SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES- By Lisa Hughes

**Ephesians – A 24 Week Inductive Bible Study**

Fall/Winter 2021 – Winter/Spring 2022

**What is the author’s purpose in writing this book?** Having come to the end of an in-depth bible study of the book of Ephesians this past year, I thought I would do a brief overview of the six chapters of this “Prison Epistle” to see the apostle Paul’s reasons, for writing this letter. We will not only look at Paul’s heart toward the church in Ephesus but also God’s heart towards the church today.

(I have added some practical biblical lessons in this overview that we stopped to meditate upon as we journeyed through this epistle. Also, I summarized each chapter with two words and a key phrase from each chapter for the sake of memorizing chapter themes.) Grab a cup of tea and review with me!

**Chapter One** summarized in two words: ***“IN HIM”***

We see in this chapter: The “riches of His grace” defined (articulated).

Ephesians 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the *riches of His grace.”*

*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-*to seek to understand* the triune God’s roles in our salvation and sanctification

-*to savor* the Gospel and ALL of the spiritual blessings that are ours in Jesus Christ

-to submit ourselves to pray that we would know the hope of His calling in our life

-to settle our hearts in knowing that we possess an amazing eternal inheritance

-*to specifically know* the surpassing greatness of His power at work in our lives

-to see how He has exalted Christ over everything/everyone including His church

-to solidify in our hearts that “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:12NASB)

**Chapter Two** summarized in two words: ***“BUT GOD”***

We see in this chapter: “The surpassing riches of His grace” detailed (elaborated).

Ephesians 2:8 “so that in the ages to come He might show *the surpassing riches of His grace* in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

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*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-to soberly remember our spiritual deadness from which we were redeemed

-to sense the magnitude of His boundless mercy and grace put on display

-to set our minds on glorifying Him because of His limitless love towards us

-*to saturate* our hearts with His will: Jew and Gentile being joint heirs in Christ

-to see that because of the cross and the blood of Jesus those who were at war can now be at peace with one another

-*to strengthen our witness* in the world by preserving unity with one another

-to solidify in our hearts that there is “one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5NASB)

**Chapter Three** summarized in two words: ***“THE MYSTERY”***

We see in this chapter: “The unfathomable riches of Christ” declared (confirmed).

Ephesians 3:8 “To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles *the unfathomable riches of Christ*.”

*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-to shine forth the Gospel in word and deed…come what may…

-to see that Paul was not a prisoner of his circumstances but a prisoner of Christ

-to shape our understanding that we can glorify Him in the midst of our trials

-to set before us His glorious eternal plan for bringing Jew and Gentile together

-to spell out the mystery of His purpose for the church: to glorify Him as one body

-to speak to Him in prayer: willingly, confidently, assuredly, boldly, & respectfully

-to savor the reality that’s His love for us is vast beyond all measure

-to solidify in our hearts “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Romans 11:33NASB)

In this chapter, we saw that Paul was a prisoner with a purpose. He knew that He was called for a purpose. What about you? Do you know what your purpose in life is? Let’s see how the Word of God directs our thoughts in this regard…

***My Biblical Goals for Life Should be:***

-To make it my aim to please the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:10) (Colossians 1:10)

-To be resolved to live for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)

To glorify God is a vertical focus! Pastor Steve Lawson states that, “One of the heart cries of the reformation was “semper reformanda” meaning always reforming. That is believers must be constantly seeking to conform to what they believe and how they live more closely to the unchanging standard of God’s Word.”

***God’s Goals for My Life are:***

-To conform me more into the image of His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29)

-To teach me and help me be satisfied in Him above all else (Psalm 27:4) (Psalm 73:25)

What precious and purposeful God-glorifying goals for our lives that you and I can live by with the enablement of God’s Spirit!!

**Chapter Four** summarized in two words: ***“ONE BODY”***

We see in this chapter: “The body of Christ” demonstrated (unified).

Ephesians 4:12 “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of *the body of Christ*.”

*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-to surrender our lives completely to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Paul did

-*to see* how our riches in Christ should balance our responsibilities in Christ

-to submit to God’s plans for the structure and the purpose of the body of Christ

-to serve Christ and His followers by using our spiritual gifts to build up the body

-to seek how to walk in unity, to walk in purity, and how to walk redemptively

-to stimulate our growth towards holiness by being kind and tender-hearted to all

-to solidify in our hearts that we are to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Romans 13:14 NASB)

In this chapter, we saw that Paul appealed for believers to no longer walk in their old ways. He reminded them that they lay aside the old self and put on the new self when they submitted their lives to the Lordship of Christ. Paul exhorted them to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. We formulated a scriptural plan of action for daily renewing our minds with some “R’s”…

***By the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us we must:***

-*Recognize* our sinful thought patterns/thoughts void of God and His truth

-*Realize* that these sinful thoughts dishonor God

-*Run* to God in prayer and ask Him to alert us through His Holy Spirit the minute the negative thought pattern begins

-*Repent* of these negative and sinful thought patterns

-*Rifle* them to death (put them to death) immediately

-*Refuse* to think them (No is not sufficient by itself. By an act of our will with the enablement of the Holy Spirit we must choose to say no to that negative, sinful selfish thought.) We must choose to stop the negative habit of thinking.

-*Redirect* our thoughts. We must provide a new course of thinking.

-*Replace* our negative inward and self-focused thoughts patterns with upward God-honoring, God-glorifying thought patterns based on scriptural truths

-*Renew* our mind by putting on biblical, righteous, hopeful, thankful, and trusting thoughts

Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit lovingly commanded the church then and God continues to lovingly command the church now to not grieve the Holy Spirit of God who dwells within us. By God’s enabling power and grace we can renew our minds daily and redirect our thoughts in ways that please Him instead of grieving Him.

**Chapter Five** summarized in two words: ***“BE SUBJECT”***

We see in this chapter: The “fear of Christ” described (established and applied).

Ephesians 5:21 “and be subject to one another in the *fear of Christ*.”

*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-to see the necessity of being imitators of God by walking in love and forgiveness

-to saturate our whole hearts in understanding the will of God for our lives

-to simply look to Christ’s life and example and to surrender our wills to His

-to stop sinning, to walk as children of Light, and to learn what pleases the Lord

-to seriously consider how to walk wisely and to be controlled by His Spirit

-to seek to live out a Spirit-filled life in our God ordained roles in our marriages

-to stand in awe of how the husband/wife relationship is compared to Christ and His relationship with the Church

-to solidify in our hearts that we are to “be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead…” (1 Peter 3:8-9NASB)

The study of Ephesians thus far has given us the perfect context for understanding marriage as God designed it! Yes! God beautifully designed marriage between one man and one woman to put His glorious Gospel on display. Ladies, God desires for us to have a Spirit-filled(controlled) marriage. But in order for us to have a Spirit-filled marriage, we as wives must first yield to the Spirit and allow Him to control us. How do we do this? Well, we can start by daily reminding ourselves to be:

In wonder of our Riches in Christ –(Ephesians 1:1-14)

In wonder of our Resources in Christ –(Eph. 1:15-19)

In wonder of the Rule and Reign of Christ –(Eph. 1:20-22)

In wonder of God’s Redeeming love and grace –(Eph. 2:1-10)

In wonder of God’s provision of Reconciliation –(Eph. 2:11-18)

In wonder of God’s Revealed priorities for those in His Household –(Eph.2:19-22)

In wonder of the Revelation of God’s Mystery –(Eph. 3:1-13)

In wonder of the Radical power of God at work in us –(Eph. 3:14-21)

After learning about who our Great God is and all of the spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ, **Paul pleads with us believers to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1).** Paul wants us to understand not only our Riches in Christ but our Responsibilities in Christ. He wants us to balance our beliefs with our behavior…to balance our doctrine with our duties…to understand that our position in Christ motivates our practice…to make it our aim to please the Lord with all of our thoughts, words, actions and reactions.

Because our lives have been divinely transformed by grace through faith by the Holy Spirit of God through the living Word of God, Paul exhorts us to walk worthy of the One who called us:

We are to walk in unity together –(Eph.4:1-16)

We are to walk in purity together –(Eph.4:17-24)

We are to walk redemptively together –(Eph. 4:25-32)

We are to walk in love together –(Eph.5:1-6)

We are to walk in the Light together –(Eph. 5:7-14)

We are to walk in Wisdom together –(Eph. 5:15-21)

Before we moved on into chapter 6 of our Ephesians study, I wanted to put something together for you to help you and I see how our study thus far creates a beautiful biblical framework for why we are to submit to our own husbands “as to the Lord”. As husbands and wives we are called to walk in the Will of the Lord together –(Eph. 5:22-32) for His glory! And when we have a Spirit-filled marriage, by God’s grace our marriages will not only produce unity, harmony and thankfulness but will display to a dying world, a beautiful picture of the Gospel!

**Chapter Six** summarized in two words: ***“STAND FIRM”***

We see in this chapter we are to: “Be strong in the Lord” -this is a decree (proclaimed and our position).

Ephesians 6:10 “Finally, *be strong in the Lord* and in the strength of His might.”

*Paul’s desire for the church then and God’s desire for the church now is:*

-to show the world the beautiful picture of the family as God has ordained it

-to see that whether we are employed or not we are the Lord’s bondservants

-to spiritually be prepared to defeat the daily temptations that come our way

-*to stand firm* against the devil’s schemes by clothing ourselves with God’s armor

-to stimulate growth and godliness and to live victoriously in our walk with Christ

-to strengthen our witness in the world as citizens of His eternal kingdom

-*to show us* the eternal purpose of the body of Christ: to glorify His great name

And finally…

-to solidify in our hearts that “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6NKJV)

Ladies, Paul’s closing words in his letter to the Ephesians in chapter 6 verses 23 and 24 beautifully summarizes the peace, love with faith, and grace, which are ours from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The themes of peace, love with faith and grace were clearly interwoven as Paul poured out his heart for the believers in Ephesus. Though I only scratched the surface in my brief overview of the six chapters of this prison epistle, it is my prayer that you would know that your riches in Christ are based on His grace, His peace, His will, His pleasure and purpose, His glory, His calling, His power, His strength, His love and His Holy Spirit!

Proverbs 28:20a states that “A faithful man will abound with blessings.” We saw this to be true in Paul’s life and it can be true in our own lives too. Because of the fullness of blessings that are ours in Christ, may we be women who are fearlessly faithful to live and to share the Gospel of grace and hope to all who come across our path. To God be the glory!

With love and prayers and gratitude filling my heart for you all,

Christyn