

EPHESIANS

A PRACTICAL APPLICATION



OF THE CHRISTLIKE LIFE

A Seven-Session Bible Study for Men
by Steven P. Eason

Ephesians

A Practical Application of the Christlike Life

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Ephesians

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introduction

Men's BIBLE Study

The Reasons for This Study

*We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life. . . .*

*The same Spirit
who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture . . .*

These words from “A Brief Statement of Faith,” adopted officially by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1991, state a primary conviction of Presbyterians. Presbyterians believe that God’s Spirit actually speaks to us through the inspired books of the Bible, “the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God’s Word” to each of us (*Book of Order*, PC(U.S.A.), G-14.0516e(2)).

Recent studies, however, have shown that many men know very little of what the Bible says; yet many do express a desire to learn. To help meet that need, this Bible study guide has been prepared at the request and with the cooperation of the National Council of Presbyterian Men of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its president, Dr. Youngil Cho.

The Suggested Pattern of Study

Men may use this guide in a variety of weekly settings: men’s breakfasts, lunches in a downtown setting, evening study cells in homes, and many others. The material provides guidance for seven one-hour sessions. To facilitate open discussion, it assumes a small group of men (no more than twelve), one or preferably two of whom might be designated as leaders. Each session is Bible study; there must be a Bible for each man. The Bible, not this study guide, is the textbook.

The men are not required to do study outside the group sessions, though suggestions are given for such study. To be enrolled in this study, however, each man is expected to commit himself to make every effort to attend and participate fully in all seven sessions.

The pattern of study is to be open discussion. Agreement by all to follow seven rules will make such study most effective.

1. We will treat no question as stupid. Some men will have more experience in Bible study than others, but each man must feel free to say what he thinks without fear of being ridiculed.

2. We will stick to the Scripture in this study. The group has gathered for Bible study, not to pool their own ideas on other matters, however good those ideas are.

3. We will regard the leader(s) as “first among equals.” Leaders in these studies are guides for group discussion, not authorities to tell the group what the Bible means. But following their study suggestions will facilitate learning.

4. We will remember that we are here to hear God speak. Presbyterians believe that the Spirit that spoke to the biblical writers now speaks to us through their words. We do not come simply to learn about the Bible, but with minds and hearts expecting to receive a message from God.

5. We will listen for “the question behind the question.” Sometimes a man’s gestures and tone of voice may tell us more of what he is feeling than his words do. We will listen with sympathy and concern.

6. We will agree to disagree in love. Open discussion is an adventure full of danger. Men will differ. None of us will know the whole truth or be right all the time. We will respect and love and try to learn from each other even when we think the other person is wrong.

7. We will make every effort to attend and participate faithfully in all seven sessions of this study. Participation will involve making notes in the spaces provided for your own answers to questions relating to the study and from time to time sharing with others your answers, even when you worry that they are not the “right” answers.

Some Suggestions for the Leader

Those who lead groups in this study should be especially aware of the foregoing seven “rules.”

Though two leaders are not required, having a team of leaders often helps to open up the group for freer discussion by all its members. One leader might be responsible for introducing the study at a given session and for summarizing other parts of the study where such summaries are suggested. The other leader might take more responsibility for guiding the discussion, helping to see that each man who wishes to has a chance to speak, helping to keep the study centered on the Scripture, and moving the group along to the next subject when one has been dealt with sufficiently. The leaders might also alternate in their responsibilities or share them equally.

This material is a guide for study within the group. The study material for each session is to be distributed at the time of that session. The study guide for each session is in the form of worksheets. Each man should have a pencil or a pen. Spaces are provided for each student to make brief notes for his answers to questions on the passages to be studied. A good deal of the time may be spent as the men quietly, individually, decide on and note their own answers to these questions. Some are designed simply to guide the students in looking at key passages. Others are intended to help the student think about what these passages mean to us today. The real basis for this study should be the ideas that come in the times when the men are quietly studying their Bibles and deciding individually on their answers to these questions. If a man has made a note on his sheet concerning his answer to a question, he has had to do some thinking about it. And he is more likely to be willing to tell the group his answer.

There should also be time, of course, for the group to share and compare answers to these questions. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit seems most often to be manifest within a group. God speaks to us authoritatively through Scripture, but often what God says to us in Scripture becomes clearest when voiced by a Christian friend. We learn through each other.

Each session ends with an Afterword. During the session the leader may call attention to things in the Afterword when they seem appropriate.

Among the many characteristics of a good discussion leader are these: (1) He tries to give everyone who wishes a chance to speak without pressuring anyone to speak who does not want to. (2) He does not monopolize the discussion himself and tries tactfully to prevent anyone else from doing so unduly. (3) He is a good listener, helping those who speak to feel that they have been heard. (4) He helps to keep the group focused on the Scripture. (5) He tries to watch for signs that show that the group is or is not ready to move on to the next question.

This kind of study can generally be carried on much more effectively with the participants sitting informally in a circle or around a table rather than in straight rows with the leader up front. Frequently, especially in a large group, you may want to divide into groups of three or four, or simply let each man compare his answers with those of the man sitting next to him.

Often, more questions have been given than some groups are likely to cover in one hour. If you don't answer them all, don't worry. Pick the ones that seem most interesting and let the rest go.

The questions in this study guide are phrased in various ways and come in different orders, but basically they are intended to help the participants think through three things: (1) What does this passage say? (2) What does it mean? (3) What does it mean now to you? It is our conviction as Presbyterians that when believers study together God's word, in an atmosphere of prayerful expectancy, God will speak to them.

Throughout each study you will find Scripture quotations. These are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. While this version is used throughout this study guide, it may prove beneficial for each participant to use the version with which he feels most comfortable.

Testing has shown that the discussion that arises in each study may cause the session to last longer than the intended sixty minutes. A clock figure has been placed in each study to suggest where it might be divided into two sessions. Discussion is at the heart of these studies and should not be sacrificed for the sake of presenting the lesson exactly as suggested in this study guide.

In the letter inviting the writers of these studies to attempt this work, Dr. Marvin Simmers, having recognized some difficulties, added, "Remember, we are not alone!" The leader also may take courage from that assurance.

Ephesians

INTRODUCTION

To the Leader(s): It would be helpful to distribute the study books prior to the first session. Ask the members of the group to read all of Ephesians along with this Introduction before coming to the first session.

When my *Golf Digest* comes in the mail I quickly open it to the “how-to” section to get the newest tips on improving my golf game. (They haven’t sent me the right tips yet!) The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians is a “how-to” letter for all Christians to read.

My suggestion is that you read the letter in its entirety (only 155 verses!) before your first meeting. Try to imagine yourself being the recipient of such a letter. What is the writer trying to say to you?

Although the letter now bears the title The Letter of Paul to Ephesians, questions concern both the writer and the receiver of this letter. Who wrote this letter? We question whether Paul was the author for several reasons:

1. The author writes, “I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus . . .” (1:15). In Acts 19:1–10 we are told that Paul was the pastor of the Ephesus church for at least two years. Paul certainly had a more intimate knowledge of the people of Ephesus than simply hearing of their faith.

2. The style of writing and the vocabulary are different from those of Paul’s other writings. William Ramsay notes:

Indeed, one enterprising critic fed Ephesians into a computer and received a printout to the effect that Paul would never have used those words and phrases.

In fact, some eighty-two words found in Ephesians are not found elsewhere in Paul’s letters, and thirty-eight are found nowhere else in the New Testament.¹

There are other reasons why Paul may not have written this letter. Ralph P. Martin suggests that the letter “was written by a well-known disciple and companion of Paul who published this letter under the apostle’s aegis either during the apostle’s final imprisonment or (more probably) after his death. He did so by gathering a compendium of Paul’s teaching on the theme ‘Christ-in-his-Church,’ and he added to this body of teaching a number of liturgical elements.”²

If Paul did not write this letter, it has enough in it to be Pauline! One of Paul’s key issues in most all of his writings is that of inclusivity. “For God shows no partiality” (Rom. 2:11). This text, with various moderations on the theme, is preached time and time again by the apostle Paul.

In Ephesians, the writer puts much emphasis on inclusivity and the body of Christ which includes Gentiles and Jews. “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (2:13). This theme, which is Paul’s strong suite, permeates Ephesians. If Paul did not write Ephesians, it has enough Pauline thought in it to be Pauline!

To whom was this letter written? Ramsay notes that “the oldest Greek manuscripts of Ephesians have no name for the destination of this letter. Only later did scribes fill in the blank with the words ‘in Ephesus.’”³

If no name was assigned to the original text, the letter could have been a “circular letter” that was to be distributed to a number of churches. If that is the case, we have some explanation for the impersonal tone of the letter, “I have heard of your faith” (Eph. 1:15). It would also explain why the letter does not address any specific problems that would characterize a local congregation. Ephesians is more general in its content.

The letter is included as a part of our Scripture. In that sense, its message is not limited by its author or by its audience. It now belongs also to us.

How will we read it? The first part of the letter focuses on what God has accomplished in Christ. The letter then turns to a practical application of a Christlike life in the church, in marriage, in parenting, with earthly masters, and against evil. It is a “how-to” letter.

I think people of faith would agree that it has never been easy to be a Christian. When I say that, I remember John the Baptist having his head served on a silver platter at someone’s birthday party! It’s never been easy.

It’s not easy now either. In a conference for pastors of large Presbyterian (U.S.A.) churches, Jack Stewart of Princeton Seminary made this observation: “In a survey of 800 confirmands between the years 1965 and 1985, we (the Presbyterian, U.S.A.) discovered that less than one-third are now involved in any congregation. During those formative years, we failed to teach them what was so special about Christianity.”⁴

1. William M. Ramsay, *The Westminster Guide to the Books of the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. 454.

2. Ralph P. Martin, *Interpretation: Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), p. 4.

3. Ramsay, p. 454.

4. Jack Stewart, “Futures in the Congregation . . .” (Presbyterian in Large-Church Conference, Orlando, Florida, February 3–7, 1997).

That's not all the good news! Stewart went on to say, "It is estimated that by the year 2000, only 10 percent of our denomination will be under thirty years of age and only 1 percent of those will be males!"

We're shrinking. We're particularly losing men. Ephesians can be read as a practical application of a Christlike life. This letter is about living the Christian faith. The huge words of this small letter strike at the core of our relationship with God, the church, our spouses, our children, authority figures, and even our enemies. How are we going to live the Christlike life in all those relationships?

It ultimately doesn't matter whether Paul wrote it or the Ephesians received it. We need it! It's not easy being Christlike in our day.

You have a golden opportunity to quickly open Ephesians to the "how-to" section to get tips on living out your faith. In this case, the right tips have been sent to you. Enjoy!

The chart below will help you to see Ephesians as it flows from the plan of God to how we live out that plan.

<p style="text-align: center;">GOD'S PLAN TO UNITE ALL IN CHRIST'S CHURCH⁵</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"He has made known to us the mystery of his will . . . in Christ . . . to gather up all things in him" (1:9-10).</i></p>			
<p>1:1 A Lyrical Celebration of God's Plan to Unite All Peoples in Christ's Church</p> <p>Praise to God for choosing to include us in God's plan, 1:1-10</p> <p>Early (Jewish) Christians and later (Gentile) converts share in the Spirit, 1:11-14</p> <p>A prayer that they will understand this plan of God, 1:15-23</p>	<p>2:1 The Working Out of God's Plan in the Actual Experience of the Gentile Readers, Now Equally Included in the Church</p> <p>They have been saved by God's grace, 2:1-10</p> <p>Now they are united with Jewish Christians in the church, 2:11-22</p>	<p>3:1 Paul's Prayerful Concern That They Share His Vision of God's Plan and Be Strengthened by It</p> <p>Paul's concern to share his insight into this plan of God, 3:1-13</p> <p>Paul's prayer for his readers: understanding and strength, 3:14-21</p>	<p>4:1 Four Resulting Charges to Gentile Converts</p> <p>Promote the church's unity, 4:1-16</p> <p>Break with pagan ways, 4:17-5:20</p> <p>Manifest Christian unity through Christian family life, 5:21-6:9</p> <p>Be good soldiers in God's army, the church, 6:10-20</p> <p>Concluding personal note and benediction, 6:21-24</p>
<p>Author: Paul? (Most modern critical scholars believe it is by a later disciple of Paul.) Recipients: Gentile converts (in Ephesus? Ephesus is not named in the earliest manuscripts.) Date: A.D. 64? (Most put it a few years later, after Paul's death.) Occasion: Paul is in prison (actually or in the memory of a later writer). Purpose: To celebrate the unity of the church and to guide new converts in understanding the church and living as good church members⁵</p>			

5. Ramsay, p. 453.

The first session will be an overview of Ephesians. We need to get the whole picture before we break it down in parts. Each of the lessons is made up of two exercises: (1) “From the Book” and (2) “From the Heart.” The Afterword at the end of each session will take us into our *Book of Confessions*. I have also provided Suggested Readings at the end of each session that can be used as daily devotionals throughout the week.

Additional Helps

The only materials necessary for leading this study are Bibles for all group members and this study guide. If you wish to have additional resources available, check with your pastor(s) or local library.

The following commentaries give good verse-by-verse information:

William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976).

Ralph P. Martin, *Interpretation: Ephesians Colossians, and Philemon* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

Also helpful for a quick overview is

William M. Ramsay, *The Westminster Guide to the Books of the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

session *one*

An Overview of EPHESIANS

To the Leader(s):

1. If this is the first time the men have been together as a group, take a few minutes to allow each man to give his name and to make a one-sentence statement about his expectations for this series.

2. As leader, you may want to review the introductory pages of this study booklet before beginning the first session. Give a brief summary in some opening comments to the group. Explain how the group works, the need for commitment, openness, respect, and the like.

3. Divide the group into two parts. Have them turn back to the Introduction to Ephesians. Assign one group the task of reading the section about Who wrote this letter? Assign the other group the task of reading the section, To whom was this letter written?

Now, let each group briefly report their findings to the other group. This will give everyone an idea concerning the issues surrounding the authorship and reception of this document.

Introduction

The purpose of this session will be to get an overview of Ephesians. (There are only 155 verses!) We're going to do this by playing various games. Don't worry, these won't be a waste of time! Spinning off of games like "What's My Line?" "Name That Tune" and "Trivial Pursuit," we will become very familiar with this letter and its message for us.

Exercise A: What's My Verse?

Let's play the game "What's My Verse?" Ephesians is loaded with familiar verses. Quickly write down the most familiar verse from each chapter. Let each man share his selection with the group.

Chapter 1:

Chapter 2:

Chapter 3:

Chapter 4:

Chapter 5:

Chapter 6:

Exercise B: Name that Theme!

Can you "Name that Theme"? As a group, list the major theme of each chapter in Ephesians.

Chapter 1:

Chapter 2:

Chapter 3:

Chapter 4:

Chapter 5:

Chapter 6:



* EXERCISE C: EPHESIANS PURSUIT!

How well do you know what has been written to the Ephesians? Here's your chance to show your knowledge of trivia.

To the leader(s): Read each question and have the group respond. Keep score of who gets the most correct answers. Each question is worth 10 points for a total of 100 points.

Scan Ephesians for the answers.

1. What do we receive through the blood of Christ?
2. By what and through what have we been saved?
3. Who were the "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel"?
4. According to Ephesians, where was Paul when he wrote this letter?
5. What is the purpose of the offices in the church?
6. How are we to "speak the truth"?
7. What is the condition placed on anger for the Christian?
8. What is our alternative to getting "drunk with wine"?
9. What are husbands called to do to their wives? (Be careful!)
10. What does the "helmet" in the "armor of God" represent?

Answers:

1. redemption (1:7) 2. grace/fairth (2:8) 3. Gentiles (2:11-12)
4. prison (3:1) 5. "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (4:12) 6. in love (4:15) 7. "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (4:26) 8. "be filled with the Spirit" (5:18)
9. "love your wives" (5:25) 10. Salvation (6:17)

Closing Exercise

Time to go! Will you share with the group one new thing you learned in this session? Allow each man to share one new insight that he gained today. Close the meeting by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

In preparation for next week's session, here are some Suggested Readings. These make good daily devotionals.

Day 1: Read Eph. 1:1-14. Meditate on what God has done for us.

Day 2: Read Eph. 1:15-23. What is the work of Christ?

Day 3: Read Eph. 2:1-10. What separates you from God? What brings you together with God?

Day 4: Read Eph. 2:11-22. Meditate on the work of Christ.

Day 5: Read Eph. 3:1-6. Why has the writer written this letter?

Day 6: Read Eph. 3:7-13. Why do we "lose heart"?

Day 7: Read Eph. 3:14-21. What does the writer want for the reader?

Afterword

William Barclay writes:

The key thought of Ephesians is the gathering together of all things in Jesus Christ. . . . without Christ there is nothing but disunity and disharmony . . . man is divided from men; class from class; nation from nation; ideology from ideology; Gentile from Jew.

In every man there is a tension; every man is a walking civil war, torn between the desire for good and the desire for evil; he hates his sins and loves them at one and the same time.

Worst of all there is disharmony between God and man. Man, who was meant to be in fellowship with God, is estranged from him.

So, then, in this world without Christ, there is nothing but disunity . . . The central thought of Ephesians is the realization of the disunity in the universe and the conviction that it can become unity only when everything is united with Christ.¹

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 66.

session *two*

Practical Application #1

BEING CHRIST-IAN

Eph. 1:1—3:21

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually in the group.

To be a *Christ-ian* is to be Christlike. We are to have the characteristics of Christ. That is mind-boggling! Why would any of us ever call ourselves *Christ-ian*? How presumptuous!

That's where Ephesians begins, with our relationship with God through Christ. That's where *Christian identity* begins—with Christ.

It's interesting how the church has divided itself into so many fragments. We have liberals and conservatives, pro-lifers and pro-choicers. We have the Black church and the white church. We have divisions over race, sex, age, class, geographical region, and theology.

Underneath all our divisions lies the question, What is it to be a Christian? What is it to have the characteristics of Christ? Can Christ be so divided?

Ephesians addresses division in the early church. The Christians in Ephesus were evidently Gentiles (Eph. 2:11). The letter was written to promote unity. In Eph. 2:14, we read, "For he (Christ) is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups (Jew/Gentiles) into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us."

This session is about our relationship with Christ. That relationship is foundational to our relationships with each other. Walls are broken down by Christ! Our relationship with Christ spills over into all of our other relationships, which is why we begin with it.

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

Quickly read over Eph. 1—3. In the space provided in the next column, make a list of things that Christ does. What are the functions of Christ?

Note the verse(s).

1. Example: God adopts us as his children through Jesus Christ (1:5).

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Now share your findings with one another and discuss the significance. What is the overall picture the writer is painting of Christ? What new insight do you gain about Christ? (Spend a fair amount of time here. This is important!)

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

A relationship encompasses the total person. Relationships tug on our emotions and on our intellect. Relationships are lived out through our physical bodies and our mental processes. We bring our head and our heart to a relationship.

Is anything different in our relationship with Christ? Why would it be? If we are truly in a relationship with Christ, that relationship encompasses everything that we are.

Below are a few universal statements that we often hear when folks speak of their relationship with Christ. The leader can read each statement aloud and then let the group respond to it. How does it strike you? What bothers you about that statement? What strikes a cord in you, mentally or emotionally? Think of these statements in light of what Ephesians has said about the role and function of Christ. (Feel free to take a few minutes to jot down your reactions.)

1. Jesus is the Lord of my life.

2. Jesus and God are the same.

3. Jesus died for my sins.

4. Are you saved by the blood of Jesus?

5. Just ask Jesus to come into your heart.

6. No one comes to the Father except by me (Jesus).

7. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

8. "I pray that . . . Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . ." (Eph. 3:16–17).

9. Who is your Lord and Savior?

10. Are you a Christian?

Share some ways you are comfortable and/or uncomfortable talking about your relationships with Christ.



* CLOSING EXERCISE

It's time to go! Quickly go around the group and ask each member to share a new insight learned from today's lesson.

I was impressed by

Use the Lord's Prayer, again, to close this session.

In preparation for next week's session, here are some Suggested Readings:

Day 1: Read Eph. 4:1–7. Meditate on the word "humility" all day.

Day 2: Read Eph. 4:8–14. Think all day on the phrase, "We must no longer be children . . ."

Day 3: Read Eph. 4:15–21. How can you "speak the truth in love" today?

Day 4: Read Eph. 4:22–28. What is your "former way of life"?

Day 5: Read Eph. 4:29–5:3. Think about this all day: "Let no evil come out of your mouths . . ."

Day 6: Read Eph. 5:4–10. Live with this today: "Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord."

Day 7: Read Eph. 5:11–20. Meditate on this all day: ". . . be filled with the Spirit."

Afterword

When was the last time you read from *The Book of Confessions*? The *Confessions* comprise one-half of our constitution as Presbyterians. The Afterword at the end of the remaining sessions will be a nugget of wisdom from our *Confessions*.

The Heidelberg Catechism was completed in 1562. It was a document hammered out between the Lutherans and the Reformed Christians over the issue of Communion and the bodily presence of Christ.

Q.31. Why is he called *Christ*, that is, the *Anointed One*?

A. Because he is ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be *our chief Prophet and Teacher*, fully revealing to us the secret purpose and will of God concerning our redemption; to be *our only High Priest*, having redeemed us by the one sacrifice of his body and ever interceding for us with the Father; and to be *our eternal King*, governing us by his Word and Spirit, and defending and sustaining us in the redemption he has won for us.

Q.32 But why are you called a Christian?

A. Because through faith I share in Christ and thus in his anointing, so that I may confess his name, offer myself a living sacrifice of gratitude to him, and fight against sin and the devil with a free and good conscience throughout his life and hereafter rule with him in eternity over all creatures.

—Heidelberg Catechism, *The Book of Confessions*

session *three*

Practical Application #2

BEING THE CHURCH

Eph. 4:1-16

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually by the group.

Do you remember when the men's church school class used to be a huge group in the church? Perhaps you have seen one of those pictures in the men's class that shows a group of fifty to a hundred men dressed in their Sunday best, standing out by one of the church buildings.

Where did all those guys go? What has happened to the relationships between men and the church? The statistics tell us that as the devoted men of the '40s and '50s die, there are no replacements coming in their place. This is serious.

Today's session focuses upon our relationship with the church. Ephesians has a classic chapter on the role and function of the church. We need to learn Eph. 4 *by heart!* First, let's learn it *by the book.*

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

What does Ephesians say about the church? What do you need to know about the church? Why is the church so important? What's the big deal?

We're going to focus on Eph. 4:11-13.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

To the leader(s): Divide the group into pairs and have them spread out. Work on the following in pairs.

Using Eph. 4:11-13, answer the following. Create your own catechism!

Q.1. What are the gifts that God gives?

A. _____

Q.2. What is the central purpose of the gifts? (Use Ephesians' wording). (Hint: The answer has nine words!)

A. _____

Q.3. Who are the saints?

A. _____

Q.4. Who equips the saints?

A. _____

Q.5. For what purpose are the saints equipped?

A. _____

Q.6. What is the work of ministry? (Use Ephesians' wording.)

A. _____

Q.7. To what end do we "build up the body of Christ"? How do we know when it is built up?

A. _____

Q.8. So what is the function of the church?

A. _____

To the leader(s): Call the group back together and have them quickly share their answers. Call out the questions and allow the group to respond.

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

Would you like to take a self-test on your relationship with the church? Our *Book of Order* outlines the involvement of a “faithful member.” (*Book of Order*, G–5.01012) Take the test and see where you stand! (No cheating!)

“A faithful member accepts Christ’s call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of his Church. Such involvement includes”:

(Rank yourself: 1 = low, 5 = high)
(Circle one.)

1. Proclaiming the good news.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
2. Taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
3. Praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian church.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
4. Supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
5. Participating in the governing responsibilities of the church.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
6. Demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
7. Responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
8. Living responsibly in the personal, familial, vocational, political, cultural, and social responsibilities of life.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High
9. Working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment.
Low 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . High

How did you do?

Take a few minutes and share your results with the group.

To the leader(s): You may either read or have someone in the group read the following.

The “work of ministry” (Eph. 4:12) can be overwhelming. How are we going to accomplish everything it requires? Do you remember “the gifts”? Do you remember who gave them?

The first page of the *Book of Order* begins with the subheading “The Head of the Church.” That’s a good place to start! There we find this statement:

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. (*Book of Order*, G–1.0100b.)

We cannot be in a healthy relationship with the church without being in a relationship with Christ! It’s not a mere voluntary organization. It’s an organism.

A body needs blood, oxygen, food, nutrients, and water. Ephesians says that we (the church) are “one body” (4:4). We need nourishment.



* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

You may only have time to do one or two of the following. Choose the one of most interest to you. Share your answers aloud as a group.

1. I am most nourished in my church by

2. My church best “equips the saints” by

3. I need

4. I am weakest in my relationship with the church in

5. My relationship with the church suffers because

6. If I could change one thing about my relationship with the church it would be

7. One way for God to use me to keep building up the body of Christ would be

Closing Exercise

You've studied the role of the church and your relationship with it today. Offer sentence prayers for your church. Pray for your pastor(s) and church staff.

In preparation for next week's session, here are some Suggested Readings:

Read Eph. 5:21–33 each day. You'll see something different with each reading. Choose a new word or phrase to meditate on throughout the day. Here's a guide!

Day 1: "Be subject to one another."

Day 2: "Husbands, love your wives."

Day 3: ". . . The two shall become one flesh."

Day 4: "Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies."

Day 5: "Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself."

Day 6: "A wife should respect her husband."

Day 7: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Afterword

The word today from the *Confessions* comes to us from The Second Helvetic Confession. The word *Helvetic* is Latin for "Swiss." The great Reformer Heinrich Bullinger composed The Second Helvetic Confession in 1561. It was supposed to be attached to his last will and testament. It became a public document in defense of Frederick the Elector who had written the Heidelberg Catechism. The churches of Switzerland adopted Bullinger's confession as their confession of faith. Of interest to us is the Confession's statement concerning the church:

The Church has always existed and it will always exist. But because God from the beginning would have men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4), it is altogether necessary that there always should have been, and should be now, and to the end of the world, a Church. (5:124)

session *four*

Practical Application #3

BEING MARRIED

Eph. 5:21–33

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually in the group.

Not everyone in the group may be married.

Even so, I hope that each person in the group will participate and benefit from this session.

Why have so many marriages failed? Why is being married so tough? Is being married more difficult now than it was thirty or forty years ago? What makes good marriages good and bad marriages bad? Does being a Christian make any difference?

Being in a relationship with Christ affects all of our other relationships. If we are vessels of the Holy Spirit, Christ dwells in us. If Christ dwells in us, who we are reflects who he is.

To the Corinthians Paul wrote, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).

If that is true, we have the very Spirit of Christ within us. If that is true, we have God’s love to empower *all* of our relationships. If that’s true, then God’s love dwells in us in our most intimate relationship—marriage. Let’s listen in to what the writer has to say about our relationships with our wives.

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

To the leader(s): Have someone read aloud Eph. 5:21–33.

This could easily be one of the biblical texts we write off as a “cultural thing.” In that sense, the Bible is speaking to that culture but not to ours. We write off a lot of biblical texts such as

. . . the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes . . . Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no women to teach or have authority over a man; she is to keep silent (1 Tim. 2:9, 11–12).

Wow! That’s a cultural write-off! Do you get the picture?

Well, is this piece on marriage a cultural write-off? You decide.

Take ten minutes and let each man comb through this text and become very familiar with it. First make a list of all the problem words or phrases. Then make a list of all the words or phrases that you think are helpful and positive.

Problem Words/Phrases

Helpful Words/Phrases

Share your lists with the group and discuss the reasoning behind your selections. This should be good!

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

I thought you might want to see the wedding vows most of you took on your wedding day.

I, _____, take you, _____,
to be my wife;
and I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful husband;
in plenty and in want;
in joy and in sorrow;
in sickness and in health;
so long as we both shall live.
(*Book of Common Worship*, p. 845)

To the Leader(s): Have someone read this aloud.

The church is not as naive as the high-tech, mega-computer world thinks it is. We don’t ask, “Do you love each other?” We ask a more serious question. We ask, “Will you love each other?” We’re realistic about the future. And we say some pretty dirty words at your wedding. We say “want” (I like the old word, “poorer”), sorrow, sickness, and death.” We know that it’ll get tough!

How are you going to be there on the worst day? What if there are a constant string of worst days? What if it's all "want, sorrow and sickness"? What resource do you have that'll keep you in there on your worst day?

Ephesians reminds us that there is another partner in our marriage—*Christ*. Our relationship with our spouse is woven into the fabric of our relationships with Christ. They appear inseparable.

Read the passage (5:21–33) and write down the Marriage/Christ or Church analogies: Do this with a partner in your group. I'll get you started.

1. "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord" (5:22)

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Compare your findings with those of the rest of the group.



* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Let's pull out the words to husbands. As a group, discuss how each phrase strikes you. You might share how you do or do not practice these exhortations in your own marriage.

1. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (5:21).

2. "For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church" (5:23).

3. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (5:25).

4. "In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies" (5:28a).

5. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh" (5:31).

6. "Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself" (5:33a).

Closing Exercise

How is the Lord present in our marriages? One way is when we bow before God and submit ourselves to God. Consider going around the room and praying for your spouse or significant other. Those who are not married may pray for those who are. The leader can offer the final prayer. Marriages need prayer!

In preparation for next week's work session, here are some Suggested Readings:

Read Eph. 6:1–4 each day. Think on these things:

Day 1: "Children, obey your parents."

Day 2: "Honor your father and mother."

Day 3: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger."

Day 4: "Fathers . . . bring them [your children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Day 5: What is "discipline"?

Day 6: What is the "instruction of the Lord"?

Day 7: If you have children, get out their baby pictures and spend some time remembering. If you don't have children, try to have a conversation with a child today. You'll learn something!

Afterword

What is the word today from our *Book of Confessions*? Today the word comes from The Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Westminster Confession is the product of 1,163 sessions of the Westminster Assembly. The Assembly was appointed by the English Parliament and operated in a crisis environment. The political and religious atmosphere of England was in turmoil. In 1647, the Scottish General Assembly adopted the Westminster Confession, replacing the Scots Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.

It just so happens that the Westminster Confession of Faith has a word concerning marriage!

Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live.

. . . No marriage can be fully and securely Christian in spirit or in purpose unless both partners are committed to a common Christian faith and to a deeply shared intention of building a Christian home.

(*Book of Confessions*, The Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.133, 6.135.)

session *five*

Practical Application #4

BEING A FATHER

Eph. 6:1–4

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually in the group.

Father. There's a word for you. What comes to mind when you say *Father*? It is a painful word for many people. It is the best word in the world for others.

When Jesus spoke of God he used the word *Father*. Surely for him it was the best of all words. To speak of *father* is to speak of providence, guidance, wisdom, compassion, strength, and support. To speak of *father* is to speak of teaching, love, discipline, and trust.

A friend of mine who serves as a prison chaplain said that he had never met a male prisoner who didn't have a "father-problem." Does every man in prison have a father-problem? It makes sense. Who provided guidance and strength for them? Who encouraged them? Who supported them when they failed? Who was there to say yes and to say no?

Father-problems show up in a variety of ways. When we don't have a good father, we can spend a lifetime looking for one, not even knowing that we are searching for our lost parent.

Today's lesson is about being a father. Men in the group will be at different places on the issues of children. Some have none, while others have children who are grown and gone. And some will still be raising children at home. Listen to one another today. There will likely be a lot of wisdom in the group concerning our role as father.

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

The text for today is brief but powerful. Here it is:

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

Because of its brevity, we can deal with this portion of Scripture one verse or sentence at a time. Let's do this as a group and let everybody chime in.

For each verse (or sentence) give your initial reaction (how it speaks to you). Secondly, bring up what questions it raises for you.

1. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

2–3. "Honor your father and mother"—This is the first commandment with a promise: "so that it may be well with you and you many live long on the earth." (See Deut. 5:16.)

4. "And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

What does it mean to be a Christian father? If to be a Christian is to be Christlike, then we are called to be *Christlike fathers*. What would that be?

Make a quick list of what you consider to be the attributes of Christ:

Group Sharing:

Which one of the attributes of Christ that you listed do you have the most difficulty with in being a father? (If you're not a father, consider which one you perceive to be the most difficult for you.)

Which one of the attributes of Christ do you sense was most present in your relationship with your father? Explain.

How did your dad deal with anger (6:4), and how do you deal with anger as a father?

In preparation for next week's session, here are some Suggested Readings:

Read Eph. 6:5-9 each day. Think on these things:

Day 1: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters." Who are my "earthly masters"?

Day 2: What does it mean to be "slaves of Christ"?

Day 3: "Render service with enthusiasm." Where do I need to do that?

Day 4: "Whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord." What good do I do?

Day 5: "Masters . . . stop threatening them [slaves], for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven." How do I misuse my authority?

Day 6: "With [God] there is no partiality."

Day 7: Look for someone today who is beneath you on the social ladder. How would Christ have you relate to that person if you allowed the Spirit of Christ to flow through you?

Afterword

We come to The Shorter Catechism in our *Book of Confessions*. The Catechism is a portion of The Westminster Confession of Faith. (See last week's Afterword.)

Some of you may remember being taught The Shorter Catechism. It's a wonderful teaching tool for children. There are 107 questions with the answers provided. Also included in the Catechism are the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed.

Since Ephesians encourages fathers to bring up our children in the "instruction of the Lord" (6:4b), you might enjoy using The Shorter Catechism at home. You could do a question a day at mealtime.



*** CLOSING EXERCISE**

Write out a prayer for either your father or for one or all of your children (or grandchildren).

The leader may close today's session by asking anyone who wishes to share their prayer to do so. After each prayer, the group will say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Here's a sample of the questions from The Shorter Catechism:

Q.1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q.14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Q.35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

Q.39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q.90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our hearts; and practice it in our lives.

(The Book of Confession, The Shorter Catechism)

session *six*

Practical Application #5

BEING IN AND OUT OF AUTHORITY

Eph. 6:5-9

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually by the group.

This is definitely one of those passages we could consider a cultural write-off. It's difficult to imagine that the Bible doesn't clearly speak out against slavery. What do we do with this Ephesians passage:

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling"(6:5a)?

Before we throw it out, pay attention to the larger issue being addressed. There's something salvageable in here about our being Christlike with regard to authority. Slaves and masters were the words of the times when Ephesians was written. Perhaps we are not being too unfaithful to the text if we look beneath those words for our words. How do we talk about authority, obedience, service, and submission? Some men have a fair amount of difficulty with such topics.

Today's session focuses on being Christlike with regard to authority. Now sit down, be quiet, and follow my directions! (Just kidding.)

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

Here's the passage:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. 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 (Eph. 6:5-9).

There are other passages on slavery in the New Testament. As a group, look these up and read them aloud:

- Col. 3:22-25
- 1 Peter 2:18-21
- 1 Tim. 6:1-2
- Titus 2:9-10

In each case, slaves are instructed to comply as a means of being faithful to God. Slaves are compared to Christ in their submission and suffering. It's a difficult read for us.

To get a more in-depth feel of this passage, let's play "What If?"

To the Leader(s): Read each of the following aloud and allow the group to respond.

What if you were to trying to explain Eph. 6:5-9 to a group of senior high youth? How would you go about it?

What if you were to have to teach this passage to an adult class in an African-American congregation? How would you go about it?

What if you were asked to teach a church school class for a group of C.E.O.s in your church? The lesson for the day is Eph. 6:5-9. What do you have to say about masters and slaves?

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

The slave–master motif has to do with power. Who’s in charge? Who’s got control? Who’s the master? Who’s the slave?

In his book *Men at the Crossroads*, Jack Balswick writes, “Legitimate power is *authority* and illegitimate power is *dominance*. The man whose power is based on the support of others or sanctioned by society possesses authority. Dominance, on the other hand, is power that has not been recognized or sanctioned by others. It is taken without the approval of others.”¹

Where have you seen the misuse of power? Where have you seen “illegitimate power” or dominance? Give illustrations for each of the following: (Be specific.)

In Government:

In Church:

In Education:

In the Family:

In Race Relations:

In the Workplace:

In Health Care:

In Dealing with the Aged:

How are we, as Christians, to relate to those in authority (masters)? (See Eph. 6:5–9.)



* CLOSING EXERCISE

Consider having prayer today for those who are oppressed. Allow the group to pray sentence prayers. Think of those in political oppression, family oppression, and employment oppression. Ask God to touch the hearts of the masters who abuse their power.

In preparation for next week’s session, here are some Suggested Readings:

Day 1: Read Eph. 6:10–12. Meditate on “Be strong in the Lord.”

Day 2: Read Eph. 6:13–14. Meditate on “fasten the belt of truth around your waist.”

Day 3: Read Eph. 6:15–16. Meditate on “take the shield of faith.”

Day 4: Read Eph. 6:17–18. Meditate on “Pray in the Spirit at all times.”

Day 5: Read Eph. 6:19–20. Meditate on “Pray that I may declare it boldly.”

Day 6: Read Eph. 6:21–22. Meditate on “Encourage.”

Day 7: Read Eph. 6:23–24. Meditate on “Peace be to the whole community. . . . Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Afterword

The word today from our *Book of Confessions* comes from *The Larger Catechism*. You’ll recall the background to the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was commissioned by the Parliament in 1649 and was composed by the Westminster Assembly. *The Larger Catechism* is one of the documents produced by the Assembly and approved by the English Parliament. It was later adopted by the Scottish General Assembly for use in the church.

1. Jack Balswick, *Men at the Crossroads* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 88.

The following excerpts from *The Catechism* speak to the issue of humility and service.

Q.46. What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?

A. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a *servant*, in his conception and with birth, life, death, and after his death until his resurrection. [Emphasis added]

Q.49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

A. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

session

seven

Practical Application #6

BEING WITH THE ENEMY

Eph. 6:10–24

Introduction

May be summarized by the leader or read individually by the group.

Who is your enemy? “I don’t think I have any. No one seems out to get me. I am not fighting anyone at this time. Maybe I don’t have an enemy.”

Be careful with that attitude. The breeding ground for evil is a naive mind. Evil is subtle. Evil hardly ever begins by crashing a gate. It always starts small—just a crack in the door . . . a possibility.

A young woman who is tragically addicted to five bags of heroin a day didn’t start there. Evil is subtle and progressive.

Most affairs don’t start out with sex. They start out with flirting. Most deceptions in business begin as little white lies. Child molesters usually begin their obsession with pornography. Evil escalates. Our enemy is cunning.

Martin Luther composed the great hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” He wrote,

And though this world,
with devils filled,

Should threaten to undo us . . .

(The Presbyterian Hymnal, #260)

The Bible makes no attempt to explain away evil. We do not act like it’s not there. The Bible is realistic. Thank God the Scriptures acknowledge the reality of evil! We *do* have an enemy.

Today’s session helps us confront the enemy of every Christian—evil. No one escapes the spiritual warfare between the flesh and the Spirit.

The writer to the Ephesians concludes with this exhortation as a means of preparing for the future. We would do well to hang onto every word!

Exercise A: From the Book . . .

How do you interpret this passage in Ephesians? Take some time to circle your response to each of the following and then share with the group. Try to use quotes from Eph. 6:10–24 to substantiate your position.

1. Evil is a real force in the world.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
2. Evil is simply the product of poor human choice.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
3. Satan is a real being with angels and charge over hell.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
4. God is responsible for the suffering we experience from natural causes (tornados, earthquakes, sickness, drought, etc.).
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
5. Everything that happens is determined by the will of God.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
6. God has power over evil but chooses not to use it.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
7. When we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “. . . deliver us from evil . . .,” God always answers our prayers.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
8. Humans can overcome evil by choosing to make sound moral choices.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
9. There is no explanation as to the origin of evil.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4
10. There is a way to overcome evil.
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree
1 2 3 4

Now, share your responses with the group and discuss the reasoning behind your selections. (Hold on . . . this will be a good one!)

Exercise B: From the Heart . . .

How do you personally deal with the enemy? What do you do to protect yourself or to strengthen yourself as a Christian? Ephesians uses the image of putting on “armor.” Reread Eph. 6:13–17. Make a list of the “armor” we have as a defense against evil:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Which of these pieces of armor are most helpful to you?

How do you see the church succeeding and/or failing to equip Christians with “the whole armor of God”?



* CLOSING EXERCISE

The final words of Ephesians encourage us to “pray in the Spirit at all times . . . keep alert and always persevere” (6:18).

This is your final session in this study. Pray for one another. Allow each man the opportunity to pray aloud for another member of the group, for the church, and for your pastor(s). Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

Afterword

The word from our *Book of Confessions* appropriately comes from The Theological Declaration of Barmen. This document was written by German church leaders in response to the Nazi party. Many German Christians saw nothing wrong with Hitler’s patriotic sentiments. The Christians who composed this document were seriously opposed to Hitler and the evil he personified.

It is most appropriate that we conclude our study on the enemy with words from The Theological Declaration of Barmen!

In view of the errors of the “German Christians” of the present Reich Church government which are devastating the Church and are also thereby breaking up the unity of the German Evangelical Church, we confess the following evangelical truths:

. . . We reject the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the Church’s vocation as well.

. . . We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the State, thus itself becoming an organ of the State.

(The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.23, 8.24)

The final word comes from Ephesians:

Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ (6:23–24).

Amen!

THE WRITER

Dr. Steven P. Eason was baptized in 1954 by the congregation of a small Methodist church in Creswell, North Carolina. He was raised in the church by loving parents and faithful Christians. Called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1972, Steve attended Duke Divinity School and later received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. He is also a certified pastoral counselor.

Steve has been married to Catherine for twenty years and is the father of Phillip, Leigh, and Sarah. He joyfully serves under the lordship of Christ and the authority of the congregation of the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, as their senior pastor.

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