

1. The Story of Ephesians (mention beginning in Acts 19; Paul's two year resident work with them and close relationship with them—Acts 20; their struggles detailed in 1&2 Timothy and Revelation 2:1-7. Paul's task in his letter was to help them to learn to accept one another in this new multi-ethnic community called church in order to present a unified body ready to live out the praise of his glory. Paul's message to them can be summed up like this)
  - a. Placement—1:3-14 (This multi-ethnic community in which both Jews and non-Jews belonged was always God's will. Paul used words like "chosen," "predestined," "adopted," & "included" to demonstrate that. No question—all belonged bc of what Jesus accomplished and fully guaranteed by the Spirit. This was crucial for all to understand if they were to be about the business of the church)
  - b. Power—1:15-23; 3:20-21 (As in resurrection power—know fully available to enable the Ephesians to do more than they could even imagine. Another crucial truth empowering them with the ability to do as God asks\_
  - c. Purpose—4:1-6:20 (Both the placement and power were so the Ephesians could live out the praises of God's glory—to appreciate, demonstrate and give witness to love and grace of God. Being saved by this grace—they were to live it out in faith in order that others too may embrace the blessings of Christ. Specifically Paul calls this)
2. Living as Children of Light (not just some random metaphor, but one rooted in Christ's words in the SOM in Matthew 5:14-16 & restated by in 1 Peter 2:9 as again the specific purpose of those called out of darkness—to shine light. The Ephesians had God's light to shine in their city. They could not do it unless they understood their place in this process—put there by God; or unless they utilized his power to do so—power to overcome their own struggles and power to make a far bigger impact in that city for God then they could grasp. They had to be united, focused and fully engaged. Are we listening to all of this—for it is no different now. The call to live as children of light remains; God has put us here specifically to do this and given us resurrection power to accomplish it. Here is what that looks like)
  - a. Replacing corrupt behavior with godly behavior (put off the corrupt and put on the wholesome—light cannot shine unless)
  - b. Reshaping relationships God's way (husband/wife; parent/child; slave/free—relationships demonstrating mutual submission, respect, fair treatment and most of all, love—revolutionary!)
  - c. Renewing the battle (putting on the whole armor of God; interesting that Paul connects the prior two to this—spiritual warfare. Actually impossible to separate. Our placement, empowerment and purpose as children of light leads us directly to this battlefield as our enemy will not hesitate to engage us using everything at his disposal. But we have nothing really to fear if, in fact our light is shining—we will stand)
3. Be Alert!