Himself without spot or wrinkle, holy without blemish. This is a true sacrificial love for a relationship that is valued.

Paul also talks about another relationship in a family, that of a parent and child. He doesn't just leave it at "children, obey your parents," but he solidifies the importance of his point by adding, "in the Lord, for this is right," and further stating that we should honour our parents. When we honour somebody, we can do so by obeying them, and even going above and beyond when we give them high respect and great esteem.

Conversely, we can be obedient in action, but resentful in heart. Obedience is an issue of the heart. The first commandment in the Bible with a promise is that when we honour our parents, it will go well with us and we will live long in the land. When we relate that to our relationship with our heavenly Father, our reward is in heaven where we will have eternal life with Him. Today as we read these verses, let us think about our family relationships and cherish them as God cherishes us.

APPLY

Paul writes about the roles of wives and husbands, but in Chapter 5, verse 32, who is he referring to whom the marriage should be modeled after?

What is one thing you can do that will bring glory to God through your relationship with your spouse, your parents, and your children?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you are the prime example of what the role of a father should look like and how he should lead those who come under his leadership.

Today, I ask for a covering over all our relationships from the attack of the enemy who would try to bring division. Fill our homes with your love, your mercy, and your grace so we can bless and serve others. I pray these things in your mighty name, Amen.

DAY 18

HOW DO WE BECOME IMITATORS OF GOD?

READ: Ephesians 5:1-6

What a great example our heavenly Father is to us. He has so much love and compassion for us. There may be times we go through struggles in life where certain circumstances prevent us from truly understanding or seeing God's love on a daily basis, but it's there. God has always been and will always be there for us.

As we have grown throughout the years, we have learned from our parents how to talk, walk, catch a ball, and say please and thank you. Mostly, we watched what our parents did so we could be just like them. Perhaps we wanted to do what they did - play sports, read, cook, and fix what needed repairing around the house. It's this kind of imitation which we should not only seek to achieve from our parents, but also from God.

We should be so in tune with God, that whatever He does, we want to do, too. When God loves or shows compassion towards our work colleagues, then we should want that, as well. When God helps the poor get back up on their feet, then we should want that, too. There is so much love that God displays, but at times, our own agenda can distract us from following Him. Our agenda and distractions may be disguised in the form of social media, gossip, or in an impure relationship.

God loves you and wants nothing more than a relationship with you. But how is your heart? What are you motivated by? How drawn are you to God that you would like to see Him represented in your life through your behaviours and actions?

APPLY

Imagine you could see God, learning a life of love, observing what He does. How different would your life be?

Are there changes that need to take place in your life in order to truly be a reflection or imitator of God?

PRAY

Father God, thank you for loving me the way you do and sacrificing so much for me. Help me, Holy Spirit, to keep your love with me always.

Help me to see others through yours eyes and love them like you love them. Create in me a passion for people and the community around me to display your love and help me to cut out anything that will get in the way of your will for my life.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for being with me this day and guiding me in a strong relationship with you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

DAY 19

SERVICE NO MATTER THE POSITION

READ: Ephesians 6:7-8

These days, marriage proposals can be very creative, funny, sweet, and touching. They might even require a lot of preparation and organisation. The man usually declares how he is ready to give his everything to the woman - to unequivocally love her and serve her.

In Paul's writings in Ephesians 6:7-8, he states, "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

Two words that may come to mind with these verses are EMPOWERED and ENCOURAGED. We, as Christ followers, are to be empowered, that our highest and noble duty of our Christianity is our service to God and others. These verses do not only apply to those who are in ministry, but it also applies to all of us who are positioned in the workforce, full time parents, and those studying in high school or university. We must fulfil our work well with integrity, enthusiasm, humility and excellence. Our service to our bosses, families, and teachers should be as though we were offering wholehearted service to God in honouring Him and giving Him glory in everything we do. The measure of our success, no matter the position, is the overflow of love through service to God and others.

As believers who have been redeemed and set free, we are to be encouraged that our positions in life can neither be a limitation or hindrance to God, nor a deterrent to the great rewards in heaven. If our hearts are pure and exclusively sold out to God, we will find that serving is an honour and an opportunity to worship Him, irrespective of our past, background, capabilities, accomplishments, or education.

As the great activist Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

APPLY

Read Ephesians 6:7-8. What does it mean to you personally to “serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men”?

What have been your true motives for serving, whether in church, in your workplace, or in your home or school?

What has the Holy Spirit revealed to you about serving God and others?
What does He want you to repent of or change through this study?

PRAY

Father, thank you for revealing to me the amazing calling of serving you first and foremost wholeheartedly and with full devotion. By your grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to serve you with unrestraint. Help me to answer your call into whichever setting and whatever position you place me in, so I can be of service to bring you glory. Show me how I can best serve my family and spiritual family with honour, love, and grace, and how I can serve my workplace and/or school with honesty, compassion, and excellence.

Remind me that my labour is not in vain and that the true rewards of following you is simply knowing you and experiencing your love, goodness, and holiness. Father, I give myself to you so that you can use me as your instrument and that your light will shine through me so that others may see and encounter you. All this I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 20

ARMOUR OF GOD

READ: Ephesians 6:10-17

Paul was never content with just giving theological information that was truth; he always had practical applications that reinforced his teachings. In Ephesians 6:10-17, we see this practicality in the form of the armour of God.

Because the armour of God has been made available to us, we need to constantly remind ourselves that we are in a battle. The battle is not against our family members, neighbours, work colleagues, boss, that person that cut us off on the motorway, or any other person that we will come into contact with. Our battle is with rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.

Since our battle is in the heavenly realms, God has provided us with spiritual armour to help us stand against attacks. We are only strong when we put our complete trust and faith in the mighty power of God. To try and apply our physical strength to a spiritual battle will only reap frustration, disappointment, and eventual unbelief. But God provides us with the necessary tools to enable us to stand against the attacks of the enemy.

The key action required to make this armour useful is to take it up and put it on! Armour is designed to be worn. Today and every day, put on the full armour of God.

APPLY

From Ephesians 6:14-17, list the 6 components of the armour of God.

Which parts of the armour do you most frequently put on in your daily life?
Why do you think you tend towards this?

Which parts of the armour do you less frequently put on in your daily life?
Why do you think you tend towards this? How will you change this?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I pray for your strength and victory to be made known in me daily so that I will never forget that you are with me. May I never forget that since you are for me, no one can stand against me.

I pray today, Lord, that I will put on the full armour of God so that you will enable me to stand against the works of the enemy. May prayer be the central weapon I go to when the enemy tries to attack. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 21

DRESSED FOR THE OCCASSION

READ: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

The book *Into the Wild* tells of the true story of a man named Christopher McCandless who in 1992 ventured out into the Alaskan bush with minimal equipment, meagre rations, and no training on wilderness survival. He intended to live off of the land, but when he realised he didn't know how to do so, he decided to head back to civilisation. But by then, the trail was blocked by the swollen Teklanika River, and because he did not have a map, he could not find another way out, and unfortunately perished there.

Part of our call as Christ's disciples is to count the cost of following Him and equip ourselves to serve His will. It would be foolish to go out into battle without training and without armour. Yet God, in His grace, has made available to us all that we need to fight the good fight. This requires us to first build our strength in the Lord (v.10) so that we can sustain the weight of the armour and stand firm against anything that may come our way.

As Christian soldiers, we are instructed to put on the *whole* armour of God - not a partial, incomplete, or inadequate fitting - but the whole, entire armour, that we may achieve victory in standing against the schemes of the enemy who wages war against us. Three times in these verses we are instructed to stand. A seated warrior cannot expect to be victorious in battle. Therefore we are to stand up and stand firm in order to suit up every part of ourselves, leaving no unguarded areas that may expose blind or weak spots.

After putting on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we are to pray at all times, and like an allegiant soldier, we are to keep alert with all perseverance. In doing so, we are prepared and armed for spiritual warfare. May we also clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14 NLT) and trust that in God's strength and power, we can and will overcome.

APPLY

In your life, what are areas of weakness that you have to guard against?

What are some of the spiritual battles you may be encountering today?

What practical disciplines can you employ in order to be strong in the Lord?

Read Ephesians 6:14-17. Which areas in your life can you apply the values described in the passage?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for granting me all I need so that I can experience true victory in you. Strengthen me more each day and enable me to stand firm in my faith. And in times of weariness, let me also find rest in you.

Let me see beyond what is visible to the human eye – let me see with eyes of faith. Let me truly understand where the real battle lies, so that I may realise how important it is to be fully dressed and ready to carry out your marching orders. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 22

PRAY AT ALL TIMES

READ: Ephesians 6:18-24

In Ephesians 6:10-17, Paul tells us that the armour of God allows us to be strong and stand against the schemes of the enemy, so it is no surprise that a call to perseverance in prayer follows. While we can be fitted with every piece of the armour, praying in the Spirit is absolutely necessary for winning the battle.

It can sometimes seem like an unrealistic and overwhelming expectation to have to pray at all times; however, intimate and constant prayer comes from a heart of devotion, not duty. Prayer is a powerful tool that allows us to not only communicate with God, but also to hear His heart and to lift up thanksgiving and worship to Him. It is also how He strengthens us for the situations we find ourselves in and for what lies ahead.

Too often we submit our requests and petitions to God only when we have needs and desires we want met. But how often do we pray His will over our situation? How often do we pray simply to worship and give Him praise? How often do we pray at all?

The way in which we live our lives is our continuous prayer to God. By being consciously aware of His presence in every moment, intentionally setting time aside to listen for His voice, and persevering in prayer for the things He places on our hearts, allows God to move in and through us. As we foster a heart of thankfulness and devotion through prayer, God empowers us to impact not only our own life, but also our family, friends, church, and the nations.

APPLY

How can you pray at all times in the Spirit?

Read Ephesians 6:18-20. What are some of the things Paul says we should pray for?

What one thing will you change today as a result of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through this study?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of being able to pray and commune with with you in such an intimate way. I ask that you help nurture a love for prayer in my life and that you would show me how I can pray at all times in the Spirit. I pray that you would break my heart for the things that break yours and I ask that you would use me to pray for others and the nations.

I thank you that you would reveal yourself in a deeper way during my time of prayer, that I would hear you speak to me and that I would be constantly reminded of your presence in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

the God and Father of our
 Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed
 us in Christ
 with every spiritual blessing in the heaven-
 ly places, even as he chose us in
 him before the foundation of the world, that we
 should be before him in love. Bendito el Dios y Padre de
 Cristo, el cual nos bendijo con toda bendición espiri-
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 [lugares] celestiales en Cristo; Segun nos escogió en él
 fundacion del mundo, para que fuésemos santos y sin
 nagsala sa atin ng banat pagpapalang ukal
 Agon sa pagkapili nisa sa atin sa kanuya bago
 kanal at mga walang dungis sa harap
 하느님 곧 우라 주 예수 그리스도의 아버지께서
 속한 모든 신령 하늘 보으로 우리에게 복주시도
 택 하사 우리로 지상 한에서 그 완전한 그리스도
 Christ, qui nous a bénis de toutes
 les grâces célestes en Christ; Qui lui Dieu nous a
 choisis saints et irrépréhensibles avant
 la fondation du monde, pour que nous
 soyons devant lui... Bini doo
 Bendito el Dios y Padre de Cristo, el cual nos bendijo con toda bendición espiri-
 tual en Cristo; Segun nos escogió en él [lugares] celestiales en Cristo; Segun nos escogió en él fundacion del mundo, para que fuésemos santos y sin nagsala sa atin ng banat pagpapalang ukal Agon sa pagkapili nisa sa atin sa kanuya bago kanal at mga walang dungis sa harap 하느님 곧 우라 주 예수 그리스도의 아버지께서 속한 모든 신령 하늘 보으로 우리에게 복주시도 택 하사 우리로 지상 한에서 그 완전한 그리스도 Christ, qui nous a bénis de toutes les grâces célestes en Christ; Qui lui Dieu nous a choisis saints et irrépréhensibles avant la fondation du mundo, para que nous soyons devant lui... Bini doo Bendito el Dios y Padre de Cristo, el cual nos bendijo con toda bendición espiri- tual en Cristo; Segun nos escogió en él [lugares] celestiales en Cristo; Segun nos escogió en él fundacion del mundo, para que fuésemos santos y sin nagsala sa atin ng banat pagpapalang ukal Agon sa pagkapili nisa sa atin sa kanuya bago kanal at mga walang dungis sa harap 하느님 곧 우라 주 예수 그리스도의 아버지께서 속한 모든 신령 하늘 보으로 우리에게 복주시도 택 하사 우리로 지상 한에서 그 완전한 그리스도



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