

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

It is clear to me that “being in ministry” — pastors, missionaries — as opposed to being in “secular” work is probably the most foundational of all distortions of our churches today.

I have had two very significant weeks meeting with key leaders in our cohorts in Little Rock, Buffalo, Orlando, and Paterson — cities in which the churches could be transformational, but they are ill-equipped for the task



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Albania/Kosovo





# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Albania/Kosovo — “Jerusalem to Illycrium!!!” (Why show these?)





# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians



D.Min. in Little Rock Monday and Tuesday

- First inner city/urban cohort at this level: 6 churches 2,000 to 7,000—2 black, 3 white, 2 strategic, including meeting here at South City church.
- 2 years into D.Min. ready to launch Re:BUILD and Urban Bachelors.
- All amazed at how ill equipped but well positioned churches are.
- RADICAL restructuring needed—Ephesians 4 is the starting point.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians



What is going on here?!!!!

- I was in France and Albania; then back to Little Rock, Buffalo, and Charlotte; last week Orlando and Paterson, NJ; and next week India. Michael was in China, Steve was in India, Bill was in Indonesia.
- What was happening here? You are doing the work of the ministry: Randy and Nancy (and teams of you) — 13 in Re:BUILD; Nate, James and Todd — excellent Sunday mornings; how many weddings?; 20 house churches and planting working at high level, etc. etc.



# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

As I mentioned last week, this week I was in Orlando

- I met with Sean Cooper in Orlando, who is now executive pastor of Northland, which was probably the most influential mega-church after Willow Creek and Saddleback.
- Then Matt Andersen, Jay Sinclair, and Steve Galegor led the meeting in Paterson, where we presented these ideas to two groups of pastors and ministry leaders (30 and 15), 3 hours each.

I hit hard on these issues!! What does it mean to be in ministry? to be equipped for the work of the ministry?



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

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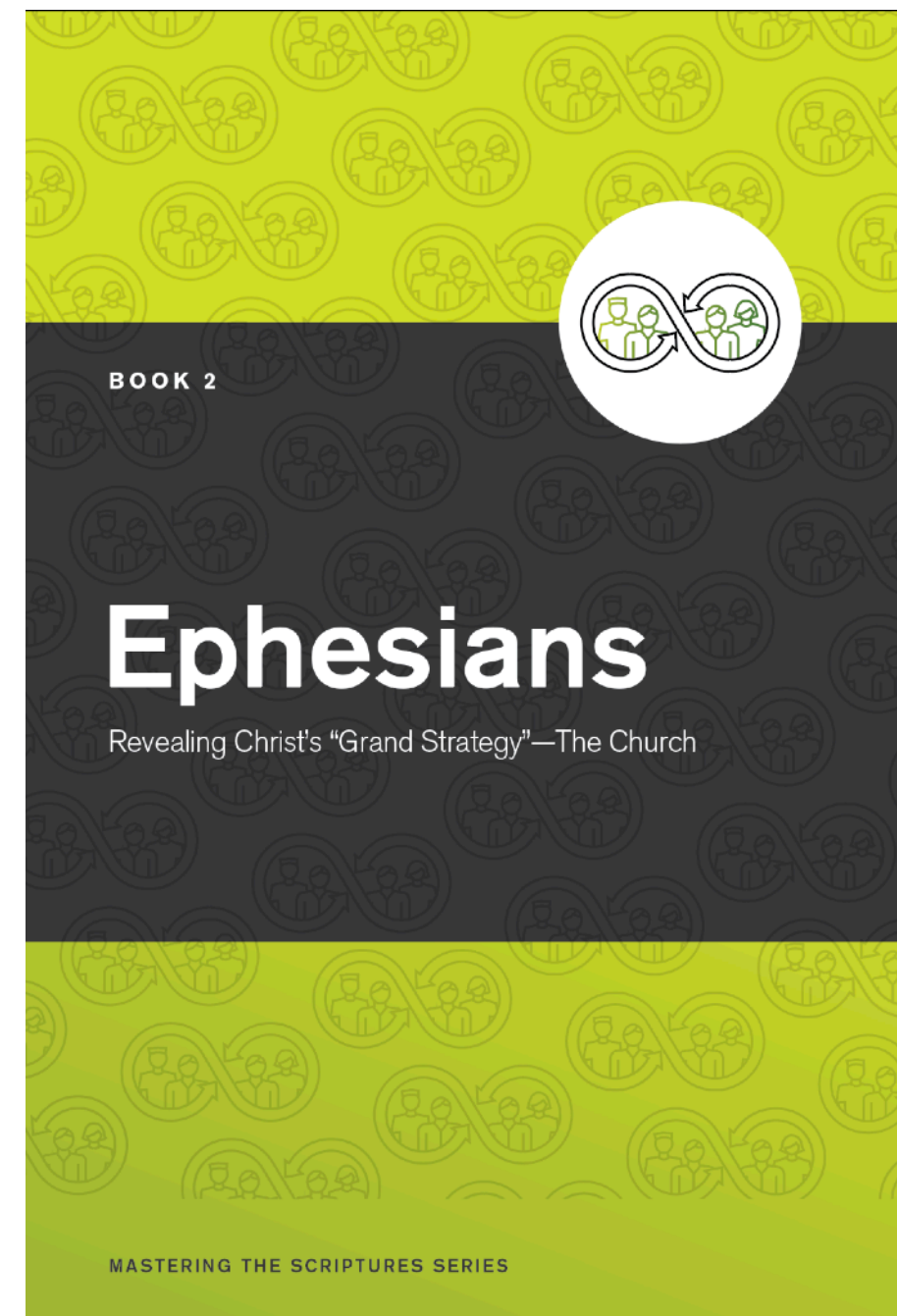
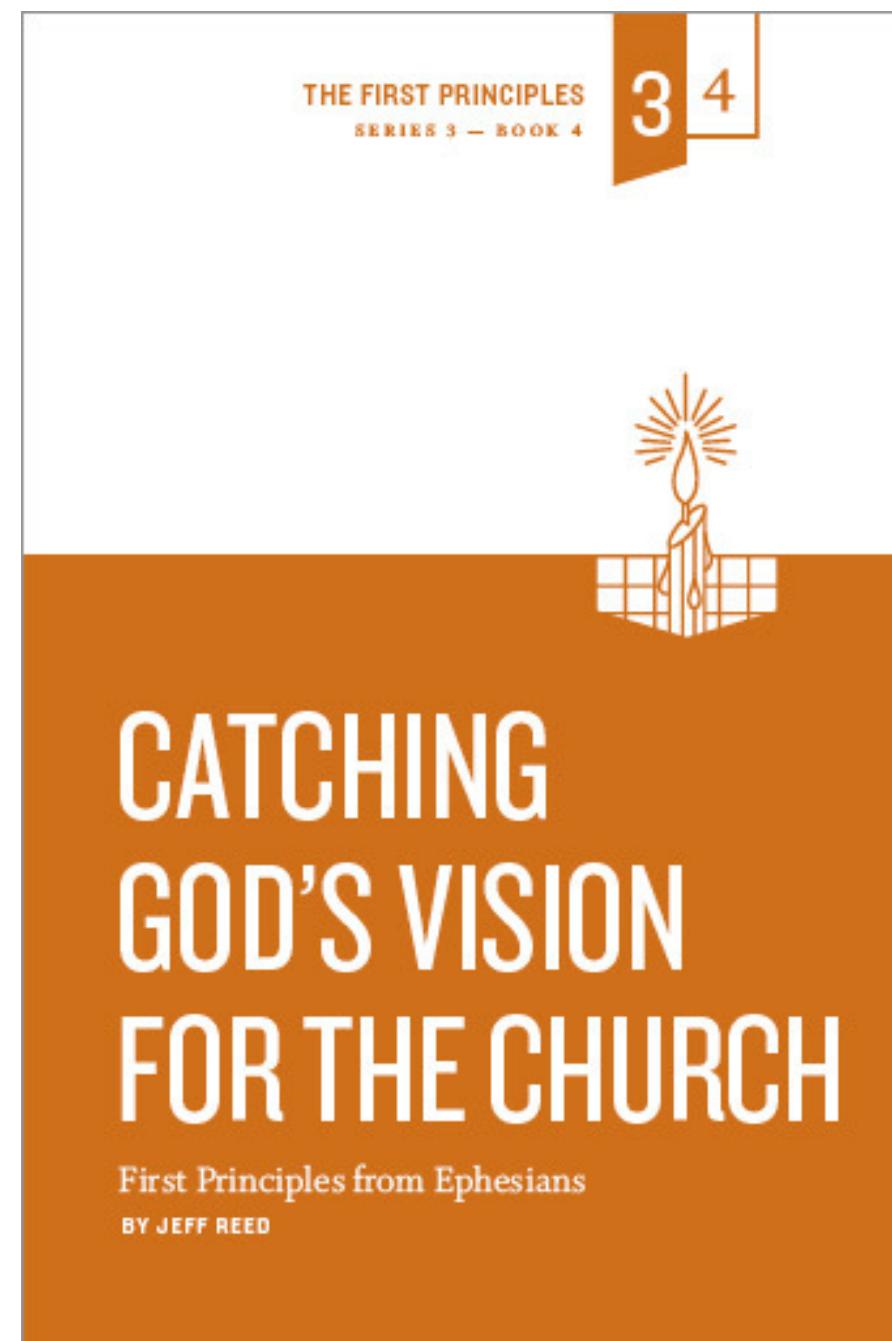
This morning, I hope to fully shape your understanding of the “work of ministry,” which we are all supposed to be equipped to do.

This concept is why I trained in ministry (MAT to BILD) rather than going to seminary.

It is the heart of BILD which grew out of MAT (1972, 1983)



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians



I have said before, this book, especially Ephesians 4:1–16, set my whole philosophy in 1972 with Ray Stedman's book *Body Life* on Ephesians 4:1–16.

Now, once again, we turn to it.

If you pay careful attention to Ephesians in The First Principles series and this booklet in the Mastering the Scriptures series you will see that this booklet builds on the first one.



# Ephesians

Revealing Christ's "Grand Strategy" — the Church





# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

Issue: The work of the ministry—Ephesians 4:17–6:9

Questions:

1. In what sense can we say Ephesians 4:17–6:9 is about doing the work of the ministry?
2. How does this section of instructions shape our understanding of doing the work of ministry? of who is in the ministry?
3. Is the mandate of husbands developing their wives and parents training their children part of the work of the ministry?
4. What exactly does it mean to be in ministry as opposed to secular work?



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>22</sup> You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:17–24



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>25</sup> So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and do not make room for the devil. <sup>28</sup> Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. <sup>29</sup> Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear

Ephesians 4:25–29



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:15–20



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>22</sup> Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:22–27



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>28</sup> In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:28–33



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

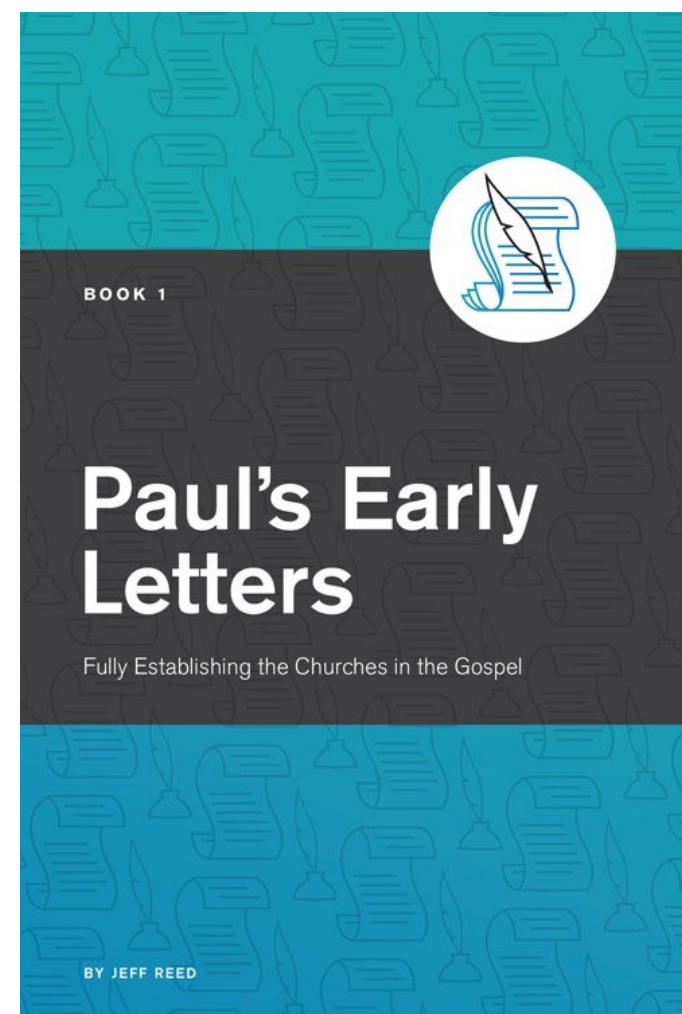
## The work of the ministry

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother” — this is the first commandment with a promise: <sup>3</sup> “so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” <sup>4</sup> And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

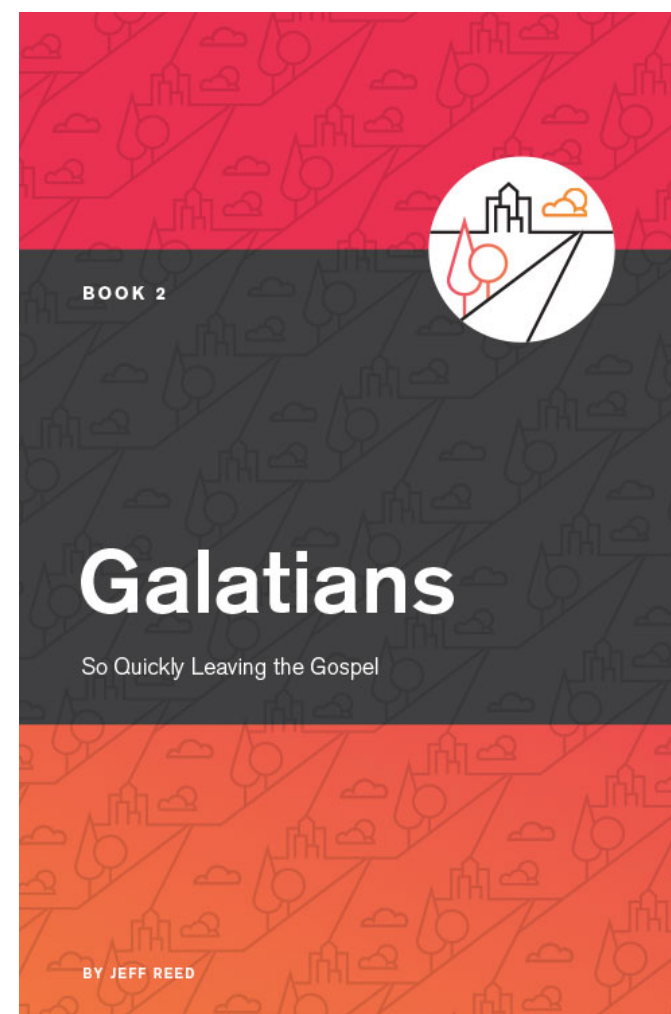
Ephesians 6:1–4



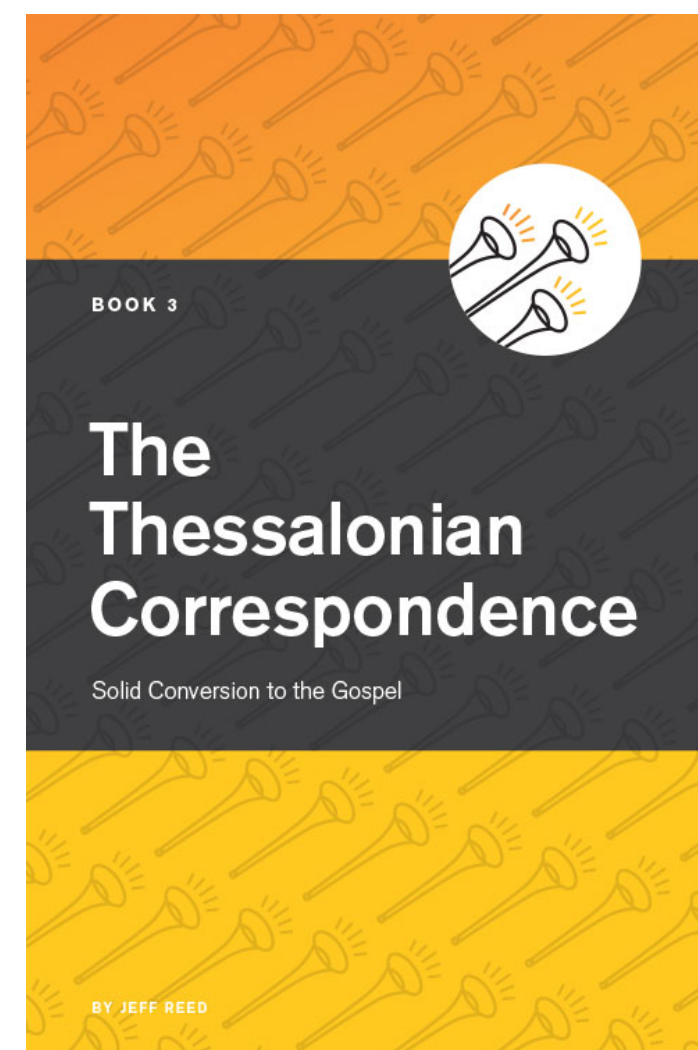
# Paul's Early Letters



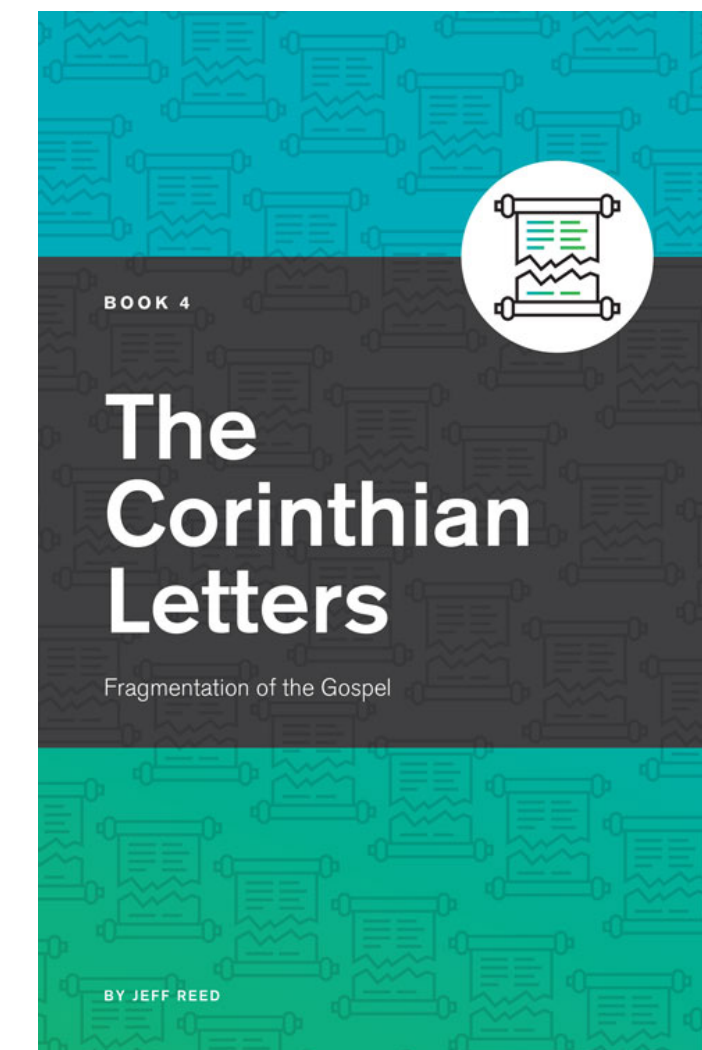
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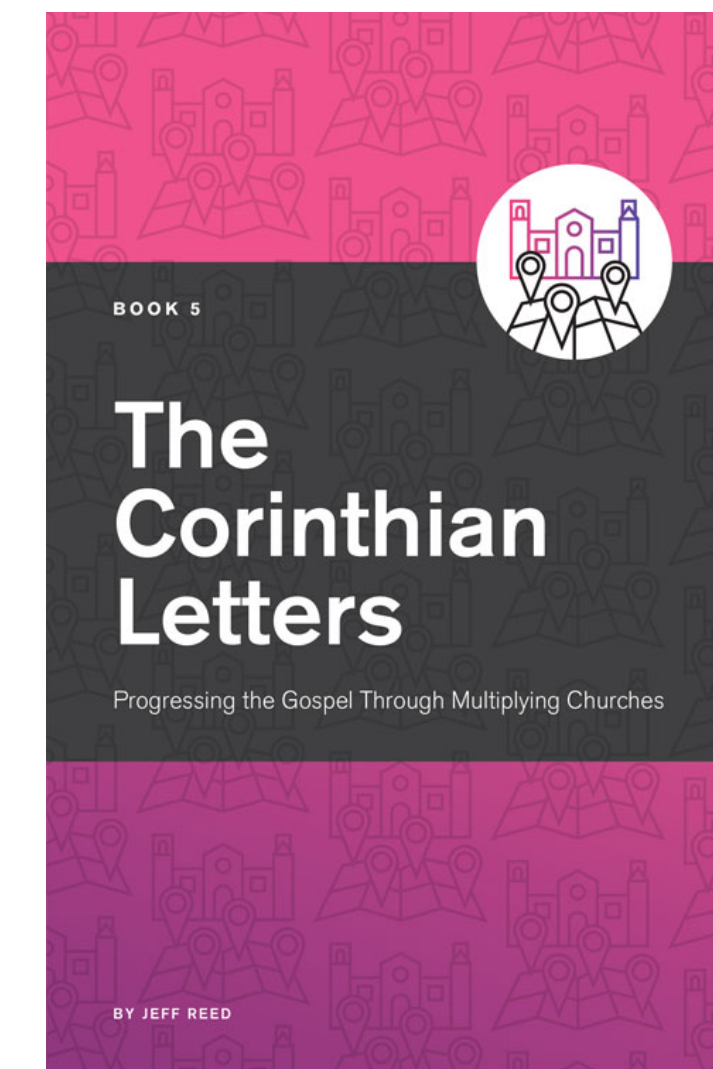
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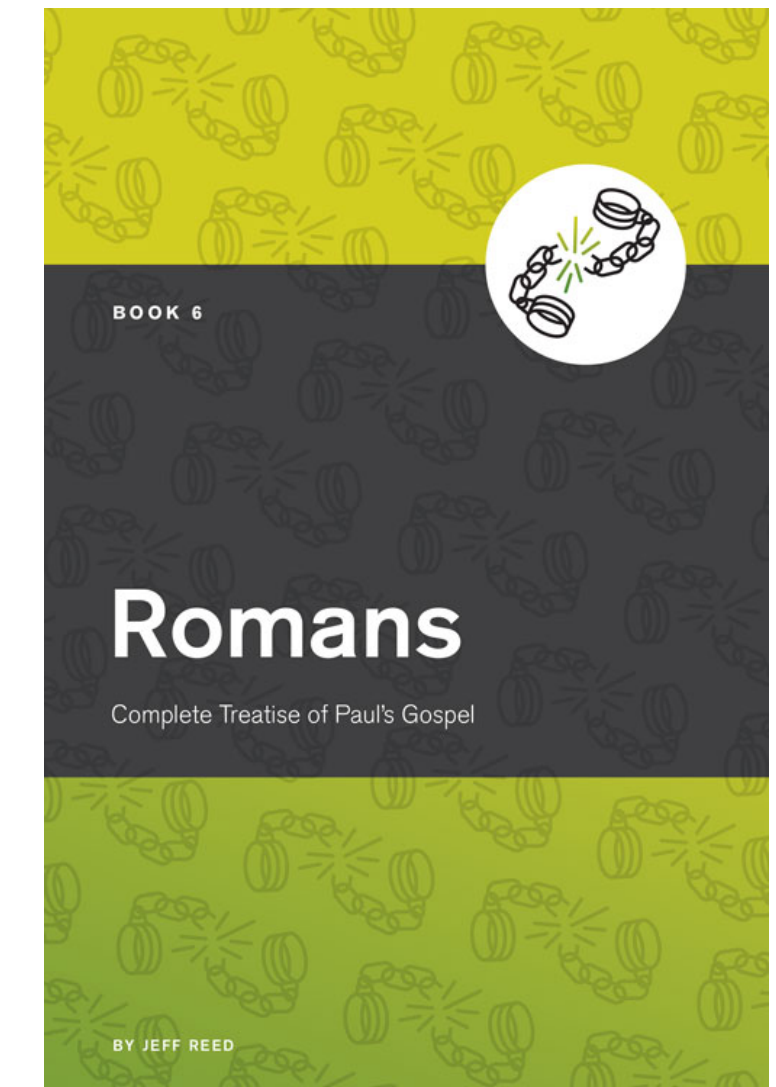
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Sept, 53



June, 56

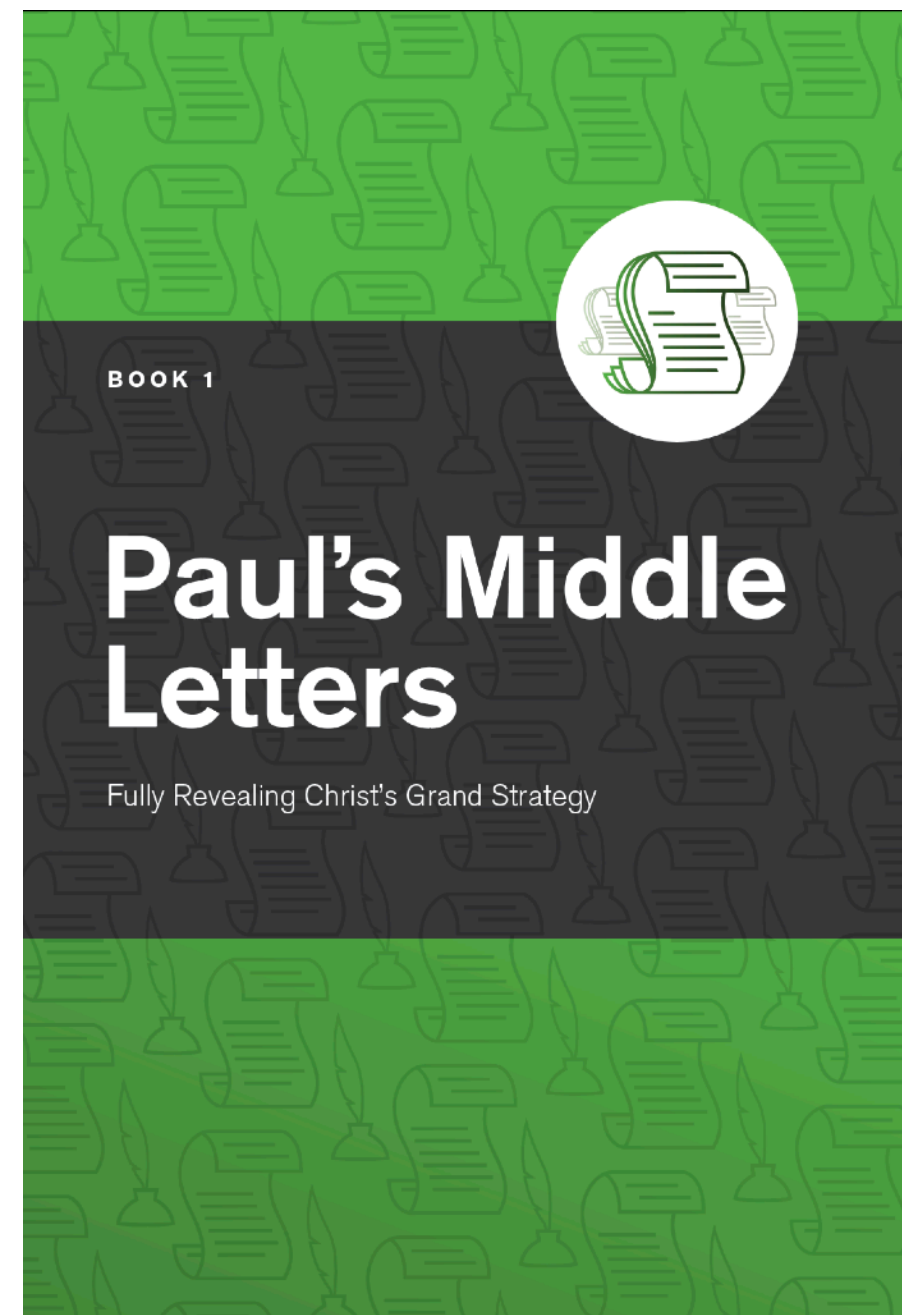


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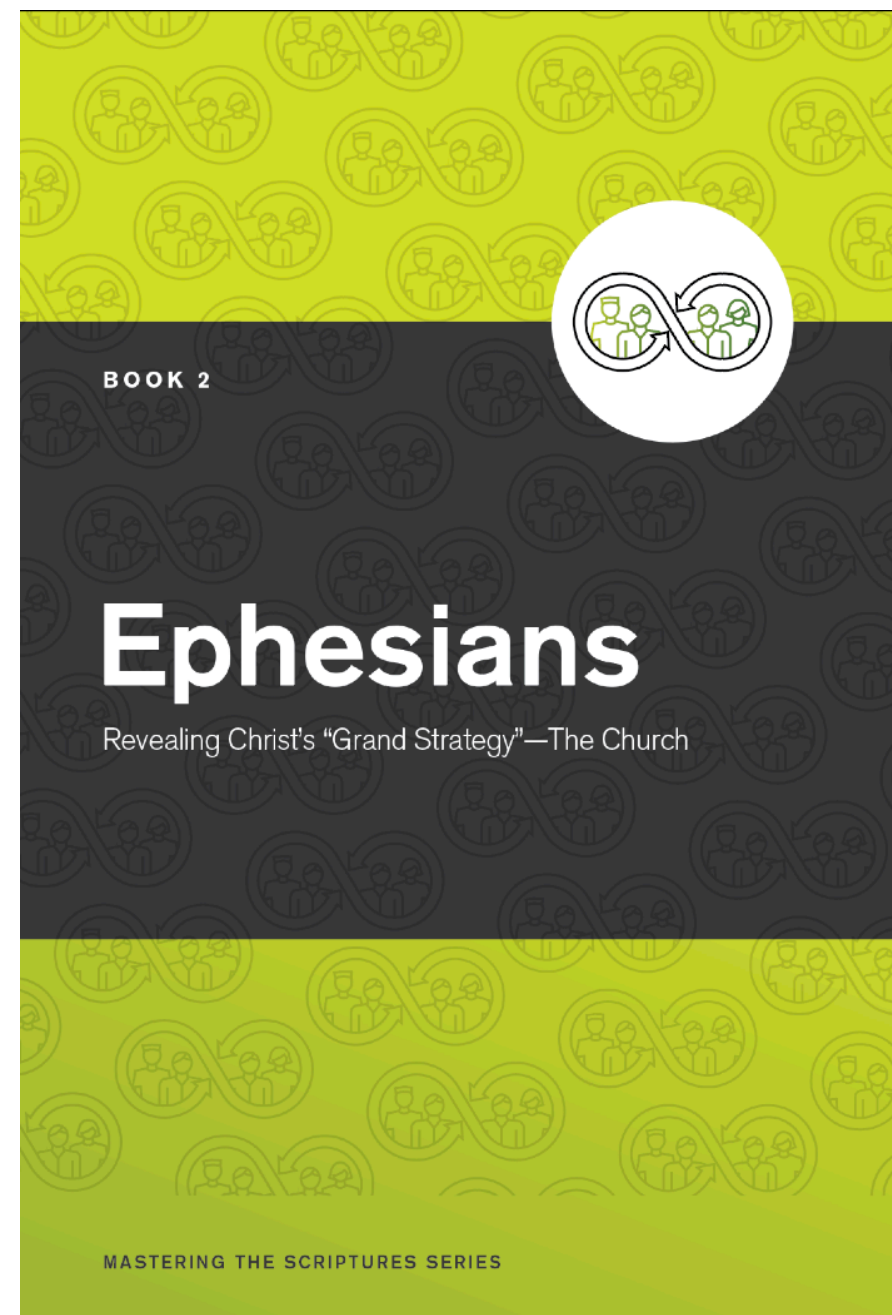




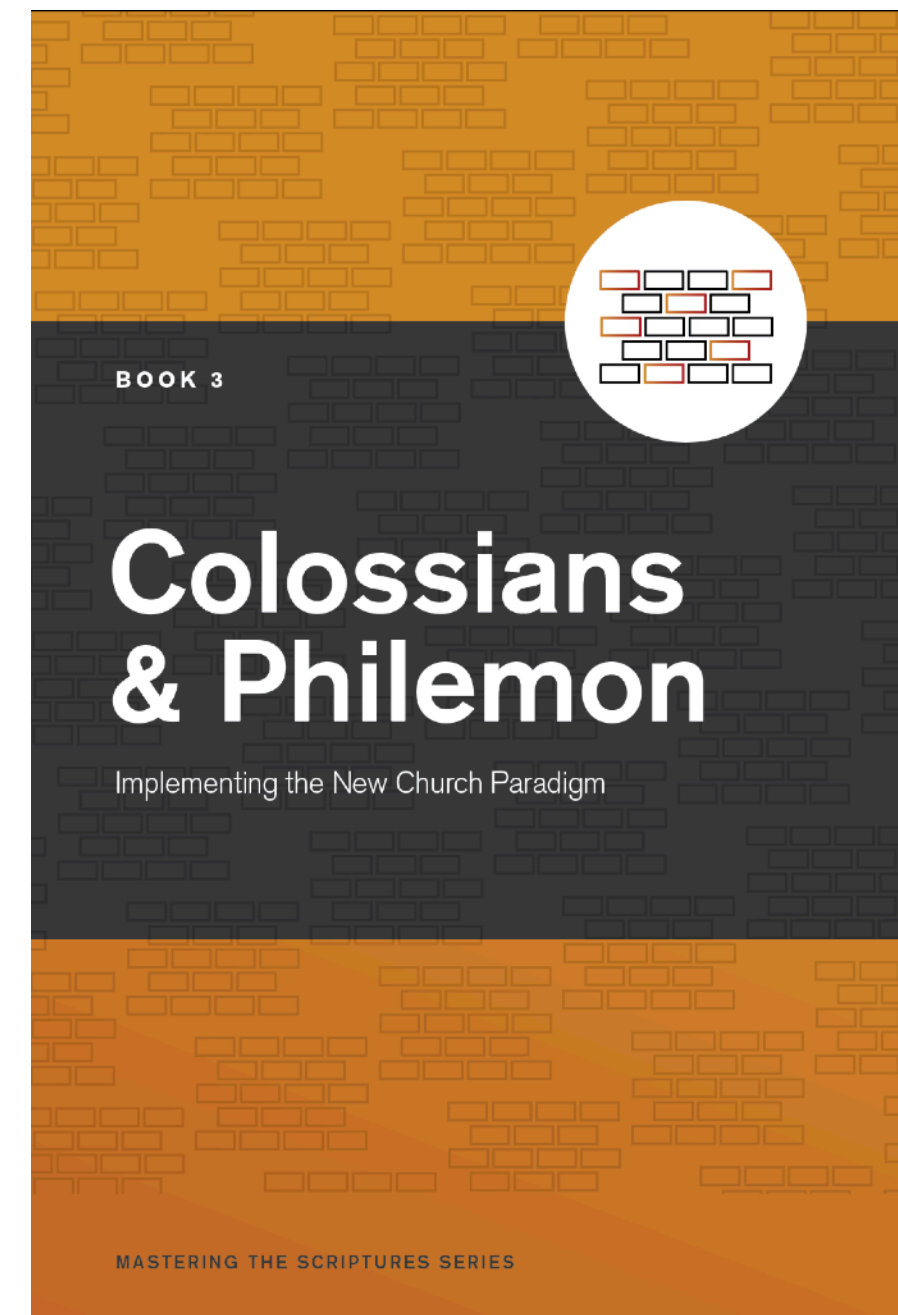
# Paul's Middle Letters



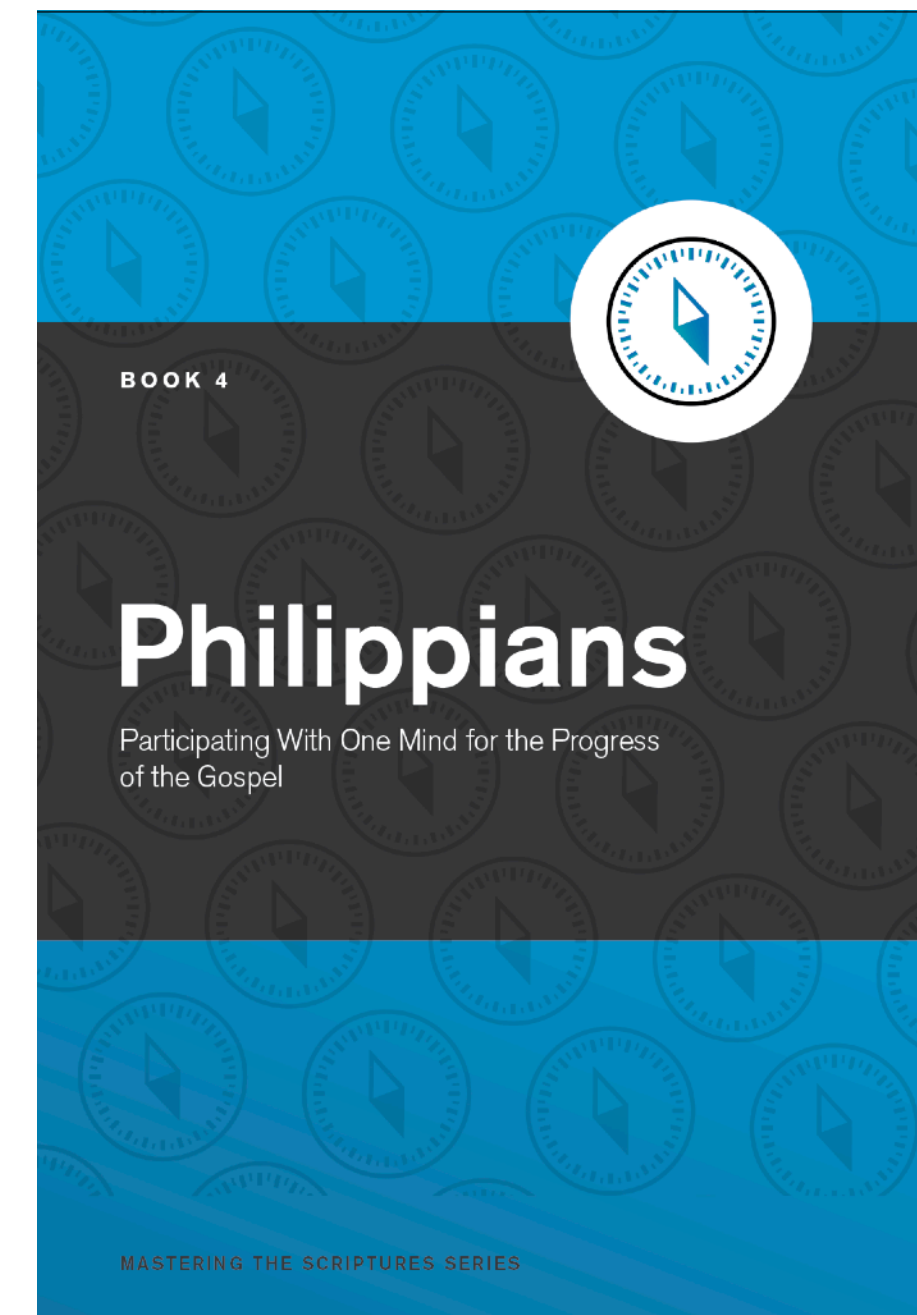
Feb, 60 to March, 62



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# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## Ephesians — Hub Churches

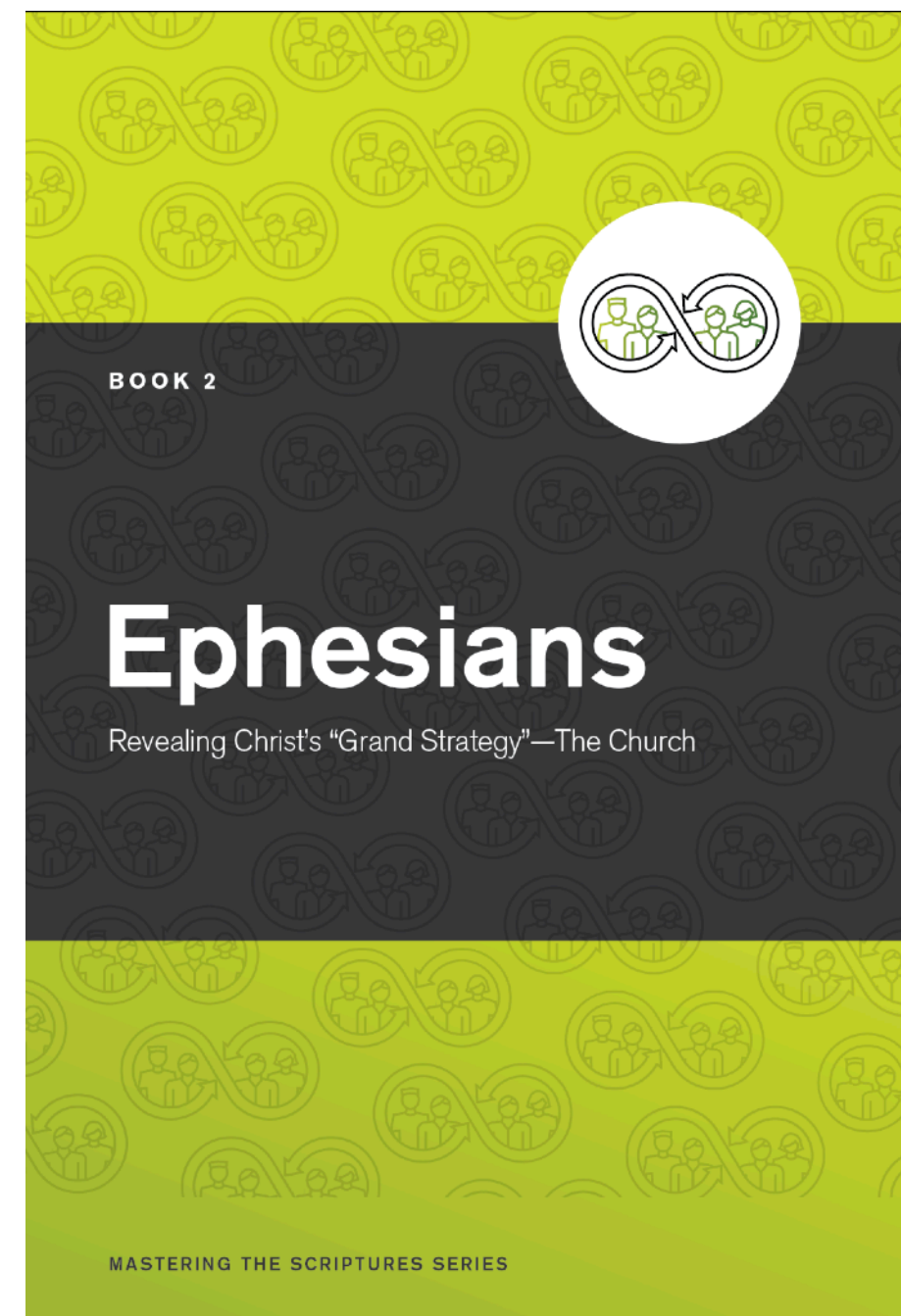
We began the second book in the series — Ephesians — in May.

It is very strategic — both in Paul's strategy and in these Middle Letters. It is the first of the four and contains the organizing center for the theology of the four together.





# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians



Session 1: Fully Grasping the  
“Grand Strategy”

Session 2: Understanding Our  
Calling (Our Stewardship)

Session 3: Building the  
Framework of the Global Church

Session 4: The Work of the  
Ministry

Session 5: Unleashing the Power  
of the Churches



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## Ephesians — Hub Churches

Ephesians: A manifesto revealing Christ's "grand strategy" — the Church — to his key "hub" churches in Ephesus, with a special challenge for the Ephesian churches to fully grasp the significance of their calling and to fully carry out all God intends for them.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

This letter is strategic in this collection of Paul's four middle letters. In this passage, we see that the Church is the center of Christ's plan—His grand strategy after inaugurating the kingdom.

The organizing center of these letters:

<sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup> and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup> so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:7–10



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Paul lays out his job description very clearly.

Paul's 2-fold job description:

1. Preach the gospel to the Gentiles (a 10-year battle for the gospel)
2. Fully reveal the heart of Christ's grand strategy—the Church

It is Christ's strategy for progressing the gospel. It will be the heart of His unfolding kingdom, and it will stun the rulers and authorities even in the heavenly places. It was a mystery (hidden) until this time.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

Then we looked at Paul's two large, similar prayers that almost bookend the first major section of the letter—1:3–3:21. Then we revisited that section and looked at both the big picture of our calling and the core elements.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

First Prayer: 1:15–23

Main idea: To be fully enlightened to truly know our calling and the power available to Christ and His church to accomplish God's purposes.

Second Prayer: 3:14–21

Main idea: To have the power to comprehend God's plan (Christ and His Church), that God might be glorified in the Church and in Christ.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

We saw the whole argument go like this:

- God developed a plan in Christ and His Church to accomplish His eternal purposes. 1:3–7
- God put His power to work in Christ, raising Him from the dead, putting Him over His coming kingdom and as head over the Church, which is now where God's power to accomplish His purposes resides. 1:15–23
- We are created for good works, as we become part of Christ and His Church. 2:1–10
- We are now members of God's household with one foundation laid by the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the cornerstone, and the whole structure of a global Church being built upon that foundation. 2:11–22



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

The whole argument goes like this:

- This mystery—of Christ and His Church as God's secret plan—has been hidden until now. But God chose Paul to make this plan clear, that through Christ and His Church God's wisdom would become clear to everyone—even the rulers and authorities in heavenly places. 3:1–13
- It is necessary for the Ephesians churches to fully understand this mystery—of Christ and His Church being central to God's plan—for the power to be unleashed in their churches and lives and for God to be glorified in the Church and in Christ Jesus. 3:14–21



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Paul's whole point then is this:

The Ephesian churches must fully understand Christ and His plan—the Church—in the context of God's plan empowering Christ (inaugurated through His resurrection and appointment as head of the Church), if they are going to experience this power in their churches.

This has huge implications for the Ephesian churches and for all churches built on this one foundation.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Now we are going to visit the section— 1:3–3:21 from the perspective of the big picture of our calling.

How do we know this should all be treated as one section?

1. Ephesians 4:1 treats it that way.
2. Structurally (literary design), Paul strategically frames the section with the two prayers.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

Key to Paul's first section—1:3–3:21

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

With the “therefore,” Paul is saying “in light of everything I just said in 1:3–3:21.”

So 1:3–3:21, in essence, is “the calling to which you have been called.”

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

So what is the big picture of our calling, and what are its key elements?

What is our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation?

Remember, fully realizing this big picture and these core elements is key to His power being unleashed in our churches.

We looked at a few key passages in this section to identify these core elements.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Elements of our calling (our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation)

1. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing—adoption as His children, forgiveness of our sins, made known to us His plans for the world, and giving us an incredible eternal inheritance, of which the down payment is the Spirit. 1:3–14
2. He has made us alive in Christ and seated us with Him (with our sins forgiven by grace), and He has specific works for us to do (collectively as churches and individually). 2:1–10
3. We are now the central part of this plan God has been unfolding (part of the “covenants of promise,” God’s big story) and are members of His household (the foundation being laid by the Apostles and prophets; Christ as the cornerstone)—the place where God dwells at this time. 2:19–22

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

Elements of our calling (our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation)

4. We are now part of God's plan (previously a mystery)—that is, part of Christ and His church—revealed through the Apostles and prophets through the Spirit, sharers in the promise of Christ (“covenants of promise”), members of one body. 3:1–6
5. In the church, we are now part of Christ's “grand strategy” to accomplish God's plan. It is a plan so amazing that not only nations but rulers and authorities in heavenly places will be amazed—part of progressing the gospel worldwide in powerful and abundant accomplishments. 3:7–10, 20, 21



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

The “big picture” of our calling (our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation)

We are central to the fulfillment of God's unfolding plan (i.e. the “covenants of promise”) — now revealed as being accomplished through Christ and His “grand strategy” the Church — and He will accomplish His eternal purposes in a powerful way through us. Therefore, we need to fully understand and invest our lives in Christ and His “grand strategy.”

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Implications of our calling (our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation): This is part of being “enlightened” —fully understanding.

1. We have been given an incredible, eternal inheritance by being adopted—far more than an orphan into a rich family. We have been adopted into God's family with an inheritance of unlimited value, in this life and the life to come. Therefore, we need to see this as our core identity that shapes our life planning.
2. Each one of us has a special role to play and work to do. This has huge implications for our life planning (i.e—Life<sup>n</sup> and for shaping our identity).
3. In this confusing world, we are given the privilege and confidence of knowing God's plan, Christ's “grand strategy.” This has huge implications for understanding the political world in which we live and the choices we all need to make as citizens in that environment.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Implications of our calling (our role, our station in life, our status or position in life, vocation): This is part of being “enlightened” — fully understanding.

4. Before we were not part of the “covenants of promise.” But now we are central to that plan and need to master the plan and play our part, as a lifetime stewardship.
5. We should expect God to demonstrate incredible power in our midst, far more than we could ever ask or expect.

# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

Then we will look carefully at Ephesians 4:1–16 and build on that foundation.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## Carefully laying the foundation and building the framework

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1–6

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

The goal is to maintain unity of the Spirit on a carefully laid foundation.

Carefully laying the foundation

- One body and one Spirit—It is the Spirit's job to actually empower the Church as we follow Christ's plan.
- One hope—We have a future in Christ's kingdom when He returns to reign, the Spirit being the down payment.
- One Lord—Christ is head of the Church and everything is under His administration, His rule.
- One faith—There is one body of teaching: the faith, the deposit, the sound doctrine, the teaching.
- One baptism—Everyone identifies with Christ and His community of faith—the Church.
- One God and Father of all—It is God's overall plan and purpose, He integrates every part.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Building the framework on the one foundation

Two key points — simple formula:

He gave key leaders — apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers

To equip the believers for the work of ministry



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Building the framework on the one foundation

Now let's think carefully through these two points.

Who are these leaders? And in what sense are they to equip the believers? What does this really mean?

Obviously, Paul and his team were working hard at ministry. We saw this in 2 Corinthians: conflicts without, fears within, sleepless nights, etc.

What did he and his team do?



# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

Building the framework on the one foundation

What did he and his team do?

They evangelized strategic cities

Formed the believers into churches

Entrusted them to leaders

Then they worked with the churches until they were mature.

Key churches served them as a base for expansion: Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Building the framework on the one foundation

Let's take Titus for example

1. Paul left him on the island of Crete to “set in order what remains” — fully establish the churches — first senior elders who have a firm grasp of the teaching, can teach and can refute those who try to upset the churches.
2. Set in order the “family of families” — older men, older women, younger women, younger men — intergenerational households.
3. Then engage in good occupations and meet pressing needs, so the gospel is adorned and churches locally multiply — the work of the ministry.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

Building the framework on the one foundation

Key points of Ephesians 4:11–16

1. The apostolic team (5-fold gifts) equips the saints for the ongoing work of the ministry—good occupations; pressing needs in community; local, spontaneous expansion of churches.
2. The apostolic team continues to build a “complex apostolic network”—giving local churches opportunity for global participation.
3. Key apostolic teams hub in key cities/churches for ongoing equipping and to solve problems/correct local leaders as needed.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

Now within the framework, let's broaden our understanding of the “work of the ministry” that we are all to do.

My thesis is that this entire section—4:17–6:9, his core teaching that we refer to as the Didache—is a big part of the work of this ministry that every member is to be fully engaged in.

We only have time here to look into a few key passage from the entire section



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>22</sup> You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22–24

# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

“to be renewed in the spirit of your mind”

“to clothe yourselves with the new self”

2 things are in mind here

- a new way of thinking
- a new lifestyle built around Christ and His grand strategy



# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

1. Develop your new lifestyle based on your new identity and renew your mind so that you think like Christ in everything – becoming fully established in your faith.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>25</sup> So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and do not make room for the devil. <sup>28</sup> Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. <sup>29</sup> Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear

Ephesians 4:25–29



# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

1. Develop your new lifestyle based on your new identity and renew your mind so that you think like Christ in everything, becoming fully established in your faith.
2. Building up other believers with your attitudes, honest conversation, and willingness to forgive other believers at every turn.
3. Labor and work honestly so you are able to give to the needy.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:15–20



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him

Colossians 3:16–17

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

The Colossians passage makes clear what is only inferred in the Ephesians passage.

What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit”?

1. Living your life skillfully — carefully stewarding your time around God and His purposes.
2. Building your priorities/lifestyle around the community of faith, not living for yourself and your own entertainment and enjoyment.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

There are some very interesting words in this little section (I am giving the sense of the semantic range of the Greek words)

1. Be careful how you live—2. not as unwise people but as wise—3. making the most of the time—4. understand what the will of the Lord is—kind of a formula

1. be careful how you live—see clearly/accurately how to conduct your life
2. as wise—wise mean skillful
3. making the most of your time—make good use of every opportunity
4. understand will of Lord—fully comprehend the design (grand strategy)  
remember Paul's prayers

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

There are some very interesting words in this little section (I am giving the sense of the semantic range of the Greek words)

Do not get drunk with wine — be filled with the Spirit — sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves,

Two main ideas here:

1. drunk with wine — self-focused lifestyle
2. filled with the Spirit — Aligning our lives around Christ and His Church allows the Spirit to transform us.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

This is the same as Romans 12:2

Romans 12:2: As we renew our minds the Spirit transforms us (Eph. 4:23)

Ephesians 5:15–20: As we carefully plan our lives around Christ and His grand strategy, being faithful to gather as church communities, the Spirit transforms (fills) us.

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

### Excursus

- Life<sup>n</sup> —Live carefully, with skill, using all your opportunities around Christ's grand strategy
- Encyclical at 2019 international conference—“Global Pentecostalism and the Holy Spirit: The Progress of the Gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

1. Develop your new identity and renew your mind so that you think like Christ in everything—becoming fully established in your faith.
2. Building up other believers with your attitudes, honest conversation and willingness to forgive other believers at every turn.
3. Labor and work honestly so as to be able to give to the needy.
4. Understand God's plan and work it out in all of your life choices, carefully planning your time and investing it in God's plan and purposes—that is the church.
5. Do not waste your time on partying, but gather together in community with believers as churches, filling your time with what the Spirit wants for our lives—a whole different lifestyle and priorities.

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

22 Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. 24 Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:22-27



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28 In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. 33 Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:28-33

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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 “so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” 4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4

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Don't miss this major point

The marriage is a picture of how much Christ loves the churches; so at the heart of the church at the center of Christ's grand strategy is the family, especially the marriage — so men need to step up and love their wives like Christ loves the church!!!!



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

1. Develop your new identity and renew your mind so that you think like Christ in everything—becoming fully established in your faith.
2. Build up other believers with your attitudes, honest conversation, and willingness to forgive other believers at every turn.
3. Labor and work honestly so as to be able to give to the needy.
4. Understand God's plan and work it out in all of your life choices, carefully planning your time and investing it in God's plan and purposes—that is the Church.
5. Do not waste your time on partying, but gather together in community with believers, filling your time with what the Spirit wants for our lives—a whole different lifestyle and priorities.

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

## The work of the ministry

6. Men, lead your households skillfully—loving your wife and helping her become all that God desires for her to become, shaping the lives your children around the teaching. Wives, help him accomplish that leadership, supporting him in every way you can.
7. Parents, carefully train your children—both the teaching and the lifestyle around that teaching—again, a heavy investment of time.

# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians

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<sup>5</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; <sup>6</sup> not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. <sup>7</sup> Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. <sup>9</sup> And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality

Ephesians 6:5–9



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7. Parents, carefully train your children—both the teaching and lifestyle around that teaching—again a heavy investment of time.
8. Understand that our occupations are part of “doing the will of God.” So even if those in authority over us are unreasonable, our work is part of the work of the ministry; we should realize we are serving Christ in our occupations.
9. Those in authority must also see those under their authority as “in ministry” and have the same worth and value in their work as you.

# Significance of Ephesians

Issue: Implications of every believer being “in ministry” — Ephesians 4:1–16

Questions:

1. What exactly does it mean to be “in the ministry”? Are people with “secular” jobs “in the ministry”?
2. Why is the concept of *only Ephesians 4:11 gifts (5-fold gifts) being the ones who are “in the ministry”* so devastating to churches? to the progress of the gospel?
3. How does this false concept of only the 5-fold gifted leaders being “in the ministry” distort pastors’ and missionaries’ perception of themselves today? of the average believer’s perception of themselves?
4. How does this distortion of the concept of the ministry explain why only a small portion of believers in churches are working hard in the ministry?



# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

So what is the effect on our churches of a false understanding of being in the ministry?

Here are just a few observations:

1. It distorts the self-understanding of pastors and missionaries of “being in the ministry” while others are not.
2. It creates a clergy-laity distinction that distorts our understanding of ministry and of being in “secular” jobs.
3. It is probably the main reason why 20% of the people in churches today do 80% of the work.
4. It devalues the work of every believer and puts it in the category of the work of laymen and women.

# Paul's Middle Letters – Ephesians

So what is the effect on our churches of a false understanding of being in the ministry?

Here are just a few observations:

5. It slows down the progress of the gospel and the spontaneous multiplication of churches – we plant sister churches who need a pastor and a building.
6. It weakens the significance of parents training their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

So what is the work of the ministry? How should we think about

Here are just a few observations

1. As men, leading our homes, helping our wives become all God intends for them, and training our children—is the work of the ministry.
2. As parents, training our children in this teaching and shaping their lives around it—is the work of the ministry.
3. Carefully stewarding our own development and using all of our time wisely, in everything we do—is the work of the ministry.
4. Our occupational work, which absorbs a lot of our time—is the work of the ministry.
5. Gathering together as churches and building each other up—is the work of the ministry.



# Paul's Middle Letters — Ephesians



What is going on here?!!!!

- I was in France and Albania; then back to Little Rock, Buffalo, and Charlotte; last week in Orlando and Paterson, NJ; and next week in India. Michael was in China, Steve was in India, Bill was in Indonesia
- What is happening here? You are doing the work of the ministry: Randy and Nancy (and teams of you)— 13 in Re:BUILD; Nate, James and Todd— excellent Sunday mornings; how many weddings?; 20 house churches and planting working at high level, etc. etc.



# Paul's Middle Letters—Ephesians

All of you are “in the ministry.”

You say yes, but not in “full-time” ministry? That is right. You are not in “full-time” ministry—you in 24/7 ministry

You are in ministry when you are doing your occupations, when you are gathered as churches, when you are in your homes with your children, when you are doing your *Life<sup>n</sup>*, First Principles and Leadership courses, when you are on a date night with your wife, even when you are on vacation you are doing the work of the ministry—orienting your whole life. That is what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

That's what amazes leaders when they are here. They see not 20% doing the work of the ministry, not 80%, but everyone.