



Empowering People to Change the World

Born for War
A Battle Manual from the Book of Ephesians

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Introduction and Outline

There is no more powerful and practical book in the entire New Testament.

Commentators and preachers outdo themselves in describing this Book...

- “The crown and climax of Pauline theology.”
- “The sublimest communication ever made to men.”
- “The consummate and most comprehensive statement which the New Testament contains of the meaning of the Christian religion. It is certainly the final statement of Pauline theology.” (All quotes are from R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians*.)
- Coleridge called Ephesians “one of the divinest compositions of man.”
- It has been called “the grand canyon of the Bible.”
- As I have studied through Ephesians many times, I have a different take than the commentaries I’ve read.

This Book is a battle manual for living the Christian life. I would entitle the theme “Born for War.”

Ephesians is a letter written in two parts:

Our Position in Christ. We know from military war theory that the best place to fight from is the higher ground! We are battling from higher ground.

- Ephesians is a treatise on our elevated state in Christ and the believer. Christ is raised up in the heavenly realm above all principalities and powers, and we are also raised up and seated next to Christ in the heavenly realm. (Chapters 1-3)
- You can't be on any higher ground than heaven!
- John Mackay, former president of Princeton Theological Seminary, in his book, *God's Order*, recounts how he became spiritually alive as a 15-year-old. One Saturday about noon in July of 1903, young Mackay was attending a service for an old-time Scottish communion in the open air, among the hills in the Highland parish of Rogart, in Sutherlandshire, England. A minister was preaching from an old wooden pulpit to several hundred people sitting under the shade trees in the glen. Though Mackay could never remember what was said, he was quickened and felt a calling to preach. For the rest of the summer, he lived in the pages of the New Testament, especially Ephesians, which became his favorite book of the Bible. He later wrote:

“From the first, my imagination began to glow with the cosmic significance of Jesus Christ. It was the cosmic Christ that fascinated me, the living Lord Jesus Christ Who was the center of a great drama of unity, in which everything in Heaven and on earth was to become one in Him. I did not understand what it all meant, but the tendency to think of everything in terms of Jesus Christ and a longing to contribute to a unity in Christ became the passion of my life.”

Our Power in Christ. It is a letter that deals with power; it is the greatest spiritual warfare manual in all of Scripture. This letter is

about WAR. We are called to war; we are born for war in this world. (Chapters 4-6)

- Ephesus was the center of magical and cultish religions. It was considered the leading magical city of Asia Minor.
- It was a city that welcomed sorcerers, magicians, and charlatans of all sorts.
- Evidence of this can be found in *Acts 19:19*, in which after the Apostle Paul preached, the new converts brought all of their magic books together and burned them. *Acts 19:19* says the value of the magic books was 50,000 pieces of silver.
- One of the greatest of cults at that time centered around the "leading divinity" of Asia Minor, Artemis or Diana.
- In *Acts 19*, it took a great power encounter in Ephesus for the gospel to make an impact. This is the place where Paul powerfully healed the sick, cast out demons, and preached the gospel. This truth encounter brought a great move of the Spirit in Ephesus.
- We will learn the heights and depths of spiritual warfare as we study this great Book.

Ephesians is one of the most practical books on the Christian life in all of the New Testament.

- It moves from the heavenly heights of Who Christ is to Who we are in Christ, into how to live a Spirit-filled life and how to have a wonderful family, and even how to battle from a position of the higher ground.
- We cannot move forward in our Christian life if we don't know where we stand with Christ—our position in Christ.

- We cannot wage warfare against the enemy of our lives if we don't know our power in Christ!
- We so often want to give up. We must understand this wonderful grace we have in Christ.

Background on Ephesus

Paul labored in Ephesus for two years. Ephesus was one of the leading cities of Asia Minor. God so used Paul to touch this city that one of the great churches in all of Asia was raised up there.

- The impact was so monumental that the sales of the little idols of Diana so trailed off that a riot happens there.
- This letter has no correction in it. He is not writing because of any problems, but just to encourage and build up the faith of the church.
- It is believed to have been a cyclical letter, meaning it was written to all of the churches in that region of Asia Minor.
- This is written about 64 AD, about five years after the Book of Acts was written. It will only be about five to ten years before John will be exiled to the Island of Patmos. It will be there that John will write to the church at Ephesus, the first church mentioned in Revelation:

Revelation 2:2-4

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

- Within just 25 years, the Ephesians will have lost their first love!

- This is a sober reminder. We must remember this. Some of you have walked with Christ over 20 years. This church was started six years ago. We must be careful, or we will lose our first love, our passion for Christ. It is always a great challenge.
 - Do you realize that teaching through the Scripture in America is now the exception, not the rule?
 - Do we realize how much freedom we have to sing these simple worship choruses, compared to most churches?
 - Do we realize how much the Word and Spirit is taught and provided throughout the life of this church? We must be constantly reminded.
 - But we have these terrible experiences of sickness, death, or a divorce to be reminded again of all that we have in Christ. So easily that can happen. But before we can do stuff for Christ, we must come to know and understand all that He has done for us. He “first loved us.” This is the first three chapters of Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:1 - Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ

- At the onset, Paul had been a militant antagonist of Christianity.
- He hated the church and hated the faith of these Christ followers.
- But it was on a lonely road, on the off ramp at Damascus, that the Lord apprehended Paul through a vision.
- His name had been “Saul,” named after the large, vain, Benjamite, former king of Israel.
- God renamed him “Paul,” which means “small.”

- Paul was humbled, changed, and went from being the persecutor, to being the persecuted.

**Apostle, from “apostolos,” means “one who is sent on a mission.”
Paul became a humble servant of Jesus.**

- The Lion of Judah had cut him down to size.
- Before knowing Christ, Paul was completely confident in who he was, what he was, and where he was going! But he had been dramatically humbled.
- Paul had to be liberated from Paul, in order to find liberation in Christ!
 - Like John of the Cross in a Toledo cell, John Bunyan from the Bedford Jail, and Charles Colson from a modern prison...Liberated in Prison!
 - Paul is a prisoner in Rome, but he's free! How does one find oneself in a dirty Roman prison and yet is walking in freedom in his heart?
- It is so important to know who you are, what you are, and where you are in Christ.
- You can cross out “Paul” and place your own name in there. “Steve, a pastor teacher of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.”
- Where are you? We sometimes have this foolish struggle within ourselves thinking that something is more important or more sacred than something else! “Joe, a carpenter of Jesus Christ by the will of God” is not less sacred...that is how Jesus spent His first 30 years. He only had a public ministry for three years. Is one more sacred than the other? It was at His baptism that the Lord said, “This is my Son in Whom I am well pleased,” before

He had done anything publically. Yet he had fellowshiped with His father day in and day out for 30 years.

- “Suzie, a grandmother of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”
- “Lois, a mother of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”
- “Bill, an accountant of Jesus Christ by the will of God”
- What influence you are having? There might be a little Ruth, Deborah, Whitfield, or Wesley that will be used to change the world!
- You look at that wash and say “How can this be the will of God?” A mile long, two miles high! The wash just keeps multiplying! It replenishes itself. Never ends.
- It is decades often before you see the results of such labor.

Paul understood his calling, his destiny, knowing that he was an apostle. How important that was for him as he faced bonds and afflictions.

- Acts 20:22-24
“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”
- It was so important that he knew who he was and what he was for. Paul understood that afflictions and pain came with the job!

Ephesians 1:1b, “To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus.”

- How important is it that we know who we are and how much the Lord really loves you. He wants to realize His life through you...
- This letter is being written to the church at Ephesus—to regular people just like us, in a locale, in a local church.
- It is meant for us. We are the “faithful in Christ Jesus.”
- We think of “saints” as something on the dashboard of a car or a statue on a lawn. All that “saints” means is “set apart, for God.” You are sitting next to a saint!
- You have two addresses: 1) you are in Christ, raised up into the heavenly realm; and 2) you are in Colorado Springs.

Verse 2

- “Grace to you and peace from God...” You can’t have truly one without the other.
- When we come to understand and really experience God’s grace and full acceptance, and when we come to experience God as our heavenly Father Who fully and completely loves us, we will have peace in our hearts.
- This is the grace that the world just cannot understand, but it is the grace that was so vital and integral to Paul’s life, that he included at the beginning of almost every letter.
- Literally, if there is a truth that each of us must discover to discover the greatest joy and peace, it is the grace of God.

- You are fully loved, just as the Father expressed this love to His son at His baptism. “You are My Son in Whom I am well pleased.” He had done nothing except commune with the Father.