

Ephesians Week 6 TDs

1. Complete the Shape of Ephesians (Make a Map).

Let's complete our task of "Discovering the Shape of Ephesians" by dividing the 2nd half into its major sections—thus completing our outline or "map."

Why do you think we might consider this much material in one session (4:17-6:9)? Is there something that connects or integrates the second half of Ephesians? What rubric or image does Paul use to abstract or "sum up" the material (see 4:17-24)?

Clue

Paul's letters are often divided into 2 major halves—a thinking or theological half and a "so-what-difference-does-it-make-in-how-we-live," acting or living half. (These halves are often separated by key petition/request sections, like Eph 4:1-16). The "ethical" or living sections thus tend to converge around the theme of living out the previous teaching.

Introduction:	1:1-23	
Prescript	1:1-2	Paul (apostle by the will of God) to Ephesians/faithful
Blessing	1:3-14	Spiritual blessing to "Us" (the first to hope) and to "You"
Thanksgiving	1:15-23	Prayer for understanding: calling, inheritance, power . . .
Middle/Body	2:1-3:21	The new humanity in Christ
Calling	2:1-10	Raised and seated with Christ: God's new creation (for good works)
Inheritance	2:11-22	One new, purposeful humanity (out of Jews and Gentiles)
Power	3:1-13	Paul's role according to (the administration of) God's power
Transition	3:14-21	Prayer for the power to understand the dimension of God's love
Middle/Body	4:1-6:9	Living Worthy
Petition	4:1-16	Request to maintain the unity and working of the Spirit To live worthy of God's new creation/humanity in Christ
Living Worthy	4:17-5:21	Living up to or worthy of the "new man" or "person" of God.
Old/New	4:17-24	New person of God
Values	4:25-32	Fundamental values/actions
Love	5:1-5	Live in Love (as imitators of God)
Light	5:6-14	Live in (as children of) light
Wisdom	5:15-21	Live (carefully) in wisdom (live smart)
Family	5:22-6:9	
Marriage	5:22-33	Family: Marriage
Children	6:1-4	Family: Parents/Children
Servants	6:5-9	Family: Servants
Conclusion:	6:10-24	Stand strong with the Armor of God
Stand/Armor	6:10-20	Stand/Armor/Prayer (for Paul)
Tychicus	6:21-22	Tychicus: To encourage about Paul
Blessing:	6:23-24	Peace . . . and grace upon those who love Jesus incorruptibly

2. Explore Eph 4:17-6:9.

4:17-5:20: New Creation/Community in Christ

Summarize Eph 4:17-5:20.

Highlight key words and phrases throughout 4:17-5:20.

4:17-24

Summarize Eph 4:17-24 (and you'll have an answer to the previous question about why we might consider this material together). How does this passage relate to the desire to maintain the one new humanity in Christ?

What does 4:17 (in addition to 1:12-13, 2:11-13) say—regarding the historical setting—about whom the letter was written to?

4:25-32

List the set of values/actions encouraged by Paul in 4:25-32 (speaking truth, controlling anger, etc.). How do these values and actions contribute to the image of the church (God's new humanity) as depicted in Ephesians and thus help to accomplish the primary point/purpose of the letter?

5:1-20

What is the foundation/source of lifestyle characterized by love, light, and attentive wisdom according to 5:1?

How do the admonitions and manner of lifestyle described in 5:1-21 relate to the one new humanity in Christ?

How does our behavior relate to our participation in the “inheritance of the kingdom of Christ and of God” (which is portrayed how in Eph 2:1-22)? And what does that say about the relationship between behavior and beliefs—the calling and the living?

5:1-7: Love

What does it mean to “walk/live in love” according to Eph 5:1-7? How does it relate to the primary point/purpose of the letter?

5:8-14: Light

What does it mean to “to live as children of light,” according to Eph 5:8-14? How does it relate to the primary point/purpose of the letter?

5:15-20: Wisdom

What does it mean to live carefully and smart (“walk/live in wisdom”) according to Eph 5:15-20? How does it relate to the primary point/purpose of the letter?

How is wisdom manifest or put into practice according to 5:15-20?

Bonus

How might the exhortations of making the most of every opportunity, understanding the Lord's *will*, being filled with the Spirit and expressing that through joyful music, and giving thanks to God for everything relate to the example and situation of Paul as portrayed in the letter (in contrast to things that aren't true, anger, rotten words [5:25-31])?

5:21-6:9: New Creation/Community: Family

Summarize Eph 5:22-6:9. How do the family values and lifestyle of Eph 5:22-6:9 relate to the one new humanity in Christ?

Highlight key words and phrases throughout 5:21-6:9.

How does the analogy of Christ's love for the church fit/function in relation to the primary point/purpose of Ephesians? List some examples from 5:21-33. How do these images relate to the theme of all things being summed up in Christ, one new humanity, growing unto the fullness of God?

3. Describe the Church as the New Humanity of God (from Ephesians).

How is it constructed? What is its nature? How was it built? What is its purpose? How does diversity (diverse giftedness) create unity? How does our lifestyle affect the nature and purpose of the church?

How is this connected to the theme of summing up all things in Christ, the fullness of Christ, the one new humanity and temple of God?

Extra, Extra . . .

In Bible times, Philosophers and politicians discussed the inherent and essential nature of “the state” (polis—we might think “nation” today) as including the fundamental relationships of marriage and family (“the essential nature” of things). They were usually discussed as part of a list or table of “household codes” (Haustafel in German), with special focus on authority and subordination as part of the larger topic of the state. (The word “salvation” in the New Testament was used in secular literature to describe the safety and security of the citizens/state.) Of the primary partnership of the home/family, Aristotle considered “the union of female and male” the starting point. Here’s an example from Aristotle regarding the primary relationships:

And now that it is clear what are the component parts of the state, we have first of all to discuss household management; for every state is composed of households. . . . The investigation of everything should begin with its smallest parts, and the primary and smallest parts of the household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children; we ought therefore to examine the proper constitution and character of each of these relationships. I mean that of mastership, that of marriage . . . , and thirdly the progenitive relationship . . . (*Politics* 1.2.1-2).

In Aristotle, the city/state exists and is a natural outgrowth (“the end/goal”) of the “first partnerships.” (Note also that the Gentile Christians have become “fellow *citizens* of the saints and members of the *household* of God” in Eph 2:12, 19.) The overall health and existence of the state thus depends on the first partnerships of the home and family (*Politics* 1.2; 1.1.3-4; 1.1.8; 1.5.1-2), though, in theory, “the whole” or the corporate (the state) is prior to and takes precedence over the parts—unity preempts diversity, with the primary union of husband and wife serving to imply and illustrate the prior reality of the state. The parts, when they function as they should, work together with power to accomplish the unity and good of the state: “. . . all things are defined by their function [“work”] and capacity [“power”], so that when they are no longer such as to perform their function they must not be said to be the same things” (1.1.11-12). Aristotle then uses the household (consisting of husband and wife, master and slave) as an analogy of the unity of the state, with its different functional parts (3.2.4).

You can see why, then, that in describing the “new humanity” or “society” of God, Paul might include a “house table” of renewed and remade relationships in the family, starting with husband and wife, as an integral part of the new society/humanity. You can also see why he would go back to Genesis as the basis/model for the “one flesh” husband-wife relationship (Eph 5:31) as part of his description of the “new *creation*.”

What does Paul mean in 5:32 when he says that he’s actually talking about Christ and the church? Does the husband-wife section serve more than one purpose in the context of the letter (32-33)? Read Eph 21-32 again with an eye on the primary point/purpose of Ephesians. How does the idea of “nourishing and caring” for the body relate to the central theme of the joining of Christ and the church?

Why might Paul have quoted from the Old Testament book of Genesis (2:24), using the reference of the “two shall become one” in describing the husband-wife relationship? . . . as part of his description of the “new creation/humanity” of God?

Sample Highlighting of 4:17-6:9

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer **walk** as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their **minds**. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their **understanding**, alienated from the **life** of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you **learned** Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were **taught** in him, as **the truth** is in Jesus, ²² to put

off your **old self**, which belongs to your former manner of **life** and is corrupt through **deceitful desires**,²³ and to be **renewed** in the spirit of your **minds**,²⁴ and to put on the **new self, created** after the likeness of God in **true righteousness and holiness**.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away **falsehood**, let each one of you speak **the truth** with his neighbor, for we are **members one of another**.²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give **grace** to those who hear.³⁰ And do not grieve **the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**.³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

5 Therefore be imitators of God, as **beloved children**.² And **walk in love**, as Christ **loved** us and **gave** himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be **thanksgiving**.⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and God.⁶ Let no one **deceive you with empty words**, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.⁷ Therefore do not become **partners** with them;⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light**⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is **good and right and true**),¹⁰ and try to discern **what is pleasing** to the Lord.¹¹ Take no part in the **unfruitful works of darkness**, but instead expose them.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that **they do** in secret.¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Awake, O sleeper,
and **arise from the dead**,
and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵ **Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise**,¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand** what **the will** of the Lord is.¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but **be filled with the Spirit**,¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ **submitting** to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, **submit** to your own husbands, as to the Lord.²³ For the husband is the **head** of the wife even as Christ is the **head** of the **church, his body**, and is himself its **Savior**.²⁴ Now as the **church** submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, **love** your wives, as Christ **loved** the **church** and gave himself up for **her**,²⁶ that he might **sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the**

word,²⁷ so that he might present the **church** to himself in **splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.**²⁸ In the same way husbands should **love** their wives as their own **bodies**. He who **loves** his wife **loves** himself.²⁹ For no one ever **hated** his own flesh, but **nourishes and cherishes it**, just as Christ does the **church**,³⁰ because we are **members** of his **body**.³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the **two shall become one** flesh."³² This **mystery** is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the **church**.³³ However, let each one of you **love** his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she **respects** her husband.

6 Children, **obey** your parents in the Lord, for this is **right**.² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a **promise**),³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and **instruction** of the Lord.

⁵ Bondservants, **obey** your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing **the will** of God from the heart,⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,⁸ knowing that whatever **good anyone does**, this he will **receive back from the Lord**, whether he is a bondservant or is free.⁹ Masters, **do the same** to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Expert's Corner

Key Questions Review

Ephesians 4:17-6:9

- How is living worthy of the calling of God fleshed out in Eph 4:17-6:9? What are the chief characters of one-body/one-another living?
- How does "putting off the old" (hu)man(ity) and on "the new" connect with God's new creation in Christ?
- What does it mean to walk/live in love? . . . in light? . . . in wisdom?
- What role does Paul see for the family as part of God's new creation/humanity? Why might he quote from Genesis?
- Why do you think Paul uses such detail in his description of the church as the bride of Christ, how one loves and treats his own body, how Christ loves and treats the church? Does it relate to his teaching about how the Gentile audience should feel about and treat the "body" and "bride" of Christ?
- What do you think Paul means when he says that this is a profound mystery, that he's talking about Christ and the church (5:31-32)?