

IMMEASURABLY MORE ..

learning from the letter to the Ephesians

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! [Eph.3.20f]

The letter to the Ephesians sets out for us ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ’ (Eph.3.8), and assures us that God is ‘able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine’ (Eph.3.20): this study is intended to help us all enter into and enjoy that ‘immeasurably more’.

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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No pressure!

As always there are 7 [sets of] questions in this study: that’s more to provide the option, however, of the material being used as a daily study guide. Don’t feel any pressure to answer *every* question in your Community Group – almost certainly there won’t be the time for that!

Priorities!

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. Key questions for us all as a fellowship this week are probably questions 4, 5 & 6, so do aim to cover at least these in the time that you have.

Prayer!

Do try also to make a point in your Community Group of leaving time for praying together!

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2. Ephesians 1.1-2 [week beginning Sunday 15th January]

“..Grace and peace to you”

Although this study centres around just the opening 2 verses, it provides a helpful introduction to the whole letter. It has, moreover, the decided benefit of being Paul's own introduction to the letter!

It is commonly agreed that the letter (like the letters to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon) was while Paul was in prison in Rome, and dates from towards the end of his life. It was quite possibly something of a 'circular' letter, sent to Ephesus as the central church with a view to it being passed on and read in a number of churches in the wider surrounding area.

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1. **Read the whole letter.** Although we break the whole letter into manageable passages, it was, in the mind of Paul, a single piece of writing, intended to be read in its entirety at one sitting.

What major 'theme' or 'themes' stand out for you?

What do you understand as the apostle's purpose in writing this letter?

2. **Read Acts 26.12-18 and Galatians 1.11-17.** Paul introduces himself as *“an apostle of Christ Jesus”* right from the start of this letter.

Why would he have wanted to underline his apostolic credentials?

What were the distinctive features of the apostleship entrusted to him?

3. Read Eph.1.9-12. It was *“by the will of God”*, Paul insists, that he was an apostle. His awareness of how ‘good, pleasing and perfect’ God’s will is (Rom.12.2) runs through the whole letter to the church at Ephesus.

How would you summarise what God has willed, as disclosed in these 4 verses in chapter 1?

In what ways should the knowledge of what God’s will is encourage and inspire us?

4. Read Eph.1.1b. The recipients of the letter are addressed and described in a particular way. As most translations will note, there’s some doubt as to whether the words ‘in Ephesus’ are part of the original letter: whether original or not, however, they remind us that our life as Christians is ‘earthed’ in a particular place, wherever that might be – as well as being ‘in Christ’

The disciples of Jesus are described in the NIV translation as the ‘saints’ (or ‘holy ones’) and the ‘faithful’: what features of our life as Christians do these two terms suggest?

What does Paul mean to highlight by stressing in the opening section of the letter that we are 'in Christ' (see Eph.1.3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13)?

Read **Eph.1.13**: how do we come to be 'included in Christ'?

5. **Read Eph.1.2**. While a standard form of greeting, Paul's salutation to some extent provides a summary of what the rest of the letter will unfold: chapters 1-3 speak of what God in His 'grace' has effected for us in Christ, while chapters 4-6 rehearse the 'peace' which we both experience and are to exhibit in Christ.

Read **2 Cor.8.9**. What would be your single sentence definition of 'grace'?

In what ways were we 'poor'? And in what ways have we become now 'rich'?

6. **Read Acts 10.36**. Peter summarized the gospel for Cornelius and his household as "*the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.*"

Why do you think that summary might have been so telling for a man who was a 'centurion in .. the Italian Regiment'?

Read **Phil.4.2-9**. What is encompassed in the reference to the 'peace' which the gospel brings? And how is such peace experienced?

7. **Read Eph.1.2**. The Fatherhood of God and the Lordship of Jesus run through the whole of this letter, underlining both the radical blessing and the radical challenge of the gospel.

In what ways has the blessing of knowing God as Father enriched and blessed your experience?

And where do you find the toughest challenges in Jesus being now Lord in your life?