

## ***Living in God's Vision: The Heavenly Vision***

*Vision is what makes sense of all the segments of your life. It is the big picture that describes where you are going and what it means.*

*So, it is no surprise that God, in His wisdom, would declare, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18) Or the NAS, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained."*

*"Perish"; "unrestrained"; are these warnings overstated? Can't people succeed as parents or professionals without a clearly defined vision from God? The answer is, "Yes, they can at one level, but they lack the central thread that gives eternal significance to all the countless mundane acts which make up life." In addition, people progress through stages according to their age and circumstances. Those without a vision from God often find that passion is slowly eroded by life's disappointments. In this sense, people may "perish" or languish, and possibly wander without direction.*

*A vision is something you "see," but this "seeing" is an inner image or picture of a preferred future. Should you be so blessed as to have God's vision burning inside, then you are "seeing" a future which describes where He is taking you and to that place where every knee will bow!*

*Youth lends itself to visionary idealism, whereas old age is often associated with an unattractive cynicism.*

*Paul, on the other hand, was probably in his sixties when he passionately declared, "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision!" (Acts 26:19) Such enthusiasm is compelling.*

*Who would want to live without being frequently rekindled with the passion that this vision fuels? Like Paul, you, too, can finish your course well. You, too, can grow in wisdom and experience without losing the excitement of God's purpose!*

*Let your heart take on the fresh provisions of "the heavenly vision" during this month.*

## Lesson 1

Paul had completed his three famous missionary journeys when he went to Jerusalem with the intention of going from there to Rome.

He was unjustly accused and spent two years in prison. During this time we have no record of anyone trying to visit him or assist him. Two governors toyed with him during this time while he faithfully shared the gospel at every opportunity.

He had already appealed to Caesar and was scheduled for transfer to Rome when a visiting king desired to entertain himself, and listen to the strange tales of this man, Paul.

Scripture Study: Read quickly Acts 26 so that you can grasp the overall scene.

*(15 minutes)*

Put yourself in Paul's place and write out your thoughts. \_\_\_\_\_

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What does this scene tell you about the place of vision in your own life?

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What might be the similarity between the heavenly vision Paul spoke of and the way the heavenly vision might apply to your own life? \_\_\_\_\_

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Paul obviously believed that King Agrippa could receive the same basic heavenly vision without having to have the same level of direct encounter with Christ. Why would this understanding be important for your life?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Thank God for the revelations of Christ, His Kingdom, and His purposes that He has given you thus far.

Ask the Holy Spirit to freshly fill you.

Surrender yourself to follow Christ into His vision.

Pray the heavenly vision into your church family.

## Lesson 2

Paul was a pioneer, and usually the pioneer has no man to teach him. He has to learn things by direct encounter and often through difficult circumstances. This is part of being a pioneer.

The beauty of not being a pioneer is that you can learn so much from those who have gone before you, who paid a great price for what they learned. And then you can run with the vision and the experience of those who have preceded you!

Of course, you still need the Holy Spirit to be your teacher, but what a privilege to follow Paul as he followed Jesus Christ!

Scripture Study: Read the earlier account of how Jesus changed Paul's life through imparting a vision that was from heaven. Read Acts 9:1-9. (*15 minutes*)

When Paul said in Acts 26:19 that he had not been disobedient to the heavenly vision, he was referring to something Jesus spoke to him in Acts 9:1-9. What are the verses in which Jesus spoke this vision? \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus spoke one sentence in Acts 9:5 which contained the essentials of "the heavenly vision." Examine this verse carefully and try to express what you see that would later be called by Paul, "the heavenly vision." \_\_\_\_\_

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Notice in Acts 9:6 that Jesus did not speak of vision but of what action he was to take. Paul had many supernatural experiences in later years in which "the heavenly vision" was fleshed out; but the essential elements of this vision were stated in Acts 9:5.

Vision is to fuel what you do.

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Come to Jesus and wait upon Him.

Ask Him to refill you with the Holy Spirit.

Ask for "the heavenly vision" to become the central purpose in your life.

Place the segments of your life into the hands of your Savior.

### Lesson 3

The vision that changed Paul's life and sustained him through all his sufferings first lived inside Jesus.

He went to the cross for the joy that was set before Him. (Hebrews 12:2)

“The heavenly vision” was what Jesus was “seeing” during His life among us, and it is that which caused Him to track toward the cross all His life. This vision is supposed to live inside each of His disciples. In fact, it is this vision that makes a man or woman His disciple.

Scripture Study: Examine various scriptures as you search for the vision that fueled Jesus. *(15 minutes)*

“Seeing” by revelation who He is and what He is building, read Matthew 16:13-18. Why would these two things be included in “the heavenly vision”?

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Read Matthew 5:3-16. What is Jesus “seeing” that is part of the heavenly vision?

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Read John 17:20-21. What is Jesus “seeing” here that is a repeat of “the heavenly vision”?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Pray through any verses that were special to you in these passages.

Ask Jesus that His vision might fill your life.

Submit yourself to Him so that He can fit your individual life into His vision.

Thank Him for putting His purpose into your life.

## Lesson 4

Jesus put “the heavenly vision” into Paul initially, but He also gradually revealed more details during the next few years. He gave Paul a special understanding of the grace of God, and He gave Paul a special insight into the church, which is seen by Jesus as an extension of His own body!

Paul was filled with a passion for the return of Christ and for all that would occur at that time. He “saw” the bowing of every knee and the confession of every person that Jesus Christ is Lord. He “saw” the role of the church in God’s overall plan.

No single book written by Paul contains as much of “the heavenly vision” as Ephesians.

Scripture Study: Read and reread Ephesians 1:3-11. *(15 minutes)*

How many blessings has God given to us? \_\_\_\_\_

What are these blessings? \_\_\_\_\_

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Now carefully reread Ephesians 1:9-10. This is not an easy passage to grasp, but it is important.

Looking at Ephesians 1:10, what does Paul “see” happening in the “fullness of the times”?

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What Paul “sees” is “the heavenly vision”: Every animal, plant, human, and demon will be brought into submission to the headship of Christ.

The NAS translates part of this as, “the summing up of all things in Christ”; but the Greek uses the word, “headship” which does not show up in the English translations. Part of the heavenly vision is everything being “summed up under the headship of Christ.”

In Ephesians 1:11, what is our part in this scene that occurs in “the fullness of the times”?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Thank God for where He is taking us!

Surrender your personal dreams to Him so that He can give you His vision and fit you into His plans.

Ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Ask the Holy Spirit to burn His passion into your heart!

## Lesson 5

The heavenly vision concerns both who Jesus is and His plans for His church.

While most Christians have a true understanding of who Jesus Christ is, they frequently lack revelation concerning the central role of the church prior to the fullness of the times.

If you do not “see” Christ’s purpose in the church in this season, then you do not have the complete heavenly vision. Paul wrote Ephesians in order to remedy this.

Scripture Study: Read and reread Ephesians 1:15-23. *(15 minutes)*

Look again at this portion and answer the question: “What does Paul “see” as the role of the church?” \_\_\_\_\_

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Reread Ephesians 1:10 using this translation: “with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things under the headship of Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.”

Notice that Paul has moved from what will happen at the return of Christ in Ephesians 1:10 to a foretaste of the future which is happening right now in Ephesians 1:21-23.

Can you see that Christ will be head over all things then, but He is already the operational head over His church now? \_\_\_\_\_

How might this affect the way you relate to the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Worship the Savior who rules over all demons!

Declare His greatness and power!

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you more of the heavenly vision.

Thank God for including you in His plans.

## Lesson 6

The heavenly vision includes far more than getting into heaven. God has a vision for displaying in the church what it looks like when Christ is the head of all things!

Paul burned with this vision, and it gave eternal meaning to everything he had to endure while serving God.

The heavenly vision entered Paul's heart when he heard Jesus identify with the church, saying, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." Apparently Jesus had a very high view of the church.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:16-18. *(15 minutes)*

What is the main thing Paul wanted to see happen as a result of his prayer?

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Paul is praying for people who are already saved, so why do you think he felt the need to pray this prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

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The way you can know what the main point of Paul's prayer is, is to notice the "so that" in the middle of Ephesians 1:18. "So that" means that a purpose clause follows. With this in mind, please answer "a" again. The main point of Paul's prayer is \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think Paul thought that it was so important for Christians to know "the hope of His calling"? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Read Ephesians 1:16b-18 before the Lord, including yourself in Paul's prayer.

By faith, embrace "the hope of His calling."

Visualize Christ's return and all things coming under His headship.

Worship Him now the way everyone will eventually!

## Lesson 7

The heavenly vision is the same for everyone. Paul did not refer to this as “a” heavenly vision because this is “the” vision that was in Jesus, and it is “the” vision which heaven has in reference to the earth.

His calling is the same for every Christian. The Greek word for church is “ecclesia” and the root word means, “the called ones.” The prefix “ec” means “out of”; and so the word, church, means, “the-called-out-ones.” Thus His calling is at the center of our identity!

The “hope of His calling” is the effect of His calling upon us who are saved. His calling gives us hope. No matter what happens to us, we have hope, because we “see” that He has called us to belong to the group (the church), which is living under His headship now.

Scripture Study: Now read Ephesians 1:9-23 quickly so that you can grasp the whole of what Paul is saying to you. *(15 minutes)*

Notice the pieces. The future is seen in Ephesians 1:10. The need for revelation for Christians is necessary so that they will not miss seeing that their personal destiny is linked to their living in the hope of His calling, Ephesians 1:18. And then there is that beautiful picture of the church displaying what it is like to live under His headship even before He returns, Ephesians 1:22-23.

How is the heavenly vision affecting your life? Write to the Lord about this.

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Lift your hands and worship Him who is moving history toward His heavenly vision!

Tell Jesus that you want to follow Him into His future.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and lead you and use you.

Pray for your local church to display what it is like to live under His headship now.

## Lesson 8

Christians often speak of “his calling” or “her calling” when they are thinking about the individual’s unique ministry; but it is probably more biblical to use other terminology for each person’s sub-vision and reserve the word, “calling,” for the one calling which comes from the Lord and makes us Christians.

Americans are such individualists that it is natural for us to think in terms of our ministry and our destiny without seeing the big picture.

It is the big picture (the heavenly vision) that charges your personal sub-vision with eternal validity.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:1-4. *(15 minutes)*

How many times do you see the word “calling” or “called” in this passage?

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What do you now think Paul means by “calling”? \_\_\_\_\_

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If the church is to display what it is like to live with each other under His headship before His return, why would this passage on unity be so important?

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Paul implores, urges, encourages you (plural) to walk (live) in a manner worthy of “the” calling. What do you think he means by living in a “way which is worthy of the calling?”

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How do you think the heavenly vision sets the stage for your individual sub-vision to bring you into your intended purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Thank God for calling you out of the world and to Himself.

Thank God for giving you a place in His church.

Pray for the relationships in your local church to display God’s truth and love.

Just hang out with the Lord this morning by simply being with Him.

## Lesson 9

The heavenly vision involves Jesus building the church (which is God's household) and our part in building with Him.

The actual church is far from perfect, but it is important that you realize that it is Jesus who will ultimately use real people to display His nature in and through the church.

Those who do not burn with the heavenly vision often see only the imperfections in the church. However, Jesus knows that it will take the cross for us to live together under His rule.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 2:16-22. *(15 minutes)*

In building the church, why do you think it was so important for God to create unity between Jews and Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_

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In Ephesians 2:19, what does Paul call the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does it mean that Jesus is the cornerstone? \_\_\_\_\_

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In what way do you think apostles and prophets are to assist in building the church?

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In Ephesians 2:21, what do you think is involved in having people "fitted together"?

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In Ephesians 2:21-22, the church is also called, "a \_\_\_\_\_." What do you think the significance of this is? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Come to Jesus this morning and let Him love you.

See the beauty of what He intends for the church and embrace His vision.

Surrender to His fitting you into the "stones" (people) He has placed above, below, and around you.

Pray for the welfare of your brothers and sisters in your part of the church.

## Lesson 10

Vision answers the question, “Why?” Why should you be patient and kind to a brother who is not being nice to you? You will need something to motivate you to see people the way God does when you are having relationship problems, and that something is the heavenly vision. You will need to “see” what God “sees”: His intentions.

God’s vision gives you the “why,” the reason for all that He does in your life. The “whats” of life should flow from the “whys.” In other words, as God’s reason for living burns inside you, what He wants you to do takes on great meaning.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 3:1 and 4:1. *(15 minutes)*

Paul had been in prison for years when he wrote this epistle. First he spent two or more years in a Caesarean prison, and then he was taken as a prisoner to Rome (months en route). How long he was a prisoner in Rome before writing, we do not know.

How does Paul interpret his circumstances in Ephesians 3:1? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you had been suffering this type of lengthy imprisonment, do you think you would have seen your circumstances the way Paul did? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think enabled Paul to view his suffering this way? \_\_\_\_\_

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Finish this sentence: “When a Christian does not live in the heavenly vision, he is likely to interpret his circumstances \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, but when God’s vision lives in a Christian, then \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.”

Comment on the effect of vision on Paul’s statement in Philippians 2:17.

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Take your place in Christ. Abide in Him.

Ask your Shepherd to let you interpret your circumstances according to His vision.

Pray His will into people surrounding your life.

Worship Him as your Head.

## Lesson 11

Wisdom can be defined as seeing people and things the same way God does. When you interpret your circumstances the way God does, you are moving in wisdom.

God, of course, designed everything to work in certain ways, and He planned everything according to His wisdom.

The so-called wisdom of our culture does not understand God's wisdom. His wisdom is given to the humble that exercise faith in Christ; and it comes in the form of revelation.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:8-9. The NAS and the NIV differ here, because "wisdom and insight" could be joined to what is before (NIV) or what is after (NAS). It seems most fitting that "wisdom and insight" be connected with the mystery of what God plans to do and how He plans to accomplish it. Therefore, the NAS says, "In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view toward..." (10 minutes)

The return of Christ will reveal the full measure of God's wisdom in how He will administrate things so that everything in heaven and earth comes under the headship of Christ.

Proverbs 8:22f speaks of how God created all things with His wisdom, so it is not surprising to find Scripture speaking of how wisdom is involved in changing the whole earth at Christ's return.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:17. (5 minutes)

Finish this sentence: "Since God designed the future events which will take place in the fullness of time with wisdom, Paul prays for us to \_\_\_\_\_"

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\_\_\_\_\_

What do you need the Spirit of God to do for you in light of Paul's prayer?

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Prayer Time: (15 – 30 minutes)

Ask the Spirit of God for wisdom and revelation in knowing Christ and the hope of His calling.

Wait upon the Lord so that He can minister to you.

By faith, draw wisdom and revelation from Him.

Let His vision fill your inner being.

## Lesson 12

“He who walks with wise men will be wise.” (Proverbs 13:20) Of course, God is the source of all wisdom, and He offers to give wisdom generously to anyone who asks, provided he asks in faith. (James 1:5-6)

When you prove obedient to the heavenly vision, you are living in God’s purposes; and you are demonstrating the wisdom of God.

The heavenly vision will keep you on track, for it comes from God.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 3:8-11. *(15 minutes)*

The phrase, “manifold wisdom of God,” means the multifaceted wisdom or the many aspects of God’s wisdom.

When God gave you, as a Gentile, His grace and joined you to His church, how did this reveal His wisdom? \_\_\_\_\_

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How does God’s wisdom of saving people by grace and joining them together in His church affect the demons now, even before Christ’s return?

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Can you see that what Paul describes in Ephesians 3:10 is what he referred to in Acts 26:19 as “the heavenly vision”? \_\_\_\_\_ Journal to the Lord some of your thoughts about this. \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Read James 1:5 and ask the Lord for wisdom.

Believe that you are raised with Christ and use His authority in prayer over spiritual forces that are resisting the glory of God.

Intercede for the church.

Thank God for including you in His vision!

## Lesson 13

God is not bashful about using the “p” word: Predestined. He takes all the credit for including you in the heavenly vision. He elected or chose you before the foundation of the world with the full intention that you would be His workmanship in such a way that you would appear before His face “holy and without blame.”

Your having His vision plays a huge role in bringing this about. It is interesting that it is what Jesus revealed to Paul that changed his vision and brought him into his destiny.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 2:1-10. *(15 minutes)*

Looking at Ephesians 2:1-3, what was your natural condition?

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Looking at Ephesians 2:5, what was your condition when God made you alive in Christ?

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Looking at Ephesians 2:8, what does Paul tell you about your faith (so that you may not boast)? \_\_\_\_\_

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In Ephesians 2:10, who is the craftsman, and who is the product?

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In Ephesians 2:10, you will see the conjunction, “so that,” which indicates a purpose clause. What is the purpose of God’s work in your life?

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Paul is writing this epistle to Christians in order to give them the heavenly vision. What role do you think this vision, contained in Ephesians, will have on bringing you into the purposes of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Express your thanks to God for choosing you and including you.

Thank Him for giving you saving faith so that you could believe and receive.

By faith, believe God to take you into the good works prepared beforehand for you.

Take His vision for your life into your inner being, by faith.

## Lesson 14

When you realize what a tremendous thing it is for God to place His calling upon your life and determine to include you in revealing His glory to the demons, you immediately feel the need for power; a lot of it!

He has to change your nature so that you love righteousness instead of sin, and that takes a lot of raw power. Then there is the power required to cause people to live together in the way they will when Christ returns. Obviously the world has no resources for power of this type.

Where will the power be found? Remember that wisdom is triggered by the right question, and this is the right question: “Where is this power to be found?”

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:16b-22. (*10 minutes*)

Ephesians 1:18 speaks of “the hope of His calling” and then immediately addresses the issue of power or the ability to make this a reality in Ephesians 1:19.

What is the power that God presents as the source both for your personal nature and for our ability to live together under His headship?

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How does a Christian access this power? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the church’s authority over demons? \_\_\_\_\_

What happens to the church’s authority when Christians are not living together in unity?

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What do you think the role of the heavenly vision is in helping Christians live in Christ’s power and authority? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Confess that you are “in Christ” and live in Him.

By faith, reaffirm that Christ lives in you and His life is your power and authority.

Declare His worthiness and authority over the demons that seek to confuse you, discourage you, or divide you from your brothers and sisters.

Pray His will on the earth and into the situations of your life.



## Lesson 16

God is a Father who has always wanted to be with His children. The reason He caused the Old Testament Tabernacle to be built was so that He could be with His children without His holiness destroying them. Later He took them into the temple, His motivation being to enjoy His children.

The Father sent His Son to be Immanuel, God with us; and finally His desire was being fully realized. He could be with us in the greatest possible way: He in us, we in Him, our being one with Him.

This desire to be with us finds its fulfillment in the church, which is “a holy temple in the Lord” and “a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” This is part of the heavenly vision.

Scripture Study: Skim-read Ephesians 2:1-22 so that you can follow Paul’s thoughts as he describes in more detail how God is blessing you. Especially notice how this chapter builds to a climax when it begins to speak of “God’s household,” “a holy temple,” “a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” *(10 minutes)*

Journal: How does this chapter affect you? What are your thoughts? Express yourself to the Lord. This we call, journaling. *(5 minutes)*

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Express yourself in worshipping God! Sing. Declare. Shout. Adore. Wait.

Take your personal identity in being part of what you just read.

Tell the Father that you want to be “with Him” also.

Spend a few minutes enjoying God as your own Father.

## Lesson 17

Ephesians, more than any other one book, reveals what the heavenly vision is and how it is to be accomplished. As you study this epistle, you will notice the significant role assigned to the grace of God.

Christ is building His church by the means of grace. The only cure for sin is grace.

It is the grace of God that changes people. It is the grace of God that supplies both the desire and the ability to become like Christ.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:4-6. (*5 minutes*)

All the blessings named in these verses are attributed to \_\_\_\_\_.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 2:5-9. (*10 minutes*)

When you were still a child of wrath in your character, God made you alive together with Christ, raised you up with Him, and seated you with Him. These three miracles are attributed to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

In Ephesians 2:7, what is God going to do?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is it about grace that would cause Him to display us like this in the coming ages?

\_\_\_\_\_

In Ephesians 2:8, it is grace that caused you to be given \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

In Ephesians 2:9, Paul explains why grace is so important. What is his reason?

\_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

By faith, take your place in Christ as made alive, raised up, and seated with Him.

Give God 100% of the credit for your turning to Christ.

Thank Him for changing you and setting you free today by His grace!

Worship Him as your only help.

## Lesson 18

Every Christian understands that his salvation comes from the grace of God. However, not every Christian understands that all growth and ministry come from the grace of God.

The good works prepared for you can only be done as you trust in Christ alone. Every Christian experiences the disappointing failure of trying so hard to accomplish these good works in his own ability.

The heavenly vision shows you God's plan; but you need the grace of God at every point in order to live in the vision.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 3:2-11. *(15 minutes)*

What stewardship was given to Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

Paul refers to a revelation of the mystery of Christ. Actually the mystery of Christ is the grace of God or at least how we experience the grace. What is the mystery of Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you are not sure what the mystery of Christ is, then search chapters one and two for clues as to what is meant by this phrase.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Ephesians 3:7-8, using Paul as an example for all of us, how does your service or ministry operate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When you read of a mystery in Scripture, it means something that was hidden by God, but is now being revealed so that all His children might partake of the beautiful thing God is making available. It still requires personal revelation, but it is freely offered.

Wherever you are experiencing failure, it is because you are relying upon yourself and thus you are blocking the grace of God.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

If you see places in which you are working in your own strength, repent and come to Christ for His forgiveness and help.

By faith take your place “in Christ,” for this is “the mystery of Christ.”

Christ alone is your righteousness, your adequacy, and your sufficiency.

Trust yourself entirely into His hands!

## Lesson 19

Paul's two prayers in this epistle tell you what he thought was most critical and therefore most vulnerable to the devil's schemes. Both involve your need for ongoing revelation or quickening of the Spirit lest you lose sight of "the hope of His calling" or "Christ dwelling in your heart through faith."

Scripture Study: Read Paul's second prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21. *(15 minutes)*

What does Paul think needs to be strengthened in you? (Ephesians 3:16)

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What does Paul think you need in order to be strengthened?

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Paul knows that, as a Christian, Christ already dwells in your heart, but what does he say you need to do in order to experience the reality of Christ living in you?

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Review Ephesians 2:8, and you will notice that grace is experienced by faith. Paul puts his finger on something in Ephesians 3:17-19, for he knows that it is to the degree that you are daily experiencing Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ that (finish the sentence) \_\_\_\_\_.

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In Ephesians 3:20, what is the power that works within you?

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In Ephesians 3:21, what is the privilege that is given to the church?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

By faith take your place in the Son and come to your Father.

Recognize that Jesus Christ is living inside you. Believe it.

Experience His acceptance and approval of you.

Let Him pour His love into your soul this morning.

## Lesson 20

God wants to bless you and His church and His creation with Himself, Who is the greatest of all blessings.

The greatest joy and happiness come from being filled with “the fullness of Him.”

All through this epistle there are rather enigmatic references to Him who fills all in all, for at His return Christ will fill all in all.

Scripture Study: Read the following references and make your own observations about what God is saying to you. *(15 minutes)*

Read Ephesians 1:10. This is probably the first vague reference to this concept in the epistle.

Read Ephesians 1:23. What does this mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Read Ephesians 2:22. Here is a more concrete expression of this same idea.

Read Ephesians 3:19. What does this say to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Read Ephesians 4:10. Notice that here the purpose of the ascension is that “He might fill all things.” What are your thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Ephesians 5:18b. Perhaps you can see the importance of staying filled with God the Spirit. What does this mean to you?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Come needy to your Savior and expect Him to fill you with the Spirit.

Use the faith God gave you to receive the Holy Spirit.

Wait on the Lord and let Him minister to you.

Quietly worship Him!

## Lesson 21

Divide and conquer is a strategy which must have originated with Satan. We see it in the Garden of Eden, for no sooner had sin entered the picture than Adam and Eve were at odds.

Christ spoke of His church as His body, and a body requires unity, teamwork, and interdependence. When something interrupts this coordination and unity, we have a disease.

Overcoming the curse and defeating Satan requires that each believer be contributing in a healthy manner and that all work together in unity.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:1-4. *(15 minutes)*

In Ephesians 4:1, Paul exhorts you to act in a way that is worthy of “the calling.” What is “the calling”? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think walking worthy of the calling is an appeal for people to jealously guard their unity with their brothers and sisters? \_\_\_\_\_

What does “all humility” have to do with unity? \_\_\_\_\_

“Gentleness” is better translated, “meekness.” How does your own meekness enable God to use you to promote unity among the brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

“Patience” is a good translation of the Greek, “long suffering.” How does this contribute to unity? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the hardest thing about living in unity with other believers in your experience? \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to improve the unity with others in your own life? \_\_\_\_\_

If, by the grace of God, you receive Paul’s (and God’s) exhortation to make every effort to guard the unity, how do you think it will affect God? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think it will affect your own life? \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Bring any failing you see in your own life to your Savior.

Pray God's choice blessings upon those with whom you are struggling.  
Envision the pleasure your Father receives from His children living together in unity.  
Pray that over your local church.

## Lesson 22

When we feel rejected, ignored, taken for granted, used, dishonored, insulted, etc., we are being tested.

Our focus quickly becomes the person or persons who have caused us the pain.

But what is God looking at? He is waiting for you to make the right choices so that you will pass your test. Their test is their test. You have yours.

Scripture Meditation: Read Ephesians 6:12 slowly several times. *(5 minutes)*

What is God saying to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Scripture Study: Consider Ephesians 3:10. *(5 minutes)*

How does your staying in unity with your brethren relate to this verse?

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What does God want to show the demons? \_\_\_\_\_

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Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:19-21 and see that when we are in unity, we have Christ's authority over every demon. *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Set others free and allow God to set you free by forgiving anyone who has wronged you.

Receive the Lord's love for those who have hurt you.

By faith move into unity with your fellow believers and receive Christ's victory over the demonic realm.

Rejoice in God's wisdom and power!

## Lesson 23

The Holy Spirit's role in bringing the heavenly vision into reality is huge.

Examine Ephesians to discover what His role is and how you can receive His help. *(15 minutes)*

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:13 where Paul says that: "In Him you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Spirit's indwelling seals us by (1) indicating Christ's ownership, (2) authenticating us as believers, and (3) protecting us as someone who belongs to the Savior!

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 1:14 where Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the pledge or down payment of what we are to receive from the Lord both in this age and the next.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 3:16 where Paul prays for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you in your inner man with the result that you can freshly experience the reality of Christ living in you!

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:30 where Paul exhorts you to not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 5:18 where Paul commands you to stay continually filled with the Spirit!

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Come to Jesus Christ this morning and surrender yourself to Him.

Ask Him to freshly fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Enjoy God by just being with Him.

Worship Him. Bless Him. Declare His goodness!

## Lesson 24

Paul is passionate about the heavenly vision of all of us living together under the Headship of Christ now before “the fullness of the times.”

He sees “His calling” upon all of us; but he also knows the failings of Christians. In other words, he is a very practical idealist.

Therefore, Paul addresses a long list of problems that grieve the Spirit, dishonor God, and frustrate the purposes of God in defeating Satan through us.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:21-5:5. *(15 minutes)*

Look at Ephesians 4:26-27. Why do you think Paul focused on our anger?

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What things give Satan “an opportunity” or “place”? \_\_\_\_\_

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In this list of sins, which ones trouble your own life? \_\_\_\_\_

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In order to remind yourself of where God pours His blessings in you, reread Ephesians 1:3.

Journal: Write some of your thoughts to the Lord regarding these things.

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Bring your sins to Jesus in order to be forgiven and delivered.

By faith draw from Christ the blessings you need this morning.

By faith ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of Christ dwelling in you.

Raise your hands to God and worship Him!

## Lesson 25

We miss so much of what God would speak to us because we read over verses quickly without “hearing” what the Spirit is saying to us. Read these verses and apply them to your life.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 5:15-21. *(15 minutes)*

What does Ephesians 5:15 say to you? \_\_\_\_\_

What does Ephesians 5:16 say about your use of time? \_\_\_\_\_

What about your priorities? \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:17 - how do you think Paul expected you to be wise in regards to God’s will?

\_\_\_\_\_

In what ways is God teaching you about being wise? \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:18 - why might a person get drunk? \_\_\_\_\_

How might this need be met by the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

How might being continually filled with the Spirit be connected with Ephesians 5:19-20?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:21 - part of God’s wisdom is your needing others and being accountable to them in your general behavior. Any believer can speak the truth in love, thus encouraging and protecting us from the various forms of foolishness that plague us all.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Read or quote from memory Romans 8:28 in reference to your current situations in life.

Praise God for loving you so much and for His wisdom in causing things to happen to you which are preparing you for more growth.

Wait before Him.

Listen to Him. He will bring you into His rest and assurance.

## Lesson 26

Once the heavenly vision is ignited within you, the journey begins!

There are many difficulties along the way that test you, and sometimes the vision gets obscured by life's problems as well as by Satan's schemes.

Paul anticipated your need for frequent encouragement by contrasting your old fruitless life with your new life in Christ. It's good to pause in the battle and remember.

Scripture Study: Scan Paul's first reminder in Ephesians 2:1-14. *(5 minutes)*

Did you get Paul's point and actually remember? \_\_\_\_\_

What does Paul's reminder do inside you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Scripture Study: Scan Paul's second reminder in Ephesians 3:17-32. *(5 minutes)*

Finish this sentence, "Paul, thank you for causing me to take stock, for \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_."

Scripture Study: Again quickly scan Paul's third reminder in Ephesians 5:5-17.

*(5 minutes)*

Are you receiving encouragement or condemnation? \_\_\_\_\_

What effect do you think the Holy Spirit means for these verses to have on a Christian?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Father loves to have you draw near to receive His loving help in getting free from some aspect of your old life. So come.

Let Him cleanse you and let Him pour His love into you.

Ask the Holy Spirit to refresh the heavenly vision in you.

Tell your Father how much you love Him!

## Lesson 27

The heavenly vision involves living together with other believers under the Headship of Christ now before He returns.

How are your primary relationships? Are they loving, respectful, and in God's divine order?

Those who live happily under Christ's Headship neither resist authority nor abuse it, for both actions oppose the heavenly vision of seeing the beauty of His rule in His people.

Scripture Study: Absorb Ephesians 5:22-32. *(15 minutes)*

Explain how Paul's model for our marriage relationships applies to us as (1) husbands and (2) wives.

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Examine God's commands to husbands and then to wives, and you will discern a difference in what men need in order to become their best and what women need in order to become their best. What does this text imply that men need most in order to function well?

\_\_\_\_\_ What does this text imply that women need most in order to function as they were meant to function?

If you are to live under His Headship now and thus demonstrate His wisdom, do you see some place or places where you need His help now?

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If you are not married, do you see something that needs to improve before entering into a marriage relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Draw near to your Father, and let Him minister to you.

By faith take your place in Jesus Christ.

Receive His life flowing into you.

Give Him thanks and worship this morning.

## Lesson 28

“It’s not about you.” Fortunately this is becoming a common expression among Christians. The question is, if it’s not about you, who or what is it about?

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:6 that we are to live, “to the praise of His glory.” It’s about God. It’s about honoring Him, trusting His wisdom, and doing it His way.

It should not surprise us that Christ’s rule over our lives would cut across the thinking of modern people in how we “do” marriage and child rearing.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 6:1-4 and refer to these verses often if you are a parent. *(15 minutes)*

Though it would seem that children are being addressed, it is probably a technique that is designed to instruct \_\_\_\_\_.

Here God gives parents the goals of child training. What are they?

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If you are successful, what benefits come to your children? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you think it is important for children to honor their parents? \_\_\_\_\_

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When a wise parent reads about the importance of his/her children honoring him/her, what do you think the effect will be? \_\_\_\_\_

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God intends to work through the leadership and authority of both parents but especially the father. Why do you think the Holy Spirit gives dads this warning?

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What insight is the Holy Spirit giving you in regard to your family life?

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Yield yourself afresh to Christ your Savior.

Let Him bring you under His Headship now.

Thank Him for eternally joining Himself to you and making you His child!

Thank Him for His wise instructions for your relationships.

## Lesson 29

God's Kingdom is about authority, but His authority flows from love and purity.

Our fallen world still requires authority. In fact, it requires more authority, not less. And yet it is part of our fallen-ness that we experience the abdication of authority or the abuse of authority.

Christians live under authority and exercise authority as part of belonging to His Kingdom.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 6:5-9. *(15 minutes)*

What lessons can you derive from these verses?

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Which part of this text is most challenging for you? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think God is saying to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Bring your struggles to the Lord and let Him minister to you.

Surrender your life afresh to Him so that you can be His workmanship.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence.

Receive His anointing to serve Him!

## Lesson 30

Have you ever wanted God to make you strong on a permanent basis? Probably so; but instead, He is teaching you how to use your needs as a means of constantly drawing your strength from Him. What a God! What a wise, loving God.

When Paul says, “Put on the full armor of God,” he is referring to your taking advantage of the help and ability that God is offering in His Son.

It honors God when you believe Him and count on His provision. This is faith.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 6:10-12. *(15 minutes)*

Why do you think Paul begins this section with, “Finally”? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you remember Ephesians 1:3 where God gives you His blessings? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think you are to experience His blessings? \_\_\_\_\_

What is God telling you about the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think God is anticipating your winning your battles? \_\_\_\_\_

What things can you receive in Christ that will perform as armor for you? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the devil’s favorite schemes that he plots against you? \_\_\_\_\_

What counsel might you give yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Come to Jesus in order to receive His strength.

Rejoice in your weakness so that you can glorify Him by having to rely on Him.

Lift your hands to God and declare His faithfulness to you!

Declare His promises over the devil and his schemes.

## Lesson 31

When Paul wrote this he was in prison and having daily contact with Roman soldiers, so it was easy for him to visualize the soldier's battle uniform as representing various aspects of the gospel.

The gospel of Christ renews your mind and protects your thoughts from submitting to the things that Satan interjects. What a picture of a helmet!

Soldiers cannot fight without the proper boots, so Paul sees your peace with God as critical to being able to effectively stand your ground against all the lies and temptations and confusion thrown at you. "My peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 6:13-20. Identify each piece of armor and explain how you can use it to win your battles. (10 minutes)

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What does all this have to do with your prayer life? \_\_\_\_\_

What is God saying to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prayer Time: (15 – 30 minutes)

By faith receive the good news of Christ as the power to renew your mind.

By faith in Christ's righteousness, establish your peace with God.

Abide in His truth and use His promises to combat Satan.

Pray His will into your life.