

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians

The world we can see is not all there is. Whatever our circumstances, our lives are secure in Christ in the world we cannot yet see.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Live light

Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: NIV

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
1	Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.	Ephesians 1:3-5	<p>This is not all the reality there is. Whatever our life experiences – good or ill – we are in Christ, secure in the unseen reality, the “heavenly realms”. And not only secure, we are blessed beyond belief with not some, but every spiritual blessing. We are in God’s family, not because we wanted it, nor because we were “want-able,” but because God wanted it. And we are chosen for a purpose – to live a life that reflects our holy and blameless King, the Lord Jesus.</p> <p>How does this knowledge encourage you in the things you face today? Why would we settle for material blessings when we can have spiritual ones?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Thank you for making me your child not on the basis of what I did or what I wanted, but on the basis of what you did and want you wanted in Christ.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
2	In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.	Ephesians 1:11-13	<p>God’s got a plan. It’s a big plan. It’s not about us. But it does sweep us up into it. God’s plan through his people Israel was for the world to look at Israel and go “Wow God!” And God ultimately achieved that through his Son, Israel’s Messiah. So it’s not just a great plan for Israel, it’s a great plan from Israel to us! People from everywhere are included in God’s plans through his Christ. How are we included? By hearing the gospel message and responding with, “Wow God!”</p> <p>What difference does it make to know it’s not about our glory, but about God’s glory? How are you seeking God’s glory today?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Thank you for sweeping us up into your plan for Israel. Help us to showcase your Son, the Lord Jesus, in such a way that those around us say “Wow, God!”</p> <p>In your Son’s name we pray,</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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3	As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest we were by nature deserving of wrath.	Ephesians 2:1-3	<p>God didn't choose us because we were the cute and adorable puppy in the window. No, we were the snarling mongrel with no time for God. Our desires, thoughts and intentions were all wrong. Not only that, we were ruled over spiritually by invisible dark forces. Nothing we could do could break that cycle. External efforts couldn't transform us from a snarling mongrel to an adorable puppy, and even if they could, we didn't want to change. We didn't deserve a nice home; we deserved the dog pound!</p> <p>How do you respond when you hear what we were actually like before Christ? What change can you see in your life now?</p>	<p>Dear Father,</p> <p>Thank you that you loved us and gave us life in your Son, not when we had straightened out our act, but when we deserved your anger.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
4	But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.	Ephesians 2:4-6	<p>So why did God choose us? His great love and rich mercy! God saved us by his kindness – his grace. Once dead, now alive. Once bound for the grave, now raised up. Once land-locked in this realm, now seated in the heavenly realm. And it's all through Christ. God didn't roll his eyes and say, "Okay, I'll save you if I have to." No! It was his deep desire to do so. This is not about our performance at all – it's about God's all-the-way-to-the-bottom-of-the-barrel grace.</p> <p>Have you truly grasped the significance of God's grace? How will grasping it transform your life today?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Thank you for your undeserved love and kindness, which is both great and rich. I repent of my efforts to impress you enough to save me, and instead revel in the reality of where I am in Christ because of your grace towards me.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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5	For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.	Ephesians 2:8-10	<p>Some things bear repeating. It's not our work that saves us, but only God's grace. And that's so hard to grasp it just needs to be said all of the time, both to ourselves and to each other. Say it slowly: "Good works don't save me!" But here's something else to say: "God saves me to do good works!" He has made us in Christ Jesus in order to live for Him, not for ourselves. And he holds these good works out to us and says, "Here's some I prepared earlier." Even the good we do is of God, so if we want to boast, let's boast about Him!</p> <p>Is the good you do in gratitude for what God has done for you, or in order to get him to do something for you?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Please direct us to the good works you have created for us in Christ Jesus. Help us to do them humbly and gratefully, knowing we do them to show how good you are, not how good we are.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
6	His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.	Ephesians 3:10-12	<p>The church is God's big play. He showcases his wisdom to the world we can see and to the world we cannot see, through the church. And this was no Plan B. God's people - the community of Jesus - has always been God's plan to announce his glory to the seen and unseen realms. That's an astonishing reality to think about when you next meet with God's people. Like Israel in the desert, the holy God is living in the midst of his people, yet now able to be approached with a confidence Israel never experienced, because of Christ.</p> <p>How do these truths help you as you meet with God's people? How important is gathering with God's church to you?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Thank you for your church. Thank you for bringing a people together to worship you and to serve one another. Help us, your people, to display your wisdom to a watching world.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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7	No to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.	Ephesians 3:20-21	<p>God's people can't exhaust God's power. God's people can't make too many requests for him to transform them by his Spirit. His power to work through the church, his power to transform lives, his power to bring glory to himself as we share the gospel of his Christ. So often we dabble at the edges of the ocean, unable to imagine the depths of God's work in his world. And it's not just here and now, it's been generation after generation of God's powerful work in the church – all the way to the last day.</p> <p>What would you want God to powerfully do among his people this week, this month, this year? Why not ask him!</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>We pray for your church today. We ask that you will lift our imaginations above ourselves and see what plans you have to bring glory to yourself in the church. In Christ's name,</p> <p>Amen.</p>
8	As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.	Ephesians 4:1-3	<p>From the sublime to the ridiculous. From the heavenly realms to life in the here and now. The unseen world has an impact on the world we can see. And just how is God's immeasurable power working out among us? In good old garden-variety humility, gentleness, patience, love and peace. That's the same stuff that was found in Jesus! That's what we are called to. The same Holy Spirit who unites us to Christ in the heavenly realms unites us to each other here on earth.</p> <p>Living among God's people is the testing ground for our spiritual lives. How are you going with practising humility, gentleness, patience, love and peace?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to love and serve your people as your Son loved and served us. Forgive us for when we fail to be more like Jesus was when he was among his people.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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9	So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.	Ephesians 4:11-13	<p>Jesus is generous! He loves splashing the cash on his people! Look at the gifts that he gives to us in order that we can complete our calling. And what is that calling? To do works of service and ultimately be like Christ. Whatever else the church is supposed to be – that’s the ultimate goal. And if he’s that generous with the gifts he gives, then let’s be generous in using those gifts to help God’s people achieve God’s purposes. Let’s love God’s people enough to “splash out the cash” of his gifts to others.</p> <p>How has Christ gifted the church in order to serve his people? How are you generously paying forward the gifts he has given you?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Thank you for the gifts of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Help us to avail ourselves of these gifts in order to serve others, for the sake of being more like Jesus.</p> <p>Amen</p>
10	You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.	Ephesians 4:22-24	<p>Out with the old and in with the new. But it’s not just about spring-cleaning or turning over a new leaf. It’s about getting rid of a dead, and deadly self, that would deceitfully drag you down. Yet it’s even more than that! There’s a whole new wardrobe to put on! A new self to replace the old. Belonging to Christ is not simply about reducing the “bad stuff,” but of taking on a righteous and holy life that reflects the God we serve.</p> <p>Have you put off the old self as you were taught? How does the new self fit? Is your life leading to righteousness and holiness?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Help me to continually reject the old self, and see it for the decay it is. Strengthen me to daily put on the new self and live a holy and righteous life for you and before others today.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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11	For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and to find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.	Ephesians 5:8-11	<p>It's as different as night is to day, this Christian life. We are to behave according to where we belong. If, in Christ, we now belong to the day, then the sneaky, sinful life of the night must be done away with. And not just avoided, but replaced by the tasty fruit of the light. Darkness can't grow anything good, so shed a light on it; first in your own life and only then in the lives of others. And don't just guess what light living looks like, ask! God, his Word and his people will help you.</p> <p>What does the fruit of the light look like in your life? What are you doing to reject the fruitless deeds of darkness? In yourself? In others?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Thanks you for bringing me from the darkness into your marvellous light. Forgive me for the times I step back into the darkness, and empower me to reject and expose its worthless deeds.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
12	Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.	Ephesians 5:25-27	<p>You may not be a husband. But if you belong to Christ, you are, in a manner of speaking, a wife! Marriages matter to God not because they are an ultimate thing, but because they point to an ultimate thing – the relationship between Jesus and his church, and how Jesus must love his bride. He must not only die for her, but put everything in place for her to shine. And in our world of relational confusion and selfishness, the church and Christian marriages can reflect Christ's costly love and service to those watching on.</p> <p>Have you thanked Christ today for loving you by dying for you? Will you demonstrate your faithful love in return by living as he has called you?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father,</p> <p>Thank you for the costly love of your Son, the Lord Jesus. Help us to live up to our calling. Fix our eyes on the promised marriage feast of the Lamb, where all the wrinkles, spots and blemishes will be gone.</p> <p>Amen.</p>

Between Two Worlds: Ephesians (continued)

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13	Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.	Ephesians 6:5-7	<p>The key word here is “earthly”. You may have a boss, you may have a CEO, but they are not the all-seeing Boss, the heavenly CEO who can see everything. So we do our work well for our earthly master because of our heavenly Master. And the Christian life is a joined up life. There are to be no sneaky slack-offs at work. Why? Because there is nowhere that Jesus is not the CEO – even when not recognised by others. There is no lunchroom or boardroom where he is not our true all-seeing boss.</p> <p>Do you take your Christianity to work? Does it inhabit your work practices as well as your work words? How does that challenge your work colleagues?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Help us to remember that you see everything we do. Forgive us for when we try to live separate lives, forgetting that you see everything we do.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
14	Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.	Ephesians 6:10-12	<p>God has a plan for your life. So does the devil – he wants to destroy it. And if we simply looked at what we were pitted against we would freak out; rulers, authorities, dark powers, spiritual forces. But there is help. And it is twofold. First, trust in God’s strong power, not your own willpower. Second, put on the armour he has generously supplied – all of it. God’s armour is not pick and mix, trust his judgment on this one. If you are going to fight a spiritual battle, you need to be on your spiritual guard. So be careful of yourself, but confident in Christ. Stay close to God, but stand up to the devil. If Jesus has won the war, then these are just the mopping up operations.</p> <p>How might the devil want to destroy you? Which of his schemes might you be most susceptible to? How does it help knowing Jesus has won the victory on your behalf?</p>	<p>Father God,</p> <p>Thank you for your powerful work that enables me to stand against the devil. Help me to struggle onwards to that day when the crown of victory replaces the armour of the fight.</p> <p>Amen.</p>