

IMMEASURABLY MORE ..

[Part 2]

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 set of studies 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!

There are 7 [sets of] questions in each study to provide the option, which some find useful, of the material being used as a daily study.

Priorities!

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. As always there will be benefit in looking at all the questions! Because they deal with the practical application of the gospel in specific regards try and cover at least questions 3-6.

Prayer!

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

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7. Ephesians 4.17-32 [w/b Sunday 4th June]

“put on the new self”

Paul’s concern for the church at Ephesus (as for every local church) was that their life together as a fellowship should provide something of a ‘shop window’ for the world – a way for the world to *see* as well as *hear* the gospel. He sought to ensure, therefore, that their life both gave expression to what the Lord had already done in their lives (bringing them to life and making them belong), and pointed forward to what He would finally effect (bringing all things together under one Head, even Christ – see Eph.1.10)

In this passage, accordingly, his focus is on cultivating in the believers a manner of living that reflects the life of God Himself. Our study of the passage mustn’t be merely academic: we need to translate this into the practicalities of our living! Pray that the Lord would use this study to challenge and to change us.

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1. **Read Eph.4.17-19.** Paul starts this section by contrasting the life of faith with the ‘way of the world’.

What does Paul mean by the ‘futility’ in the thinking of the Gentile world? How would you illustrate that from our contemporary world?

What does Paul say is the reason for that ‘futility’?

Paul's claim that the world has 'lost all sensitivity' is a bold one! In what sense is that the case, and how does it find expression?

2. Read Ephesians 4.20-24. Living the life of faith involves a steep learning curve: believers require to be taught. Here Paul reminds his readers what in broad terms they had been taught in regard to this new way of life.

What three exhortations does Paul say had been addressed to these believers when they heard the message – and what does each mean and involve?

These exhortations could sound like (and could easily drift into) 'legalism' – the need for 'good works': why are they not that, and how do we avoid them becoming that?

3. Read Ephesians 4.25. We move here from the general to the particular: Paul gets specific – and we need to do so as well! Since Jesus is 'the Truth', Paul rightly starts with truthfulness.

What challenges does this exhortation raise for us, especially now that we live in a 'post-truth' society?

What changes are you challenged by this to make in your own life?

4. Read Ephesians 4.26-27. Anger, in one form or another, is an emotion which we all have to learn to handle appropriately.

How do *you* give expression to anger? In what ways are *you* most likely to 'sin' in regard to your anger?

What does Paul mean by not letting the sun go down on your anger, and what steps might you need to take to avoid that?

5. Read Ephesians 4.28. We live in an acquisitive society and have an innate desire to 'get things on the cheap'. The values of the kingdom of God turn such a perspective on its head.

Beyond the obvious (eg shop-lifting etc) in what ways could it be said that we have tended to 'steal' from others?

What values is Paul promoting here? And, as you reflect on this verse, what changes do you find God challenging you to make in your life (if any!)?

6. Read Ephesians 4.29-30. Jesus is 'the Word': it's vital, thus, to our sharing the gospel that *our* words communicate all that He is and has done. These verses oblige us to think about our speech.

What the person we're speaking with needs to hear may be very different from what we want to say! How might we develop a way of speaking which is invariably 'upbuilding'?

Why do you think that Paul immediately follows this exhortation about our 'talk' with a call to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit and how do we do so?

7. Read Ephesians 4.31-32. *Grace* is the hallmark of the Lord's dealings with us: grace, therefore, is to be the hallmark of all our living.

Getting rid of bitterness etc is easier said than done! How can we be helped to get rid of these harmful attitudes and reactions?

"Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until he has something to forgive" (C S Lewis). Why is forgiving others so hard? How might we cultivate a forgiving spirit?