

We have come to the conclusion of this powerful letter that has made so many incredible claims. John MacArthur gives a great summary of this letter in his commentary on this passage. "Paul begins Ephesians with the comprehensive declaration that *"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3). He then proceeds to tell us that we are chosen, predestined, and adopted as God's children (1:4-5); lavished with His grace (1:6, 8; 2:7); redeemed and forgiven (1:7; 4:32); given the mystery of His will (1:9; 3:4-6); receivers of an inheritance (1:11); have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13-14; 4:30); greatly loved by God (2:4; 5:25); made alive with new life (2:5-6) (and I would add that is "resurrection life"); the workmanship of Christ, created by Him for doing good works (2:10); given God's own peace (2:14); made one with Christ and with every other believer as His own Body (2:13-19; 3:4-6); made citizens of God's kingdom and members of His family (2:19); built into God's own temple and the dwelling place of His Spirit (2:20-22); given boldness and confident access to God (3:12); made powerful beyond our imagination (3:20); given the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3); individually and uniquely gifted by Christ (4:7); blessed with specially gifted leaders to equip us in the work of ministry (4:11-12); taught by Jesus Christ Himself (4:20-21); given a new self in God's holy likeness (4:24); made light (5:8); offered the fullness of the Holy Spirit (5:18); given the instructions and resources to make all relationships with others what God intends them to be (5:21-6:9); and given God's full armor to make us invincible against Satan and his demonic forces (6:10-17).*" The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians.

The letter has challenged us to live up to the gracious calling we have received, to live worthy of the One that called us. (4:1) In this last chapter Paul has told us of the spiritual armor that we are to put on. We are in a war. The enemy of our soul has battle tactics and to counter them we must be clothed in Christ and wield His Word with accuracy.

After the description of the armor and what each represents, he continues without a break in the sentence. Many who are familiar with the armor stop mid-sentence, leaving out an important part of our battle against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. And indeed, this is one area in which we are often lacking. It is the necessity of prayer.

If I were to ask how many of you were satisfied with your prayer life, I don't imagine I'd see many hands. In one sense, that is a good thing. We should always be seeking a deeper communion with the Father. Jesus is our example, and He was in constant communion with the Father (Luke 5:16), doing only what He saw Him doing, saying only what He was taught to say, and even learning how to say it. (John 12:49) That all came through His continual prayer life.

- Commented [notes1]: Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)**  
<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
- Commented [notes2]: Ephesians 1:4-5 (ESV)**  
<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- Commented [notes3]: Ephesians 1:6 (ESV)**  
<sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
- Commented [notes4]: Ephesians 1:8 (ESV)**  
<sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight
- Commented [notes5]: Ephesians 2:7 (ESV)**  
<sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- Commented [notes6]: Ephesians 1:7 (ESV)**  
<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
- Commented [notes7]: Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)**  
<sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- Commented [notes8]: Ephesians 1:9 (ESV)**  
<sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ
- Commented [notes9]: Ephesians 3:4-6 (ESV)** ... [1]
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- Commented [notes13]: Ephesians 2:4 (ESV)** ... [5]
- Commented [notes14]: Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)** ... [6]
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- Commented [notes25]: Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)** ... [17]
- Commented [notes26]: Ephesians 4:20-21 (ESV)** ... [18]
- Commented [notes27]: Ephesians 4:24 (ESV)** ... [19]
- Commented [notes28]: Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)** ... [20]
- Commented [notes29]: Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)** ... [21]
- Commented [notes30]: Ephesians 4:1 (ESV)** ... [22]
- Commented [notes31]: Luke 5:16 (ESV)** ... [23]
- Commented [notes32]: John 12:49 (NIV)** ... [24]

We wield the Sword of the Spirit at the direction of Lord through prayer. We often pray that sword into action. Every part of the armor is bolstered by prayer. Prayer is a necessity to hear from our Commander and Chief. If we aren't being directed by Him and are instead operating out of ritual or patterns taught by men, we are just beating the air. We can act like a soldier of Jesus Christ, speak like a soldier ready for battle, even be suited up for combat, but if we aren't following orders from headquarters, we are just flailing around and accomplishing little or nothing. We may even be acting in a way that is detrimental to the Commander's plans, all because we aren't listening for His orders.

Here is how the armor passage continues. <sup>18</sup> *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.* What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? In 1Corinthians 14, Paul is addressing the church in Corinth that is overly zealous about the gift of tongues. Paul explains that the gift of tongues, or praying in a heavenly language, is good thing, but is the one gift that is self-edifying rather than building up the body. Therefore, he suggests that it not be demonstrated when gathered to worship unless there is someone that can interpret.

In a worship service, Paul emphasizes the need for prophecy (speaking forth the Word at God's direction) over tongues. He explains, <sup>2</sup> *For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.* 1 Corinthians 14:2 (ESV) Paul told them that he prayed both in a language given by the Spirit within his spirit, and with his mind as well. <sup>14</sup> *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.* <sup>15</sup> *What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.* 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 (ESV)

Yet, not everyone has the gift of tongues. God gives the gifts as He determines. (1Corinthians 12:11) So when Paul writes here that we should, along with the armor, pray at all times in the Spirit, is he suggesting every believer should have the gift of tongues. That would contradict what he has written elsewhere. (4:7) Certainly it could include prayer in tongues, but I can't see that it could be limited to that. I believe he is telling us to let the Spirit of God lead us in prayer and assist our prayers. He wrote to the Romans, <sup>26</sup> *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* <sup>27</sup> *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* Romans 8:26-27 (ESV)

The Spirit of God will prompt us in prayer, bringing to our minds the people and situations we should be praying about. He will pray along with us in ways that can't be physically expressed (even in tongues). This is deep prayer that is not just a minute of doing our duty and fulfilling an obligation, or going through a list. This is getting the mind of Christ, waiting on Him, listening to His voice and praying His will into the earth. (John 10:16) Too often we pray for what we want, instead of praying in the Spirit. Then we add the closing words, "in Jesus'

**Commented [notes33]:** 1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

**Commented [notes34]:** Ephesians 4:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

**Commented [notes35]:** John 10:16 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

name" as if we had the authority to pray for anything we desire. (John 15:7) Certainly we can bring our burdens to the Lord, but we should do so with a humble heart.

God understands when we desire a loved one to live and not die, or that we do not want to suffer. He desires that we look to Him in times of trouble, but His answer is what is best. He hears our prayers, but His will will be done. Demanding that God fulfill our wishes is demagoguery. How dare we add, "in Jesus' name" if we are simply making our demands upon God! It's better to pray, "Not my will but God's will be done." (Luke 22:42) We pray with Jesus' authority when we pray His heart in the Spirit.

So Paul tells us that along with this armor we must always be praying in the Spirit. Kent and Barbara Hughes wrote an excellent description of what this looks like in the spiritual realm. *"...we pause to reflect upon the formidable picture of the Christian warrior dressed in "the full armor of God" (6:10-17). Everything about it says action. As he readies himself he adjusts his war belt. His heart pounds under his breastplate so that it almost rings. He scuffs at the earth like a football player with his nail-studded boots, testing his traction. He repeatedly draws his great shield across his body in anticipation of the fiery barrages to come. Reflexively he reaches up and repositions his helmet. He gingerly tests the edge of his blade.*

*The enemy approaches. A thousand swords ring from their scabbards in dreadful symphony. The warriors stand motionless, breathing heavily. And then the Christian soldier does the most amazing thing - he falls to his knees in deep, profound prayer! To be sure, there will be action. He will rise, and his steel will flash, but all will be done in prayer, for prayer is primary.* - Preaching the Word – Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ.

What a great description! Pray in the Spirit. When the battle looms, the way we charge is to fall to our knees! Paul goes on to list four "alls".

The first "all" is "all times". Jesus told a parable in Luke 18 (Luke 18:1) in which he told us to always pray and not lose heart. There isn't a situation that doesn't require prayer. There isn't a day in which we don't need to spend time in prayer. We should have a time for that deep prayer where we can enter into our closet, so to speak, and get away from distractions and really listen. (Matthew 6:6) We can be led by the Spirit even in how to pray in the midst of a hectic schedule. When a saint of old was asked how he found time to pray he responded, "The more I have to do the more time I need to take in prayer."

Some people teach that we don't need to bother God with little things. That sounds to me like they think God is limited and too busy to converse with us. That sounds like a limited god. My God is big enough to speak to me about the littlest thing. If the picture of marriage is a mystery about our relationship with God as Paul wrote in the last chapter (5:32), the bride of Christ is the one with 10,000 word a day, but God is the One who lovingly gives the succinct and thoughtful answers that we need. Pray at all times.

**Commented [notes36]:** We can ask for whatever we want when we are abiding in Christ for then we want what He wants. John 15:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

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**Commented [notes37]:** Luke 22:42 (ESV)

<sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

**Commented [notes38]:** Luke 18:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

**Commented [notes39]:** Matthew 6:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**Commented [notes40]:** Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)

<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

The next all is with "all prayer and supplication". All our prayers should be in the Spirit. We can ask for all things that advance His kingdom, that is, if they are in the Spirit. Nothing is too great. If the Spirit of God lays it on your heart, pray in faith and believe. (Jude 20) It may take the rest of your life. The answer may not come in your lifetime, but obey the Lord and He will bring it to pass in His perfect time.

**Commented [notes41]: Jude 1:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

I've prayed for some of the cults in our town to either convert or leave. I found others in the body were led to pray the same, and in God's time they left. I'm praying for this shop on the corner to come to know the freedom and salvation of Jesus or leave and turn that corner into a place that glorifies God. He's put it on my heart and I believe He will do it. I'll keep praying until it happens.

*To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,* To the end that we always pray in the Spirit with all our petitions, we are to keep alert with the third all, "all perseverance". The command to the believer to keep alert or expressed in another way, "watch", is quite frequent in Scripture. (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36) We have to stay on guard. We can't let our guard down. We can't forget that we are in the midst of a raging battle. Prayer is essential.

**Commented [notes42]: Mark 13:33 (NIV)**

<sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

**Commented [notes43]: Luke 21:36 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

What do I need to pray about now? What is the Spirit speaking to my heart? We must develop that discipline of persevering in waiting upon the Lord.

The fourth "all" is to make supplication for "all the saints". Recognizing that we are in a battle, we must pray for one another. What believer couldn't use your prayers for their encouragement, spiritual fervency and growth, wisdom in the use of their time, discernment, discipline, and most of all an increasing love for our Savior and His body? We know that is God's will. Have you spent time praying for your fellow believers? God will put certain ones on your heart. Lately we've all been praying for Connie and Jan, Don and Penny, Rock and Jetta but we also need to lift up Jonathan in this special time of year when the youth go to camp. Pray for those who will disciple the young people when they return. You probably know of someone that is struggling with unemployment, health, home, and numerous other circumstances that threaten to discourage and defeat them. Pray!

Dear Ida would take the directory and pray right through it for everyone in the church. If the Lord leads you to do that as well, do it. Recognize when the Spirit of God is bringing someone to mind and stop and petition the Lord for them. What you sow you will reap as others pray for you. (Galatians 6:7)

**Commented [notes44]: Galatians 6:7 (KJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, Paul asked for prayers for himself. Don't be shy about asking for prayer. He knew that there would be a great temptation to be less than bold when brought before the Caesar and asked who exactly is his Lord. He asks the same thing we need to ask, to be

strong in the face of temptation and to boldly proclaim what Jesus has done for us. He didn't ask to quote a creed or doctrinal statement, but that the Holy Spirit would give him the right words for the situation. He knew it wasn't about formulas, but rather it is in the power of the Spirit to uniquely address a given situation. May the Lord give us ears to hear and a mouth to proclaim what He speaks to our hearts!

This is a good place as any to remind you to pray for me and the pastors of Sedona. Those who proclaim the Word faithfully are targets that the enemy would love to bring down. We do not fear the enemy but we do know how weak man is. Pray that I might grow in spirit, use my time wisely, stay in my calling, and be faithful. Pray that my love for the Lord and His body might continue to increase more and more. Pray that God's hand would be on me as I prepare the messages each week. I need your prayers.

*<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.* That is why Paul is in chains, because he boldly declared the mystery. It is a temptation to back down and be silent when you get some push back. He asked for prayer to continue to boldly declare the gospel as he ought to speak. "Lord, make us bold to speak when You lead."

This verse should also remind us to pray for the saints living under persecution. We should pray for their boldness under difficult circumstances and remember their chains as if we were in chains with them. (Hebrews 13:3)

*<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.* Tychicus is in heaven's hall of fame, not only was he a beloved brother in Christ of the Apostle Paul, but Paul considered him to be a faithful minister. That is the one thing God is seeking in His servants. He isn't going to say well done good and busy servant, or fervent servant, or even disciplined servant, but rather well done good and faithful servant. (Matthew 25:21)

Tychicus was faithful to the Lord. He had a listening ear and willingness to obey with his whole heart. He served the Apostle in bringing this letter and several others to the churches. (Colossians 4:7-8) Even toward the end of Paul's ministry, he was sending this encourager to strengthen the churches. (2Timothy 4:12) As a close companion of Paul, he could fill in the churches on Paul's ministry and physical and spiritual condition so that they could pray for him.

And finally the benediction of this letter. *<sup>23</sup> Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.* May we all walk in peace with one another and when possible with those outside the fellowship. May we abound in love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We need the love and faith that comes from God. We can't work it up. We must receive His own love for one another and for the lost. And may grace be with all who

**Commented [notes45]:** Hebrews 13:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

**Commented [notes46]:** Matthew 25:21 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

**Commented [notes47]:** Colossians 4:7-8 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,

**Commented [notes48]:** 2 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible. I pray that is true of each and everyone here this morning and that your love for Jesus is continually growing as you realize how great His grace is in your life. Amen!

#### Questions

- 1 What part of the armor description do we tend to leave out?
- 2 What can "in the Spirit" mean?
- 3 Why is prayer so essential?
- 4 How are we to pray?
- 5 List the four "all"s of prayer. Discuss each.
- 6 What can we learn from Paul's request for prayer for him?
- 7 What's so great about Tychicus?
- 8 What was his assignment?
- 9 Review and discuss the three parts of the benediction.

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### **Ephesians 3:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,  
<sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.  
<sup>6</sup> This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

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### **Ephesians 1:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

**Page 1: [3] Commented [notes11] Paul 5/18/2012 10:52:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,  
<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

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### **Ephesians 4:30 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

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### **Ephesians 2:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,

**Page 1: [6] Commented [notes14] Paul 5/18/2012 11:04:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

**Page 1: [7] Commented [notes15] Paul 5/18/2012 10:54:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 2:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ -by grace

you have been saved -

<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

**Page 1: [8] Commented [notes16] Paul 5/18/2012 10:55:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**Page 1: [9] Commented [notes17] Paul 5/18/2012 10:55:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 2:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

**Page 1: [10] Commented [notes18] Paul 5/18/2012 10:58:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 3:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

<sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

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### **Ephesians 2:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

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### **Ephesians 2:20-22 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,



<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

<sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

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### **Ephesians 3:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

**Page 1: [14] Commented [notes22] Paul 5/18/2012 10:59:00 AM**

### **Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

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### **Ephesians 4:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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### **Ephesians 4:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

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### **Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

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### **Ephesians 4:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But that is not the way you learned Christ! E

<sup>21</sup> assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

**Page 1: [19] Commented [notes27] Paul 5/18/2012 11:01:00 AM**

**Ephesians 4:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

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**Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

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**Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

**Page 1: [22] Commented [notes30] Paul 5/18/2012 11:07:00 AM**

**Ephesians 4:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

**Page 1: [23] Commented [notes31] Paul 5/26/2012 5:38:00 PM**

**Luke 5:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

**Page 1: [24] Commented [notes32] Paul 5/18/2012 11:09:00 AM**

**John 12:49 (NIV)**

<sup>49</sup> For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.