

# **GRACE, UNITY, AND VICTORY**

**EXPLORING EPHESIANS,  
COLOSSIANS, AND PHILIPPIANS**

*"Endeavoring to keep the unity of  
the Spirit in the bond of peace."  
Ephesians 4:3*

**2025**

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 1 – Blessed in Christ

Ephesians 1:1–14 (NKJV)

Written ~A.D. 60–62 from Paul's first Roman imprisonment

### *Historical & Literary Context*

The letter to the Ephesians was written by the Apostle Paul while imprisoned in Rome. Ephesus was a major port city in Asia Minor, known for its commerce, diverse population, and the temple of Artemis. Paul spent over two years ministering there (Acts 19:1–41). Unlike some of his letters that address specific problems, Ephesians focuses on the believer's position in Christ and the blessings that come from that union. In this opening section (1:1–14), Paul presents one long, soaring sentence in Greek, praising God for every spiritual blessing in Christ. These blessings are from the Father, through the Son, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

### *Full Scripture Text – Ephesians 1:1–14 (NKJV)*

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

### ***I. The Author and Audience (1:1–2)***

Paul writes as an apostle “by the will of God,” reminding the believers of his divine commission. The recipients are “saints” (set apart ones) and “faithful in Christ Jesus.”

**Cross-Reference:** Philippians 1:1 – Paul addresses the church as “saints,” showing this is the standard term for all believers, not just special ones.

**Application:** See yourself the way God sees you—as a saint and faithful in Christ—and live like it.

**Question:** How would your daily walk change if you saw yourself as a “saint” and “faithful in Christ Jesus”?

### ***II. Blessings from the Father (1:3–6)***

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He chose believers before the foundation of the world—not individuals predestined to salvation apart from faith, but His plan that all who are in Christ would be holy. Adoption as sons is God’s will and delight.

**Cross-Reference:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”

**Application:** Rest in the truth that God’s plan for you is holiness, adoption, and acceptance in Christ.

**Question:** Which blessing from the Father encourages you most—being chosen, made holy, adopted, or accepted?

### ***III. Blessings from the Son (1:7–12)***

Redemption and forgiveness come through Christ’s blood. God reveals the “mystery of His will” — unity in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth. We have an inheritance in Him, according to His purpose.

**Cross-Reference:** Colossians 1:14 – “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

**Application:** Live as one who is already redeemed and has an eternal inheritance.

**Question:** How does knowing your inheritance is guaranteed change your view of earthly possessions?

### ***IV. Blessings from the Spirit (1:13–14)***

The Spirit seals believers after they hear and believe the gospel. The Spirit is the guarantee (down payment) of our future redemption.

**Cross-Reference:** 2 Corinthians 1:22 – God “has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

**Application:** Take confidence in your salvation because the Holy Spirit Himself guarantees it.

**Question:** In what ways have you seen the Spirit’s seal and presence give you confidence in your salvation?

### ***Prayer Prompt***

Lord, thank You for blessing me in Christ with every spiritual blessing. Thank You for choosing me in Him, redeeming me by His blood, and sealing me with Your Spirit. Help me live each day to the praise of Your glory. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 2 – From Death to Life

Ephesians 1:15–2:10 (NKJV)

Written ~A.D. 60–62 from Paul's first Roman imprisonment

### *Historical & Literary Context*

In the first part of Ephesians 1, Paul celebrated the spiritual blessings believers have in Christ. Now, he prays for the Ephesian believers to understand the hope, riches, and power that are theirs. In chapter 2, he reminds them of the dramatic transformation God has worked—bringing them from death in sin to life in Christ. This passage ties theology to experience: the same power that raised Christ from the dead has raised believers spiritually. Paul's theme here is consistent with his teaching in other letters: Colossians 2:13 (NKJV) – “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

### *Full Scripture Text – Ephesians 1:15–2:10 (NKJV)*

1:15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,  
1:16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:  
1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,  
1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,  
1:19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power  
1:20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,  
1:21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.  
1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,  
1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,  
2:2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,  
2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.  
2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,  
2:5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),  
2:6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,  
2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.  
2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,  
2:9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared

beforehand that we should walk in them.

### ***I. Paul's Prayer for Insight (1:15–19)***

Paul thanks God for the believers' faith and love, and prays that they would grow in wisdom, revelation, and spiritual understanding. Knowing God is more than head knowledge—it's a Spirit-given illumination of the heart.

**Cross-Reference:** Philippians 1:9–10 – “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent...”

**Application:** Make it your habit to pray for other believers' spiritual growth, not just their physical needs.

**Question:** How often do your prayers for others focus on their relationship with God rather than only their circumstances?

### ***II. Christ's Power and Authority (1:20–23)***

The same power that raised Christ from the dead is working in believers. Christ is enthroned above all spiritual powers, with all things under His feet, as head of the church—His body.

**Cross-Reference:** Colossians 1:18 – “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

**Application:** Trust that no enemy—spiritual or physical—can overrule Christ's authority in your life.

**Question:** How does knowing Christ is head over all things give you confidence in uncertain times?

### ***III. From Death to Life (2:1–7)***

Paul reminds the believers of their former state—dead in sin, enslaved to the world, the devil, and the flesh. But God, rich in mercy and love, made them alive with Christ, raised them up, and seated them in the heavenly places.

**Cross-Reference:** Romans 6:4 – “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

**Application:** Never forget the depth of your rescue—it fuels humility and gratitude.

**Question:** What specific changes in your life reflect the fact that you've been made alive in Christ?

### ***IV. Salvation by Grace Through Faith (2:8–9)***

Salvation is entirely a gift from God—not earned by works, but received through faith. This excludes boasting and centers all glory on God.

**Cross-Reference:** Titus 3:5 – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...”

**Application:** Rest in God's grace as the foundation of your salvation.

**Question:** Do you ever struggle with trying to “earn” God's favor? How can this verse free you from that?

### ***V. Created for Good Works (2:10)***

Believers are God's workmanship—His masterpiece—created in Christ for good works that God prepared in advance. Good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation.

**Cross-Reference:** Matthew 5:16 – “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

**Application:** Look for ways to live out your faith through acts of service and love.

**Question:** What “good work” can you intentionally pursue this week to glorify God?

### ***Prayer Prompt***

Lord, thank You for bringing me from death to life in Christ. Open the eyes of my heart to see the hope, riches, and power You have given. Help me to rest in Your grace, walk in the works You've prepared for me, and glorify You in all I do. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 3 – The Mystery Revealed

■ Ephesians 2:11–3:21 (NKJV)

📖 ■ Written ~A.D. 60–62 from Paul's first Roman imprisonment

### Historical & Literary Context

In Lesson 2, Paul celebrated the transformation from spiritual death to life in Christ. Now, he turns to the corporate transformation — how Jews and Gentiles, once deeply divided, are now united in one body through the cross. This was the “mystery” hidden in ages past but now revealed through the apostles and prophets. Paul closes with a prayer for believers to grasp the magnitude of Christ's love and be filled with all the fullness of God.

### I. Remember Who You Were (2:11–13)

**Commentary:** Paul reminds the Gentile believers in Ephesus of their past alienation — they were “without Christ,” “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” and “strangers from the covenants of promise.” Spiritually, they had no hope and were without God in the world. This stark reminder magnifies the grace they have now received in Christ, who has brought them near by His blood.

**Cross-References:**

- Romans 9:4–5 – Israel's blessings and covenants.
- Colossians 1:21–22 – Once alienated, now reconciled.
- Isaiah 57:19 – “Peace to him who is far off and to him who is near.”

**Application:** We can't fully appreciate grace without remembering what we were saved from. This remembrance fuels humility and gratitude, and removes any ground for boasting in ourselves.

**Questions:**

Why is it important to remember your life before Christ?

How can remembering your past help you relate better to unbelievers?

### II. Christ Our Peace (2:14–18)

**Commentary:** Jesus doesn't just give peace — He is our peace. By His death, He broke down the “middle wall of separation” between Jew and Gentile, creating one new man out of the two. He reconciled both to God through the cross, granting access to the Father by one Spirit.

**Cross-References:**

- Galatians 3:28 – No Jew or Greek, but all one in Christ.
- John 10:16 – One flock, one Shepherd.
- Romans 5:1–2 – Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Application:** True unity is not achieved by compromise but by a shared submission to Christ. If Jesus has removed the dividing wall, we must not rebuild it through prejudice or pride.

**Questions:**

What “walls” might Christians today be tempted to rebuild?

How can you personally promote peace in the body of Christ?

### III. Members of God's Household (2:19–22)

**Commentary:** Believers are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. The church is described as a holy temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone.

**Cross-References:**

- 1 Peter 2:5 – Living stones built into a spiritual house.
- Hebrews 3:6 – We are His house if we hold fast our confidence.
- Matthew 16:18 – Christ will build His church.

**Application:** Being part of God's household means commitment, belonging, and shared purpose. The Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation.

**Questions:**

How does viewing the church as God's household change your attitude toward it?

What role are you playing in building up God's temple?

### IV. The Mystery Revealed (3:1–13)

**Commentary:** Paul explains the "mystery" — that Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of God's promises in Christ through the gospel. This was not revealed in previous ages but is now made known by the Spirit. Paul sees his role as preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles.

**Cross-References:**

- Colossians 1:26–27 – The mystery now revealed to the saints.
- Acts 10:34–35 – God shows no partiality.
- Romans 16:25–26 – The mystery made manifest.

**Application:** We are stewards of the mystery — entrusted to make known the gospel that unites all who believe in Christ.

**Questions:**

How should the truth of Jew-Gentile unity affect the way we share the gospel?

What does Paul's attitude toward his ministry teach us about humility in service?

### V. Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Strength (3:14–21)

**Commentary:** Paul bows his knees and prays that believers would be strengthened in the inner man, rooted and grounded in love, and able to comprehend the width, length, depth, and height of Christ's love. His desire is that they be filled with all the fullness of God. The doxology closes with praise to Him who can do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think.

**Cross-References:**

- Philippians 4:13 – Strength through Christ.
- Romans 8:38–39 – Nothing can separate us from God's love.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 – The inner man renewed daily.

**Application:** We often pray for changed circumstances, but Paul prays for changed hearts. The more we grasp Christ's love, the more we will be shaped into His image.

**Questions:**

How can you deepen your understanding of Christ's love this week?

What would change in your life if you truly believed God can do "exceedingly abundantly" beyond your prayers?

### Prayer Prompt:



Lord, thank You for revealing the mystery of unity in Christ. Strengthen me to live as a peacemaker, a faithful member of Your household, and a steward of the gospel. Root me in Your love and fill me with all Your fullness. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 4 - Walk Worthy of Your Calling

Ephesians 4:1-16 (NKJV) | Written ~A.D. 60-62 from Paul's first Roman imprisonment

### Historical & Literary Context

Ephesians 4 marks the shift from doctrine (chapters 1-3) to duty (chapters 4-6). Paul moves from explaining the believer's identity in Christ to describing how that identity must shape our daily walk. The emphasis here is on unity, maturity, and the proper functioning of the church as Christ's body.

### I. Live with Christlike Character (4:1-3)

**Commentary:** Paul begins with an appeal to 'walk worthy' of the calling we have received. This involves humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love. These virtues are not optional extras; they are essential for maintaining unity in the Spirit.

**Cross-References:**

- Micah 6:8 - Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.
- Colossians 3:12-14 - Put on compassion, kindness, humility, and love.
- Philippians 2:3-4 - Consider others better than yourself.

**Application:** Unity in the church is not automatic; it requires intentional effort. These virtues must be practiced daily, especially when disagreements arise.

**Questions:**

- Which of these virtues (humility, gentleness, patience, love) do you need to strengthen most?
- How does practicing these virtues prevent division in the church?

### II. Recognize the Basis of Unity (4:4-6)

**Commentary:** Paul lists seven 'ones' - one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. This shows that unity is grounded in shared spiritual realities, not in personal preferences or cultural similarities.

**Cross-References:**

- John 17:21 - Jesus prays that His followers may be one.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - Many members, one body, one Spirit.
- Galatians 3:27-28 - All one in Christ Jesus.

**Application:** The church's unity is based on God's work, not ours. Our responsibility is to maintain it by aligning our attitudes and actions with these core truths.

**Questions:**

- Which of the 'seven ones' stands out to you the most, and why?
- How can focusing on these shared truths help resolve conflicts?

### III. Use Your God-Given Abilities for Building Up the Body (4:7-12)

**Commentary:** When Paul wrote of 'gifts' here, some were miraculous in the early church to confirm the word (Hebrews 2:3-4). But with the completion of Scripture, those miraculous gifts are no longer

needed. What continues is the God-given diversity of abilities and roles—teaching, service, encouragement, generosity, leadership—that strengthen the church. Paul highlights leadership roles—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—whose responsibility was and is to equip the saints for ministry, not to do all the ministry themselves.

**Cross-References:**

- Romans 12:6-8 - Different abilities to be used faithfully in service.
- 1 Peter 4:10 - Use what God has given you to serve others.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 - Varieties of abilities, but the same purpose.

**Application:** Every believer today still has a role in building up the church. This is not about miraculous gifts, but about faithfully using whatever abilities God has given you to strengthen the body. Sitting on the sidelines robs both you and the body of Christ of growth.

**Questions:**

- What abilities or opportunities has God given you to strengthen the church today?
- Why is it dangerous when the work of ministry is left only to leaders?

## **IV. Grow Toward Spiritual Maturity (4:13-16)**

**Commentary:** The goal of equipping and unity is maturity - attaining the fullness of Christ. Maturity protects against false teaching and instability. Instead, we speak the truth in love, growing in every way into Christ, as each part does its work.

**Cross-References:**

- Hebrews 5:12-14 - Move from milk to solid food.
- Colossians 1:28 - Present everyone mature in Christ.
- James 1:22-25 - Be doers of the word, not hearers only.

**Application:** Maturity is not about age or time in the church; it is about Christlike character and active service. Speaking truth in love is key to growth.

**Questions:**

- How can you measure your own spiritual maturity?
- What role does 'speaking the truth in love' play in church growth?

## **Prayer Prompt**

Lord, help me to walk worthy of the calling You have given me. Grow in me humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Show me how to use my gifts to build up Your church and to pursue unity and maturity in Christ. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 5 – Put Off the Old, Put On the New

■ Ephesians 4:17–32 (NKJV)

📖 ■ Written ~A.D. 60–62 from Paul's first Roman imprisonment

### Historical & Literary Context

In Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul continues the practical section of the letter, contrasting the lifestyle of the Gentiles in darkness with the new way of life in Christ. Believers are to abandon their old corrupt patterns and embrace righteousness, holiness, and love in speech and conduct. This transformation is rooted in the truth of Christ, not in self-improvement programs.

### I. Reject the Futility of the Old Life (4:17–19)

**Commentary:** Paul warns against walking like the Gentiles—driven by futile thinking, darkened understanding, alienation from God, ignorance, and hardness of heart. This spiritual blindness produces shameless indulgence in impurity and greed.

**Cross-References:**

- Romans 1:21 – Their thinking became futile and hearts darkened.
- 1 Peter 4:3–4 – You have spent enough time in sinful living.
- Colossians 3:5–7 – Put to death sinful passions you once walked in.

**Application:** The Christian life is not compatible with the values of a world that rejects God. Transformation begins with rejecting the mindset and moral patterns of our past.

**Questions:**

- What worldly patterns still try to pull you back into 'old self' thinking?
- How can you guard your mind against the futility Paul describes?

### II. Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind (4:20–24)

**Commentary:** The truth in Jesus teaches us to put off the old self, be renewed in our minds, and put on the new self—created according to God's righteousness and holiness. This is not a one-time act but a daily discipline.

**Cross-References:**

- Romans 12:2 – Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- Colossians 3:9–10 – Put off the old self, put on the new.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

**Application:** Spiritual renewal happens when God's Word shapes our thinking, which then transforms our actions.

**Questions:**

- What daily habits help you 'renew your mind'?
- How does knowing your new identity in Christ change the way you act?

### III. Speak Truth and Build Up with Your Words (4:25–29)

**Commentary:** Paul gives practical commands—stop lying, control anger, reject theft, work honestly, and use words to build up rather than tear down. Our speech should impart grace to those who hear.

**Cross-References:**

- Proverbs 12:18 – Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- Matthew 12:36–37 – We will give account for every idle word.
- James 3:9–10 – Blessing and cursing should not come from the same mouth.

**Application:** Words can destroy relationships or strengthen them. God calls us to be intentional about speaking truth with love and avoiding any speech that corrupts.

**Questions:**

- How can you train yourself to speak with grace, even when angry?
- What changes in your relationships when you intentionally speak to build up others?

## **IV. Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30–32)**

**Commentary:** Grieving the Spirit happens when believers act contrary to His holy nature—through bitterness, rage, slander, and malice. Instead, we are to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving, just as God forgave us in Christ.

**Cross-References:**

- Galatians 5:22–23 – The fruit of the Spirit.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19 – Do not quench the Spirit.
- Matthew 6:14–15 – Forgive as you have been forgiven.

**Application:** A Spirit-filled life is marked by kindness, compassion, and forgiveness, which flow from understanding the depth of God's grace toward us.

**Questions:**

- What attitudes in this list do you most need to remove?
- Who do you need to forgive as Christ forgave you?

## **Prayer Prompt**

Lord, help me to daily put off the old self and put on the new. Renew my mind with Your truth, purify my speech, and fill me with Your Spirit so that I reflect Your kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians Lesson 6 – Walk in Love, Light, and Wisdom (NKJV)

## Historical & Literary Context

Ephesians 5 continues Paul's practical instructions for living out the believer's calling. It emphasizes love, purity, light, wisdom, and Spirit-filled living. These verses contrast the old life of darkness with the new life in Christ and call believers to live distinctly in a sinful world. Paul uses three "walk" commands—walk in love, walk as children of light, and walk in wisdom—to describe how Christians should conduct themselves. He also calls for worship, gratitude, and mutual submission as marks of the Spirit-filled life.

### I. Walk in Love (5:1–7)

**Commentary:** Imitating God begins with sacrificial love, patterned after Christ's death on the cross. Love is not mere emotion—it is holy, selfless action. Paul warns against fornication, impurity, greed, and corrupt speech—sins incompatible with the life of a saint. Those who practice such things have no inheritance in God's kingdom.

**Cross-References:**

- John 13:34–35 – Love one another as Christ loved you.
- Galatians 5:13–14 – Love fulfills the law.
- Colossians 3:5–6 – God's wrath comes on disobedience.

**Application:** True love sacrifices without tolerating sin. Love that ignores holiness is not God's love.

**Questions:**

How does biblical love differ from the world's definition?  
Which warning in this passage most applies to you today?

### II. Walk as Children of Light (5:8–14)

**Commentary:** Believers were once darkness but are now light in the Lord. To walk as children of light means producing goodness, righteousness, and truth. It also means exposing works of darkness rather than participating in them. This requires courage and a commitment to truth.

**Cross-References:**

- Matthew 5:14–16 – Let your light shine before men.
- Philippians 2:15 – Shine as lights in the world.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5 – You are sons of light and day.

**Application:** Walking in light involves both moral purity and the boldness to confront sin with truth.

**Questions:**

Where in your life might you be tempted to overlook sin rather than expose it?  
How can you reflect Christ's light in your workplace or community?

### III. Walk in Wisdom (5:15–17)

**Commentary:** Wisdom is careful, purposeful living that makes the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. It requires understanding the Lord's will, which is revealed in His Word. The wise believer aligns life priorities with God's eternal purposes.

**Cross-References:**

- Colossians 4:5 – Walk in wisdom toward outsiders.
- James 1:5 – Ask God for wisdom.
- Proverbs 4:7 – Wisdom is the principal thing.

**Application:** Wisdom redeems the time by investing in things that matter eternally.

**Questions:**

What's one area where you need to redeem the time this week?

What decision do you face right now that requires God's wisdom?

## **IV. Be Filled with the Spirit (5:18–21)**

**Commentary:** Instead of being controlled by wine or worldly influences, believers are to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Today, this filling is not about miraculous gifts—which confirmed the Word in the first century (Hebrews 2:3–4)—but about holy living, spiritual fruit, and submission to God's Word. Spirit-filled believers display worship, gratitude, and mutual submission.

**Cross-References:**

- Galatians 5:22–23 – The fruit of the Spirit.
- Colossians 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
- Acts 4:31 – Filled with the Spirit, they spoke God's word boldly.

**Application:** Spirit-filled living comes from daily surrender to God and allowing His Word to guide every action and attitude.

**Questions:**

What habits in your life open the door for the Spirit's influence?

How can Spirit-filled worship and gratitude shape your relationships?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Lord, help me to walk in love, light, and wisdom. Fill me with Your Spirit so my life reflects Your holiness, my words overflow with gratitude, and my relationships show humility and grace. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 7 – Christ’s Supremacy and the Gospel’s Power (NKJV)

### Colossians 1

Written ~A.D. 60–62 during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment, alongside Ephesians and Philippians.

#### Historical & Literary Context

Colossians was written to a church Paul had not personally visited, likely planted by Epaphras. False teachings threatened to diminish Christ’s supremacy by mixing Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy, and mysticism. Paul writes to exalt Christ as the preeminent Lord of creation and redemption, urging the believers to remain steadfast in the gospel.

#### I. Thanksgiving for Faith and Love (1:1–8)

Paul opens by commending the Colossians for their faith in Christ and love for the saints, both flowing from their hope in heaven. He reminds them the gospel is bearing fruit worldwide.

Cross-References: Ephesians 1:15–16; Romans 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:3

Application: Gratitude for others’ faith should lead us to encouragement, not envy.

Questions: 1) Who in your life has encouraged your faith the most? 2) How do you intentionally encourage the faith of others?

#### II. Prayer for Spiritual Growth (1:9–14)

Paul prays for the Colossians to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will, producing a life pleasing to Him, strengthened for endurance, and giving thanks for salvation.

Cross-References: James 1:5; Ephesians 3:16–19; Philippians 1:9–11

Application: Spiritual growth is intentional and requires God’s wisdom through His Word.

Questions: 1) In what area of your spiritual life do you need more discernment? 2) What does it mean for you to “walk worthy of the Lord” this week?

#### III. The Supremacy of Christ (1:15–20)

Christ is the image of the invisible God, Creator of all, head of the church, and reconciler of all things through His cross. Paul exalts Christ as supreme in every realm.

Cross-References: John 1:1–3; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:9–11

Application: A right view of Christ shapes every decision, priority, and relationship.

Questions: 1) How does recognizing Christ’s supremacy impact your daily life? 2) What in your life might compete with Christ’s rightful place?

#### IV. Reconciliation and Perseverance in the Faith (1:21–23)



Once alienated, believers are now reconciled through Christ's death, to be presented holy and blameless—if they continue in the faith.

Cross-References: 2 Corinthians 5:18–19; Romans 5:10; Hebrews 3:14

Application: Perseverance is the mark of genuine faith.

Questions: 1) What practices help you remain steadfast in your faith? 2) How does reconciliation motivate you to live for Christ?

## V. Paul's Ministry for the Church (1:24–29)

Paul rejoices in his sufferings for the sake of the church, proclaiming the mystery—Christ in you, the hope of glory—laboring to present every believer mature in Christ.

Cross-References: Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 3:8–9; 2 Timothy 4:5

Application: Ministry is about Christ's glory and others' growth, not our comfort.

Questions: 1) How can you better support those laboring for the gospel? 2) What steps are you taking to help others mature in Christ?

## Prayer Prompt

Lord, thank You for the supremacy of Christ and the power of the gospel. Help me to remain steadfast in the faith, grow in spiritual wisdom, and labor for the maturity of others in Christ. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 8 – Rooted in Christ, Guarded from Deception (NKJV)

### Colossians 2

Written ~A.D. 60–62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment

#### Historical & Literary Context

Paul continues warning the Colossians against false teachings that undermine Christ's sufficiency—legalism, mysticism, and human tradition. He calls them to remain firmly rooted in Christ, complete in Him, and to reject any teaching that adds to or takes away from the gospel.

#### I. Encouragement and Unity in Christ (2:1–5)

Paul reveals his deep struggle for the Colossians and others, desiring them to be knit together in love and full assurance of understanding in Christ.

Cross-References: Philippians 2:1–2; Hebrews 10:24–25; Ephesians 4:15–16

Application: Genuine unity is built on shared love for Christ and truth, not on compromise with error.

Questions: 1) How can you actively promote unity rooted in truth? 2) What truths about Christ most encourage you when facing spiritual challenges?

#### II. Walk in Christ as Lord (2:6–7)

Paul urges believers to continue in the way they received Christ—rooted, built up, established in the faith, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Cross-References: John 15:4–5; Ephesians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Application: Our spiritual walk should reflect continual growth in dependence on Christ.

Questions: 1) What habits are helping you grow deeper roots in Christ? 2) Where might you be relying on your own strength rather than Christ's?

#### III. Beware of Deception (2:8–10)

Paul warns against being taken captive through philosophy, empty deceit, human tradition, and worldly principles instead of Christ, in whom all fullness dwells.

Cross-References: 2 Corinthians 10:4–5; Galatians 1:6–9; 1 John 4:1

Application: Every teaching must be tested against God's Word to see if it aligns with Christ.

Questions: 1) How do you test the truth of what you hear or read? 2) What philosophies or trends today tempt people to shift away from Christ?

#### IV. Complete in Christ's Work (2:11–15)

Paul emphasizes that believers are spiritually circumcised in Christ, buried and raised with Him through faith, forgiven of sins, and freed from the law's condemnation.

Cross-References: Romans 6:3–4; Ephesians 2:13–16; Hebrews 10:14–18

Application: Nothing outside of Christ is needed for salvation or spiritual maturity.

Questions: 1) How does understanding your completeness in Christ affect your confidence before God? 2) What “extra requirements” do people still try to add to the gospel today?

## V. Freedom from Legalism and Man-Made Religion (2:16–23)

Paul rejects the imposition of dietary laws, festival observances, ascetic practices, and mystical visions as means to righteousness. Christ is the substance; these are shadows.

Cross-References: Galatians 5:1–6; 1 Timothy 4:1–5; Hebrews 8:5

Application: True holiness flows from holding fast to Christ, not from man-made rules.

Questions: 1) Have you ever felt pressured to follow extra-biblical rules to be “spiritual”? 2) How can you discern between godly discipline and legalism?

## Prayer Prompt

Lord, root me deeply in Christ so I am not swayed by deceptive teachings. Help me rest in the completeness of Your work, walk in Your truth, and reject anything that would diminish Your glory. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philipians

## Lesson 9 – Setting Your Mind on Things Above (NKJV)

### Colossians 3:1–17

Written ~A.D. 60–62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment

#### Historical & Literary Context

In Colossians 3, Paul moves from doctrine to practice. After establishing Christ's supremacy and our completeness in Him (chapters 1–2), he now calls believers to live out this reality by putting to death earthly desires and putting on the new self, reflecting Christ's character in every area of life.

#### I. Seek the Things Above (3:1–4)

Paul urges believers to set their hearts and minds on Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God, because our lives are hidden with Him.

Cross-References: Matthew 6:33; Philipians 3:20–21; Hebrews 12:1–2

Application: Where we focus our thoughts determines the direction of our lives.

Questions: 1) What practical steps help you keep your focus on Christ daily? 2) How does remembering your life is "hidden with Christ" affect how you handle trials?

#### II. Put to Death Earthly Desires (3:5–7)

Paul lists sinful behaviors—sexual immorality, greed, anger—that must be put to death because they belong to our old life before Christ.

Cross-References: Romans 6:11–13; Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 5:3–5

Application: True spiritual growth requires decisive action against sin.

Questions: 1) Which of these sins do you see most celebrated in today's culture? 2) How can you actively "put to death" those sinful patterns in your own life?

#### III. Put Off the Old, Put On the New (3:8–11)

Believers are to remove anger, malice, slander, and lies, and instead clothe themselves with the new self renewed in the image of Christ.

Cross-References: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22–24; Romans 12:2

Application: The Christian life is not just avoiding sin, but embracing Christlikeness.

Questions: 1) What part of your "old self" tries to reassert itself most often? 2) How can renewing your mind with Scripture help you put on the new self?

#### IV. Clothe Yourselves with Christlike Virtues (3:12–14)

Paul lists compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love as the garments of the new life.

Cross-References: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Peter 4:8

Application: Love is the binding force that holds every Christian virtue together.

Questions: 1) Which virtue from Paul's list do you most want to grow in? 2) How does love "bind" all other virtues together in your relationships?

#### V. Let the Peace and Word of Christ Rule You (3:15–17)

Paul calls believers to let Christ's peace rule their hearts, be thankful, let His Word dwell richly, and do everything in His name.

Cross-References: Philippians 4:6–7; John 14:27; Psalm 119:11

Application: A heart ruled by Christ's peace will overflow in gratitude and godly action.

Questions: 1) How can you create space in your life for the Word of Christ to dwell richly? 2) What would change if you truly did "everything in the name of the Lord Jesus"?

#### Prayer Prompt

Lord, fix my mind on You, help me put to death every sin, clothe me in Your virtues, and fill my heart with Your peace and Word so that everything I do glorifies You. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philipians

## Lesson 10 – Christ in Every Relationship and Work (NKJV)

### Colossians 3:18–4:18

Written ~A.D. 60–62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment

#### Historical & Literary Context

Paul concludes Colossians with instructions for relationships in the Christian household, guidance for prayer and evangelism, and final personal greetings. His message is that Christ's lordship should influence every relationship and responsibility—whether in the home, workplace, church, or the wider community.

#### I. Christ-Centered Households (3:18–21)

Paul addresses wives, husbands, children, and fathers with instructions rooted in love, respect, and the Lord's authority.

Cross-References: Ephesians 5:22–33; Titus 2:4–5; 1 Peter 3:1–7

Application: A Christ-centered home is built on mutual love, respect, and obedience to God's design.

Questions: 1) How does Christ's example shape the way you interact with family members? 2) Which of these instructions is most challenging for you to live out consistently?

#### II. Christ-Centered Work Ethic (3:22–4:1)

Servants are told to work sincerely as for the Lord, and masters are told to treat their servants justly and fairly.

Cross-References: Ephesians 6:5–9; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12

Application: Our work—whether for pay or service—is an opportunity to glorify God.

Questions: 1) What changes when you view your work as service to Christ? 2) How can you model fairness and integrity in your workplace relationships?

#### III. Devotion to Prayer and Evangelism (4:2–6)

Paul urges believers to devote themselves to prayer, stay alert with thanksgiving, and pray for open doors to share the gospel.

Cross-References: 1 Thessalonians 5:17–18; Romans 10:14–15; Ephesians 6:18–20

Application: Prayer fuels both our spiritual health and our witness to others.

Questions: 1) How can you be more intentional about praying for gospel opportunities? 2) What would it look like to speak with both grace and clarity when sharing Christ?

#### IV. Faithful Fellowship and Service (4:7–14)

Paul lists faithful coworkers—Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas—highlighting their service and encouragement.

Cross-References: Hebrews 6:10; Galatians 6:9–10; Philippians 1:3–5

Application: Ministry is a team effort, and every role in the body matters.

Questions: 1) Who in your life encourages your walk with Christ the most? 2) How can you encourage a fellow servant of Christ this week?

#### V. Perseverance in Ministry (4:15–18)

Paul closes with greetings, instructions to read the letter publicly, and a personal reminder of his chains.

Cross-References: 2 Timothy 4:7–8; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 12:1–3

Application: Ministry often involves endurance through hardship, but the eternal reward is worth it.

Questions: 1) How do Paul's closing words inspire you to remain faithful in service? 2) What "unfinished work" has God placed before you that requires perseverance?

#### Prayer Prompt

Lord, help me live for You in my family, my work, my prayers, my service, and my endurance. May Christ be seen in every area of my life. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 11 – Joy in Partnership for the Gospel (NKJV)

### Philippians 1:1–26

Written ~A.D. 61–62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment

#### Historical & Literary Context

Philippians is Paul's warm letter to the church at Philippi, the first church he planted in Europe (Acts 16:11–40). Written from prison, it overflows with joy, gratitude, and encouragement. In this opening section, Paul gives thanks for their partnership in the gospel, prays for their growth, and reflects on how his imprisonment has served to advance the gospel.

#### I. Thanksgiving for Gospel Partnership (1:1–8)

Paul begins with a greeting and thanksgiving for the Philippians' faithful support from the first day until now.

Cross-References: Acts 16:13–15; 2 Corinthians 8:1–5; Philemon 1:4–5

Application: Gratitude for fellow workers in Christ strengthens unity and mutual encouragement.

Questions: 1) Who in your life has been a consistent partner in serving Christ? 2) How can you express your gratitude to them this week?

#### II. Prayer for Spiritual Growth (1:9–11)

Paul prays that their love would abound in knowledge and discernment, leading to sincere and blameless lives filled with the fruit of righteousness.

Cross-References: Colossians 1:9–10; John 15:8; Galatians 5:22–23

Application: True love is guided by biblical truth and results in fruitful living.

Questions: 1) How can love and discernment work together in your spiritual decisions? 2) What fruit of righteousness do you want to see grow in your life?

#### III. The Gospel Advanced Through Hardship (1:12–18)

Paul explains that his imprisonment has opened doors for the gospel to reach the palace guard and emboldened others to speak the word without fear.

Cross-References: 2 Timothy 2:9; Acts 28:30–31; Romans 8:28

Application: God can use trials to accomplish His purposes in spreading the gospel.

Questions: 1) How have your own hardships created opportunities for gospel witness? 2) What might change if you viewed difficulties as a platform for God's work?

#### IV. Living and Dying for Christ (1:19–26)

Paul declares that to live is Christ and to die is gain, expressing his desire to be with Christ yet also to continue serving the Philippians for their progress in the faith.

Cross-References: 2 Corinthians 5:6–9; Galatians 2:20; Revelation 14:13

Application: A Christ-centered life values service on earth and hope in eternity.

Questions: 1) What does "to live is Christ" mean for your daily priorities? 2) How can the hope of being with Christ shape the way you face life and death?

#### Prayer Prompt



Lord, help me live with a joyful partnership in Your work, grow in love and discernment, embrace hardships for the gospel's advance, and hold fast to the hope of eternal life with You. Amen.

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## Lesson 12 – Conduct Worthy of the Gospel & Shining as Lights (NKJV)

Philippians 1:27–2:30

✍️ Written ~A.D. 61–62 during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment

### Historical & Literary Context

Paul writes from prison, yet his concern is not for his own comfort but for the Philippians’ faithfulness. He calls them to live as “citizens” worthy of the gospel, reminding them their true citizenship is in heaven (cf. Philippians 3:20). This section emphasizes unity, steadfastness under opposition, Christ-like humility, and living as shining examples in a dark world.

### I. Live Worthy of the Gospel (1:27–30)

Paul urges believers to stand fast in one spirit, strive together for the faith, and remain unshaken by opposition.

Cross-References:

- Ephesians 4:1–3 – Walk worthy of the calling with humility, gentleness, and patience.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12 – Walk worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.

Application: Living worthy of the gospel means both our conduct and our courage reflect Christ.

Questions:

- 1) What changes would you need to make for your daily conduct to match your heavenly citizenship?
- 2) How can unity strengthen the church in times of spiritual opposition?

### II. Christ’s Example of Humility (2:1–11)

Paul calls for unity through humility, urging believers to consider others more important than themselves. He points to Jesus, who humbled Himself by taking on human form and obeying to the point of death.

Cross-References:

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

- John 13:14-15 – Jesus washed the disciples’ feet as an example of humble service.
- 2 Corinthians 8:9 – Christ became poor for our sake, so we might become rich in Him.

Application: True unity flows from selfless humility modeled after Christ.

Questions:

- 1) In what situations is it most difficult for you to put others ahead of yourself?
- 2) How can reflecting on Christ’s humility reshape your relationships?

## III. Working Out Salvation with Reverence (2:12-13)

Paul instructs believers to “work out” their salvation, not in fear of losing it, but in reverence for God who works in them to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Cross-References:

- Colossians 1:29 – Paul labors, striving according to God’s power working in him.
- Hebrews 13:20-21 – God equips believers to do His will.

Application: Spiritual growth is our responsibility, but the power to grow comes from God.

Questions:

- 1) What practical steps can you take to cooperate with God’s work in your life?
- 2) How does knowing God is working in you encourage you in daily obedience?

## IV. Shining as Lights in the World (2:14-18)

Believers are to live without grumbling or disputing, so they may be blameless and shine like lights in a dark world.

Cross-References:

- Matthew 5:14-16 – Let your light shine before men so they glorify God.
- Daniel 12:3 – Those who turn many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever.

Application: The way we respond to trials and treat others reveals Christ to the watching world.

Questions:

- 1) How can you respond to challenges without complaining?
- 2) Who in your life needs to see the light of Christ in your attitude this week?

# Grace, Unity, and Victory: Exploring Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians

## V. Examples of Faithful Service (2:19–30)

Paul commends Timothy for his genuine care for the Philippians and Epaphroditus for risking his life in service.

Cross-References:

- 1 Corinthians 16:10–11 – Timothy’s work is the Lord’s work.
- Romans 16:3–4 – Priscilla and Aquila risked their lives for Paul.

Application: Faithful service often involves personal sacrifice for the sake of others.

Questions:

- 1) How can you encourage and support faithful servants of Christ in your church?
- 2) What personal sacrifice could you make to serve others in the gospel?

Prayer Prompt

Lord, help me live as a citizen worthy of Your gospel, to walk in humility, to grow in reverence for You, to shine brightly in a dark world, and to serve others faithfully no matter the cost. Amen.

# Lesson 13 - Rejoicing Always & Finding Contentment (NKJV)

Philippians 3-4

Written ~A.D. 61-62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment

## Historical & Literary Context

Paul closes his letter to the Philippians with exhortations to rejoice in the Lord, press toward the goal, live as citizens of heaven, stand firm in faith, and rest in Christ's sufficiency. Despite being imprisoned, Paul models unwavering joy, showing that Christian contentment is rooted not in circumstances but in the unchanging character of God.

### I. Rejoicing in the Lord & Guarding Against False Teachers (3:1-3)

Paul begins this section with a reminder: "Rejoice in the Lord." Joy is not based on external situations but flows from our relationship with Christ. He warns against those who distort the gospel (the Judaizers), calling them "dogs" and "evil workers."

Cross-References:

- Galatians 5:1 - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free..."
- 2 John 1:9 - Remaining in the doctrine of Christ is essential for fellowship with God.

Application: Rejoicing in the Lord provides strength against error. Those grounded in joy and truth are not easily swayed by false teaching.

Questions:

1. How does rejoicing in the Lord guard you from spiritual deception?
2. What false teachings are most prevalent in today's culture, and how can you resist them?

### II. Pressing Toward the Goal (3:4-16)

Paul lists his religious credentials but counts them all as loss compared to knowing Christ. His life is aimed toward the upward call of God, pressing forward without clinging to the past.

Cross-References:

- Hebrews 12:1-2 - "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus..."
- 1 Corinthians 9:24 - Run to win the imperishable crown.

Application: Spiritual maturity means continually moving forward in Christ, not relying on past accomplishments or being stalled by past failures.

Questions:

1. What "past" in your life might be holding you back from pressing forward?
2. How can you practically pursue the "upward call" of God each day?

### III. Citizenship in Heaven (3:17-21)

Paul contrasts those whose minds are set on earthly things with those whose true citizenship is in heaven. Believers eagerly await Christ's return, when He will transform our lowly bodies.

Cross-References:

- Colossians 3:2 - "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."
- 1 Peter 2:11 - We are sojourners and pilgrims on the earth.

Application: A heavenly mindset shapes our earthly priorities. We live differently when we know where our true home is.

## Lesson 13 - Rejoicing Always & Finding Contentment (NKJV)

Questions:

1. How does remembering your heavenly citizenship change your daily decisions?
2. In what ways can you remind others that this world is not our home?

### IV. Standing Firm & Choosing Joy (4:1-9)

Paul exhorts the Philippians to stand firm, settle disputes, rejoice always, and replace anxiety with prayer. He encourages them to meditate on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy.

Cross-References:

- Isaiah 26:3 - God keeps in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on Him.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks..."

Application: Joy and peace are choices that flow from prayer and disciplined thinking.

Questions:

1. Which area of your thought life needs the most renewal according to Philippians 4:8?
2. How does prayer replace anxiety with peace in your life?

### V. Learning Contentment in Christ's Strength (4:10-23)

Paul thanks the Philippians for their generosity but clarifies that his contentment is not tied to gifts. He has learned to be content in any circumstance, knowing he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him.

Cross-References:

- 1 Timothy 6:6 - "Now godliness with contentment is great gain."
- Psalm 23:1 - "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Application: True contentment is learned through dependence on Christ, not perfect circumstances.

Questions:

1. In what areas of your life do you most struggle to be content?
2. How has God used trials to teach you deeper reliance on His strength?

Prayer Prompt:

Lord, help me rejoice always, press forward in faith, live as a citizen of heaven, stand firm in truth, and rest in the sufficiency of Christ in every situation. Amen.