

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Ephesians

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Ephesians

1 I am Paul. The Messiah Jesus sent me to represent him
because that is what God wanted. I write this letter to
the people whom God has set apart for himself who are
living [in the city of Ephesus][a] and who are loyal to the
Messiah Jesus. 2 *May* God our Father and our Lord Jesus the
Messiah *continue to be* kind to you and *make you* peaceful.

3 Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah!
He has blessed us with every kind of spiritual blessing that
comes from heaven because we belong to the Messiah. 4 In
fact, even before God created the world, he chose us to
belong to the Messiah, so that the Messiah could make us
completely holy for him. Because God loves us, 5 he decided
long ago to adopt us as his own children by means of Jesus
the Messiah. It pleased him to do this, so he did what he
wanted to do. 6 Because of this, we now praise God for being
so amazingly kind to us, far beyond what we could deserve,
as he blessed us by means of his Son whom he loves.

7 When Jesus died in our place, he paid the price for
our sin. That is, when he died for us, God forgave us our
sins because that is how abundantly and generously kind
he is. 8 God knew that we would need him to be extremely
kind to us in this way because God knows everything and
is completely wise. 9 In this way, God has now revealed to
us his plan that he had not revealed to anyone before—a
plan that he was pleased to accomplish through the work
of the Messiah. 10 In this plan, when the time was just right,
the Messiah would unite all things under himself so that all
things in heaven and all things on earth would belong to the
Messiah. 11 Because of what the Messiah has done, God has
also claimed us as his own. He planned to do this long ago,
and he always does exactly what he wishes to do. 12 In God's
plan, we Jews, who were the first to trust in the Messiah,
would live to praise God because he is so great. 13 Then you
non-Jews also heard the true message, the good news of how
God saves you, and you believed in the Messiah. When you
did that, God marked you as belonging to the Messiah by
giving you the Holy Spirit, as he had promised to do. 14 The
Holy Spirit is like a down payment that proves that God will
also give to us everything else that he has promised to give
to us at that time when he will release everything that he
has for us. Praise God because he is so great!

15 Because God has done all of this for you, and because
people have told me how you trust in the Lord Jesus and
how much you love all the believers, 16 I thank God for you
constantly as I talk to God about you when I pray to him.
17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, the
glorious Father, will give you his Spirit to make you wise
and to reveal God to you so that you can continually know
him better. 18 I pray that God may enable you to see things
as they truly are so that you may know the wonderful plan
that God has for us because he has called us to be his people.
I pray that you may know how wonderful and abundant are
the things he promises to give to us and to all the believers.
19 And I pray that you will know how exceedingly powerfully
God acts for us who believe in the Messiah. He is just as
powerfully strong for us 20 as he was for the Messiah when
he caused the Messiah to become alive again after he died,
and raised him to the place of highest honor in heaven.
21 The Messiah rules as supreme there over every ruler and
powerful spirit on every level of authority and over every
being that people revere. He rules over them not only now,
but forever. 22 God has made everything to be subject to the
Messiah and has appointed the Messiah as the ruler over
everything among all believers everywhere. 23 We believers
relate to the Messiah as the parts of a person's body relate
to its head. He supplies what is lacking for all believers just
as he completes everything everywhere.

2 Before you trusted the Messiah, you were spiritually
dead—you were unable to stop sinning. 2 You used to
live in a sinful way, guided by the spirit of this world. You
were guided by the ruler of the evil spirits, who controls
the authorities of this world. This ruler is Satan, who now
works through the people who disobey God. 3 All of us used
to live in the same way as these people who disobey God;
we did the evil things that we desired, things that would
bring pleasure to our bodies and our minds. We deserved
that God should be very angry with us, just as he is with the
other people.

4 But God is very merciful to us because he loves us very
much. 5 God loved us so much that even when we were
spiritually dead and constantly sinning, he made us alive by
joining us to the Messiah. Remember, when God saved you
from being spiritually dead, he was being very kind to you
in a way that you did not deserve. 6 God saved us from being
spiritually dead just as he raised Jesus from being physically
dead and he made us spiritually alive with him. Then he
gave us seats of honor to rule with the Messiah Jesus in
heaven. 7 He did that to show to everyone in all future times
how exceedingly gracious he is in being kind to us by joining
us to the Messiah Jesus.

8 So God was very kind to you in a way that you did
not deserve when he saved you from being spiritually dead.
He did this because you trust in Jesus. You have not saved
yourselves; this is a gift from God— 9 a gift that no one can
earn, so no one can boast and say that he has saved himself.
10 So God is making us what he wants us to be; through the
Messiah Jesus he has created us as new people to do good
things—things that God had previously arranged for us to
do.

11 So remember that previously you non-Jewish people
according to who your ancestors were did not belong to
God's people. The Jews insulted you by calling you "the
uncircumcised." They call themselves "the circumcised." By
this they mean that they, not you, are God's people, although
circumcision is something that humans do that only changes
the body, not something that God does that changes the spirit.
12 Remember that, at that time, you were separated from the
Messiah. You were foreigners to the people of Israel. You did
not share in the things that God promised in his agreements
with them. You did not confidently expect that God would
save you. No, you were living in this world completely
without God. 13 But now, because you have trusted in Jesus
the Messiah, God has brought you into his family, even
though before that you did not know him. This was possible
because the Messiah died on the cross for you.

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[a] Many early versions do not include, *in the city of Ephesus*.

14 It is the Messiah who has made it possible for Jews and
non-Jews to live peacefully with each other. He made the two
separate groups into one group. The two groups hated each
other, but he took away every reason for hating each other
when he died for all of us. 15 He made it no longer necessary
for us to obey the commandments and requirements of the
Jewish law for him to accept us. He did this in order to make
the Jews and the non-Jews into one new people who would
live peacefully together because of their relationship to him.
16 He did this in order to reconcile both groups to God as
one group by dying on the cross for all of them. By dying for
them, Jesus made it possible for them to stop being enemies
to each other and to God. 17 Jesus came and announced the
good news that we can be at peace with God; he announced
this to you non-Jews, who did not know about God, and to
us Jews, who did know about God. 18 Because of what Jesus
did for us, both Jews and non-Jews now can come to God
the Father with the help of God's Spirit.

19 Therefore now you non-Jews are no longer left out
of God's people, but instead you are fellow members with
those whom God has set apart for himself, and you belong
to God's family. 20 You are like stones that God has put
together into a building, and the apostles and prophets are
like the foundation stones of that building. You depend
on what they have taught, just as building stones depend
on the foundation stones below them to form a wall that
is upright and strong. The Messiah Jesus himself is like
the cornerstone, which is the most important stone of the
building. 21 Jesus determines where each person belongs,
just as the cornerstone determines where each stone fits in
the building. Just as a builder joins stones together to make
a holy temple, Jesus is assembling his family of believers
to be one holy group which serves the Lord. 22 Because you
belong to Jesus, he is building you up together, both Jews
and non-Jews, into one family that is like a building in which
God lives by means of his Spirit.

3 Because God is working out this plan for you non-Jews,
I, Paul, pray to the Father for you, even as I am in prison
because I serve the Messiah Jesus for your sake. 2 I assume
that people have told you about me, that God has given me
the task of communicating to you non-Jews his plan to be
extremely kind to you. 3 God told me this message that people
did not understand before by revealing it to me directly,
just as I wrote to you before briefly. 4 As you read that, you
can perceive that I clearly understand things that God had
not previously revealed about the Messiah. 5 Formerly, God
did not fully reveal this message to people, but now his
Spirit has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets. 6 The
message is this: the non-Jews now share together with Jews
the spiritual riches of God and belong to the same group of
God's people and will share all the things God has promised
to his people because they are joined to the Messiah Jesus
as a result of believing the good news. 7 I now serve God by
telling people this good news. God was very kind to me and
gave me this work to do even though I am not worthy of it,
and he enables me to do it by powerfully working in me.

8 Although I am the least worthy of all of God's people,
God kindly gave me this gift: he appointed me to proclaim
to the non-Jews the good news about the unending spiritual
blessings that the Messiah has for us 9 and to enable everyone
to understand what God's plan is. This plan is something
that God, who created everything, has kept hidden from
long ago. 10 God hid this plan so that as he reveals it now by
making it happen in those who believe, he also reveals to
the spiritual authorities at the highest levels how profoundly
wise he is. 11 This is the plan that God has always had, and
it is what he accomplished through the work of the Messiah
Jesus, our Lord. 12 So now, because of what Jesus has done,
we can come to God freely and confidently because, when
we trust in Jesus, he joins us to himself. 13 So please do
not be discouraged by the things that I am suffering here
in prison on your behalf, because they produce a glorious
result for you.

14 Because God has done all this for you, I kneel and pray
to God our Father. 15 He is the original father, who gave the
pattern for every family in heaven and on the earth to follow.
16 I pray that God will give you his Spirit to strengthen your
spirit in proportion to how abundantly great he is. 17 I pray
that the Messiah may stay as close to you as your own hearts
because you trust in him, and that everything that you do
and say will be a result of God's love for you and your
love for him and others 18 so that you may be fully able to
understand, along with all of God's people, how very much
the Messiah loves us. 19 I pray that you will come to know
how much the Messiah loves us, even though he loves us
so much that we cannot understand it. I pray that God will
give you a full measure of everything that he is.

20 Praise God, who is able to do much more than anything
that we ask him to do, or even that we think that he can do,
because of how powerfully he works within us! 21 May all
believers praise him for how great he is and for the awesome
work that he has done through the Messiah Jesus! May they
praise him throughout all generations forever! May it be so.

4 Because of all this, as someone who is in prison because
I serve the Lord Jesus, I appeal to you to live in a way
that honors Jesus, who called you to live for him. 2 Always
be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, enduring
the bothersome things that others do because you love each
other. 3 Since God's Spirit has united you, do everything that
you can to remain united with one another. Bind yourselves
together by acting peacefully toward each other. 4 God only
has one family of believers and one Holy Spirit, just as he
also called all of you to receive the one and only thing that
people can hope for, that belongs to you whom God has
called. 5 There is only one Lord, Jesus the Messiah, only one
way to believe in him, and they baptized us to show that we
belong to him alone. 6 There is one God, who is the Father
of all of us, whether Jew or non-Jew. He rules over all of
us, works through all of us, and is in all of us.

7 To each one of us God has given spiritual gifts in just
the way that the Messiah has decided that we should have
them. 8 That is why the scripture says,

> As he went up to the high place,
> he brought with him many people whom
> he had captured,
> and gave gifts to his people.

9 The words "he went up" certainly make us know that
the Messiah had also previously gone down to the lower
parts of the earth. 10 The Messiah, who came down to earth
from heaven, is also the one who returned upward to the
most exalted position in heaven in order that he might fill
the universe. 11 As gifts to his people, he appointed some
of them to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to seek
out people to tell them the good news about Jesus, and

some to care for and to teach the groups of believers. 12 God appointed all of them to prepare God's people to do the work of serving others so that all the people who belong to the Messiah might become spiritually strong. 13 This work will continue until all of us together become what God wants us to be: united as we together fully trust in the Son of God and experience his working in us, and completely mature as a group of believers—as fully mature in trusting and knowing God as the Messiah himself. 14 Then we will no longer be spiritually immature, as little children are immature. We will no longer follow every new teaching, always changing what we believe like a boat that goes one way and then the other as the wind and waves change direction. We will not allow clever people who teach what is false to deceive us with their lies. 15 Rather than that, as we lovingly speak to each other what is true, let us become more and more like the Messiah in every way as he directs us, just like a person's head directs the person's body. 16 He is the one who joins us all together and keeps us connected to each other. He teaches us how to support each other and to work in a coordinated way as he gives the ability that is appropriate to each one of us, just as a person's head does that for the parts of his body. In this way, as we love each other, we will grow together and make each other stronger.

17 For that reason, and with the authority of the Lord Jesus, I tell you this: from now on you must not live in the same way as the other non-Jews live. The way that they live comes from an empty way of thinking. 18 They are unable to think clearly about what is right or wrong because they try to live completely separated from God. They do this because they do not know what they are missing and because they stubbornly refuse to obey God. 19 They have become unable to sense if something is good or bad, and so they have devoted themselves to doing whatever shameful things their bodies desire. They commit all kinds of immoral acts and want to do them more and more.

20 But that is not how you learned to live when you learned about the Messiah, 21 to the extent that you have heard and understood the message about Jesus and have learned from him, since his way is the true way to live. 22 Your teachers taught you to stop living the way that you used to live. Because you desired to do evil things, you deceived yourselves into thinking that those things were good. Living like that was destroying you spiritually. 23 So you must let God give you a new spirit and a new way of thinking, 24 and you must start living like the new person that God created you in his own image to be. He created you to live in the right way with each other and with himself, in the true way of Jesus.

25 So stop lying to one another. Speak truthfully to each other because we belong to each other as members of God's family. 26 Be angry about sinful behavior, but do not sin because you are angry. Before the end of each day, take care of whatever has made you angry 27 so that you will not allow the devil to do evil things among you. 28 Those who have been stealing must not steal anymore. Instead, they must work hard, doing good work by their own efforts so that they may have something to give to those who are needy. 29 Do not say harmful things. Instead, say good things that will encourage people when they need help so that God can work through your words to benefit those who hear. 30 God has marked you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, who will be with you until the day that the Messiah will rescue you from this world. So do not make the Holy Spirit of God sad by how you live. 31 Do your best to completely stop behaving in these ways: Do not be resentful or furious toward others or even become angry with others. Do not shout abusively at others or slander others. Never act maliciously in any way. 32 Rather than behave like that, be kind to one another. Act mercifully toward each other. Forgive each other in the same way that God also forgave you through what the Messiah has done for you.

5 Because of what God has done for you, imitate him just as children imitate the father who loves them dearly. 2 Do everything in a way that shows that you love others. Be like the Messiah, who loved us so much that he willingly died for us on the cross as the offering and sacrifice to God in our place. This sacrifice pleased God very much. 3 But there should be no reason for anyone to even suggest that any of you are involved in sexual sin or any kind of immoral or obsessive sexual behavior. Such sins do not belong among God's people. 4 When you speak to each other, do not tell obscene stories or say foolish things or joke about committing sins. Such things are not what people who belong to God talk about. Instead, express the things that you are thankful for. 5 It is quite true that these people will be excluded from the kingdom of the Messiah who is God: everyone who is sexually immoral or indecent, or who is obsessed with sex, which is the same as worshiping an idol. 6 Do not let anyone deceive you by telling you that God will not punish people who do these things. It is because of these very things that God will punish the people who disobey him.

7 So do not join with those people in doing these kinds of sins. 8 Remember that before you believed in the Lord Jesus, you did not know what was true, just as people who are in a dark place do not know what is around them. But now it is as though you have come out into the light, because the Lord has shown to you what is true. So live in the way that the Lord has shown to you. 9 Because just as people who have light will walk in the right way, as a result of knowing Jesus you can always live in a way that is good, right, and true. 10 As you live this way, keep learning what pleases the Lord. 11 So do not participate together with those who are doing the worthless deeds that they do in spiritual darkness. Instead, expose to everyone how worthless those deeds are. 12 Of course it is shameful for God's people to even talk about the evil things that those people do in secret, 13 but it is necessary for us to expose them so that people can know and understand that these deeds are evil. This is like when we bring something into the light in order to reveal to everyone what it truly is. Then people can examine and judge that thing that light has exposed. 14 Before you knew God you were like someone asleep or dead in a dark place. This is what believers are talking about when they say,

> "You who are asleep, wake up!
> You who are dead, come out of the darkness and live!
> The Messiah will show you what is true,
> just as a light that shines shows people what
> was in the darkness."

15 So be very careful how you live. Do not behave as foolish people do. Instead, behave as wise people do. 16 Do the most good that you can with the time that you have, because people are doing more and more evil things every day. 17 So be wise, understand well what it is that the Lord Jesus wants you to do, and do it!

18 Do not become drunk by drinking alcoholic drinks,
because people cannot control themselves when they are
drunk. Instead, let God's Spirit control what you do at all
times. 19 Sing to each other Psalms and songs about the
Messiah and songs that God's Spirit gives you. Let this music
come from deep within you as sincere praise to the Lord.
20 At all times thank God the Father for everything because of
what our Lord Jesus the Messiah has done for you. 21 Humbly
submit yourselves to each other because you deeply respect
the Messiah.

22–23 Wives should submit to their own husband's
leadership as they do to the Lord Jesus because the husband
is the leader of the wife as also the Messiah is the leader of
the worldwide assembly of believers. He is the Savior who
has saved all believers from being condemned for their sins.
24 As for wives, just as all believers submit themselves to
the authority of the Messiah, in the same way wives must
also submit themselves completely to the authority of their
husbands.

25 Each of you husbands, love your wife as much as the
Messiah loved all who would believe in him. He even gave
up his own life for us on the cross 26 so that he might set
us apart for himself. He purified us by telling us his plan
to forgive us and by removing our sins as though washing
them away in water. 27 He did this so that he could present
the group of all believers to himself as a glorious group that
does not have any sin or moral imperfection, but instead
is holy and perfect, like a glorious bride ready to meet her
groom. 28 In that same way, each man should love his own
wife as much as he loves his own body. A man who loves
his wife is also, by doing that, loving himself 29–30 because
no one ever hated his own body. Instead, he feeds his own
body and cares for it, just like the Messiah also cares for all
us believers in his worldwide assembly. We have become
one group of believers that belongs to him. 31 The scriptures
say this about people who marry:

> "Therefore a man will leave his father and his
> mother and will join himself to his wife,
> and the two of them will become as
> though they were one person."

32 There is very much about this that we cannot understand,
but I am telling you that this example of a husband and
wife also helps us to understand the relationship between
the Messiah and the group of people who belong to him.
33 However, as for you, each man must love his wife just as
he loves himself, and each woman must deeply respect her
husband.

6 As for you who are children, obey your parents as a way
of serving the Lord Jesus because it is right for you to
do that. 2 God commanded in the scriptures,

"Greatly respect your father and mother." That is the
first law that God commanded in which he also promised
something. He promised,

3 "If you do that, you will prosper, and you will live a
long time on the earth."

4 As for you who are fathers, do not treat your children in
a way that makes them become angry. Instead, bring them
up well by instructing them and by disciplining them in the
manner that the Lord Jesus wants you to do.

5 As for you who are slaves, very respectfully and sincerely
obey those who are your masters here on the earth, just as
you obey the Messiah. 6 Obey them not only when they are
watching you, as people do who only care about appearing
to work hard. Instead, work as though you were slaves of the
Messiah, doing enthusiastically what God wants you to do.
7 Serve your masters willingly, as though you are serving the
Lord Jesus rather than people. 8 Do this because you know
that the Lord Jesus will reward each person for whatever
good deeds that person has done. It makes no difference
whether that person was a slave or a free person.

9 As for you who are masters, just like your slaves should
serve you well, in the same way you must treat them well.
Stop threatening them. Do not forget that the one who is
both their Lord and your Lord is in heaven and he judges all
people equally whether their position is high or low.

10 Finally, rely completely on the Lord Jesus to strengthen
you spiritually because he is immeasurably strong. 11 Just
as a soldier puts on all of his armor to be ready to fight
his enemy, you should use every spiritual resource that God
provides for you so that you may successfully resist the devil
when he cleverly schemes against you. 12 Remember that
we are not fighting against other human beings. Instead, we
are fighting against the demons who have authority to rule
over the people doing evil things in this evil time, that is,
against the evil spirits who live in the air. 13 That is why
you must use well all of the spiritual resources that God has
given you, like a soldier who puts on all of his armor. If you
do that, you will be able to resist the evil spirits when they
attack you. You will also be ready for when they attack you
again and able to continue to live well for God.

14 You must be ready to resist the devil and his evil
spirits just as soldiers must always be ready to resist the
enemy. To do that, keep thinking about the true things that
God has shown you. Also, continue to act righteously. This
will protect you like a soldier's armor protects his chest.
15 Just like a soldier who keeps his boots on, be ready to go
anywhere you are needed for the sake of the good news that
tells people how to be at peace with God. 16 Just as a soldier
holds up a shield to stop the flaming arrows that his enemy
shoots at him, you must keep trusting firmly in the Lord at
all times. That will protect you from all of the things that
your enemy, Satan, the evil one, will try to do to harm you
spiritually. 17 Also, as a soldier relies on a helmet to protect
his head, rely on the fact that God has saved you. And just as
a soldier uses a sword to defeat his enemies, use the weapon
that God's Spirit gives you, which is the message that comes
from God. 18 Whenever you pray to God and request things
from him, always let God's Spirit direct you in how you pray
and what you pray for. To be most effective, keep watching
to see what God is doing, and be persistent as you continue
to pray for all of God's people. 19 Pray for me, also, that
God would tell me what I should say whenever I speak, in
order that I may boldly tell others the good news about the
Messiah that people did not know before. 20 It is because I
have been telling people about the Messiah that I am now
representing him here in prison. Pray that as I continue to
tell others about the Messiah, I may speak boldly because
that is how I ought to speak.

21 Now in order that you may know about what is
happening with me and what I am doing, Tychicus will
tell you everything that is happening here. He is a fellow
believer whom we all love very much, and he serves the
Lord Jesus faithfully. 22 That is the reason that I am sending
him to you with this letter; I want you to know how we are,
and I want him to comfort and encourage you.

23 I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus the
Messiah may give to all of you fellow believers a peaceful
spirit and enable you to love each other and to continue to
trust in God. 24 I pray that God will continue to act graciously
among all people who steadfastly love our Lord Jesus the
Messiah.