

# The **Bible** Unpacked

## **Comprehensive Study Series**

A compilation of the Bible's teaching  
for believers established in the faith

paul mallison

This series of studies is based on the  
*Comprehensive Edition of The Bible Unpacked.*

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked.*  
These aim to address the needs of  
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,  
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

For more information and free downloads go to:  
[www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net)



## An Appeal on Behalf of Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

### **Barnabas Fund** – [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org)

It provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

### **Christian Faith and Freedom** – [www.cffreedom.org](http://www.cffreedom.org)

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity International** – [www.csi-int.org](http://www.csi-int.org)

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** – [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

### **Compass Direct** – [www.compassdirect.org](http://www.compassdirect.org)

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

### **Open Doors** – [sb.od.org](http://sb.od.org); [www.opendoors.org.au](http://www.opendoors.org.au)

It provides Bibles and other Christian materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

### **Religious Liberty Commission** – [www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/); [www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx](http://www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx)

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org)  
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to [join-rpb@hub.xc.org](mailto:join-rpb@hub.xc.org).

### **The Bible League** – [www.bibleleague.org/persecuted](http://www.bibleleague.org/persecuted); [www.bibleleague.com](http://www.bibleleague.com)

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

### **Voice of the Martyrs** – [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com); [www.persecution.com.au](http://www.persecution.com.au)

VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

*Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.'* Matthew 25:40 NCV

# The Bible Unpacked™

## Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith

## 26. Being One Body

Composed by Paul Mallison

Scripture quotations are from the *NET Bible*®, unless otherwise indicated.

*The Bible Unpacked*™ Copyright © 1994–2011 by Paul Mallison. All rights reserved.

**This book may be freely reproduced for use for non-profit Christian purposes.** Free electronic copies may be downloaded at: [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net). In return, users are asked to increase their support of persecuted Christians (cf. [www.thebibleunpacked.net/persecuted\\_Christians.htm](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net/persecuted_Christians.htm)).

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the **NET Bible**® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/> All rights reserved. Scripture quoted by permission.

- Scripture quotations marked “CEV” are from the **Contemporary English Version** Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “ESV” are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “GNT” are from the **Good News Translation in Today’s English Version**- Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “GW” are taken from **God’s Word**® Copyright 1995 God’s Word to the Nations. Used by permission of Baker Publishing Group. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “ISV” are taken from the *Holy Bible: International Standard Version*®, Release 1.44. Copyright © 1996–2007 by The ISV Foundation of Fullerton, California USA. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. All rights reserved internationally.
- Scripture quotations marked “NCV™” are taken from the **New Century Version**®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations of short phrases from other Bible translations are on occasions included in comments on the verses. The copyright notices for these translations are given below.


- Scripture quotations marked “AMP” are taken from the *Amplified*® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved. Used by permission. ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)).
- Scripture quotations marked “NASB” are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
- Scripture quotations marked “NLT” are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “NKJV” are taken from *The New King James Version* / Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers., Copyright © 1982. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Scripture quotations marked “NRSV” are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1989 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This copy uploaded/printed: 26-Feb-11

## Overview of *The Bible Unpacked*


There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net).

 **Two-Minute Edition:** Key Bible teachings for people “on the run”  
For giving to non-Christians.


 **Pocket Edition:** Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth  
Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.

 **Concise Edition:** A look at the Bible’s teaching for new and young believers. For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.




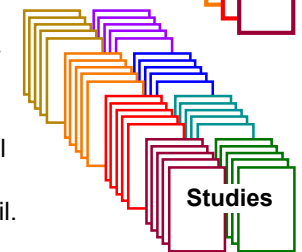
 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.




 **Intermediate Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers growing in the faith. For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.



 **Comprehensive Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers established in the faith. For a comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Useful as a study or a devotional tool - and preparing talks. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.



 **In-Depth Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for teachers and students of the Bible. For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders, Bible students and Bible colleges. It is also in an electronic version, which is a PDF file.



## Section II. What to Do

### Part E. Relating to God

#### 21. Being Right with God

- I. Getting Right with God
- II. Staying Right with God

#### 22. Having Faith in God

- I. Faith and Hope
- II. What Not to Do

#### 23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

- I. Loving and Fearing God
- II. Obeying God

#### 24. Connecting with God

- I. Being Close to God
- II. Praying to God

#### 25. Exalting God

- I. Instructions
- II. Reasons to Exalt God

### Part F. Church Life

#### 26. Being One Body

- I. General
- II. Caring for the Body

#### 27. Worshiping God

- I. General
- II. Offerings

#### 28. Serving God

- I. Preliminary Instructions and Insights
- II. Doing God's Work

#### 29. Significant Practices

- I. Symbolic Rites
- II. Other Significant Practices

#### 30. Church Leadership

- I. General
- II. Teaching in the Church

### Part G. Relating to People

#### 31. Love

- I. Loving Qualities
- II. Antitheses of Love

#### 32. Justice

- I. Justice in Action
- II. Being True

#### 33. Wisdom

- I. Being Wise
- II. Antitheses of Wisdom and Knowledge

#### 34. Common Relationships

- I. Family Relationships
- II. Civil Relationships

#### 35. Spreading the Gospel

- I. Instructions
- II. Insights

### Part H. Persevering

#### 36. Standing Firm

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Warfare

#### 37. Rejecting Sin

- I. Encountering Sin
- II. Avoiding Sin and Being Holy

#### 38. Major Pitfalls

- I. Pride
- II. Riches and Sex

#### 39. Hard Times

- I. General
- II. Praying in Hard Times

#### 40. Persecution

- I. The Persecution of God's People
- II. What to Do in Persecution

## Contents

A Quick Word .....	iv
Suggestions for Study Groups .....	v
<b>I. General</b>	
a) The Church as One Body .....	2
b) Be in Unison .....	5
c) Be in Fellowship .....	8
d) Love Each Other (I): General .....	11
e) Love Each Other (II): How .....	14
<b>II. Caring for the Body</b>	
a) Pray for Each Other (I): General .....	18
b) Pray for Each Other (II): What to Ask .....	20
c) Encourage Each Other .....	22
d) Help Each Other .....	25
Topics in This Series .....	31
Overview of <i>The Bible Unpacked</i> .....	33

## A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who lead the Israelites out of Egypt and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: [www.thebibleunpacked.net](http://www.thebibleunpacked.net)

Paul Mallison

## Topics in This Series

### Section I: What to Know

#### Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

##### 1. God's Being

- I. Basics
- II. God's Pre-Eminence

##### 2. God's Character

- I. Holy Characteristics
- II. Loving Characteristics

##### 3. Jesus Christ

- I. General
- II. Jesus Christ and God

##### 4. The Holy Spirit

- I. General
- II. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as One

##### 5. Angels, Satan and Demons

- I. Angels
- II. Satan and Demons

#### Part B. God and the World: Basics

##### 6. God's Creation

- I. General
- II. God's Creation of People

##### 7. God's Sovereignty

- I. God's Supreme Authority
- II. God's Control over the World

##### 8. God's Word

- I. General
- II. Key Old Testament Covenants

##### 9. The Problem of Sin

- I. General
- II. The Law's Provision for Israel's Sin

##### 10. God's Judgment

- I. Basics
- II. The Manifestation of God's Judgment

#### Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

##### 11. God's Promised Messiah

- I. The Messiah's Identity
- II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person

##### 12. Jesus Christ's Mission

- I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ
- II. Jesus Christ's Ministry, Death and Resurrection

##### 13. Salvation through Jesus Christ

- I. Salvation from Sin
- II. Salvation for the World

##### 14. The New Order

- I. Jesus Christ and the Law's Diminished Role
- II. Key Elements of the New Order

##### 15. 'The Last Things'

- I. Jesus Christ's Return and the Final Judgment
- II. The Afterlife

#### Part D. God and His Own People

##### 16. The Standing of God's People

- I. Belonging to God
- II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ

##### 17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People

- I. Basics
- II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

##### 18. God's Transformation of His People

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Attributes

##### 19. God's Care of His People

- I. God's Saving of His People
- II. God's Preservation of His People

##### 20. God's Plans for His People

- I. General
- II. God's Plans for Israel

## Notes

## Suggestions for Study Groups

### Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

### Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.
- Answers need not be limited to only what is mentioned in the material.
- The group should feel free to diverge from the study if related issues arise.

### General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
  - (a) how you relate to God or to other people; or
  - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?





### a) The Church as One Body

(⇒ God's People Are One Body 'in' Jesus Christ, in 16. The Standing of God's People)

#### God's people form local groups, called churches

**GAL 1:2B, 22** [PAUL:] *To the churches in Galatia. ...* <sup>22</sup>*The churches of Christ in Judea didn't know me personally.* GW

The term "church" refers to a community of believers. As such it can be used of small house groups as well as local church congregations. Additionally it can be used more generally of God's people as a whole – the worldwide church.

As per the first two uses, believers meet and function together in local community groups (as parts of God's people as a whole). It is this localized context that is generally spoken of in this and the following chapters in Part F. Church Life.

#### The many church members form one body – the body of Christ

**1COR 12:12, 27** [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] *A person's body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Though there are many parts to a body, all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that also. ...* <sup>27</sup>*Together you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that body.* NCV™

The phrase "the body of Christ" figuratively depicts the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his people. Moreover, it points to the unity Christ's people have together in their relationship with him. While the worldwide church is the whole "body of Christ", each local church is a form of "the body of Christ". And in each case the many members together make one body.

#### As one body, church members meet together . . .

**ROM 16:5A** [PAUL:] Also, greet for me *the church that meets at their house.* NCV™

**HEB 10:25A** [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Let us not give up the habit of meeting together,* as some are doing. GNT

How does compassion motivate us to help others? How can we be more compassionate?

---

---

---

Are you aware of anyone in your church that needs practical support? What could you share with them? How else could you assist them?

---

---

---

Why is doing something for another Christian correlated with doing it for Jesus Christ (cf. Matt 25:35–40)?

---

---

---

**2TIM 1:16–18** [PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because *he often refreshed me* and was not ashamed of my imprisonment. <sup>17</sup>But when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me. <sup>18</sup>May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well *all the ways he served me* in Ephesus.

**Note: What one does for another Christian, one does for Jesus Christ**

**MATT 25:35–40** [JESUS CHRIST, TO RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE ON JUDGMENT DAY:] For *I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,* <sup>36</sup>*I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.* <sup>37</sup>*Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’* <sup>38</sup>*When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?’* <sup>39</sup>*When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’* <sup>40</sup>*And the king will answer them, ‘I tell you the truth, just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it for me.’*

**. . . and they function together as one church body**

**ACTS 15:3–4** So *they* [Paul and others] *were sent on their way by the church*, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they were relating at length the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers. <sup>4</sup>When they arrived in Jerusalem, *they were received by the church* and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all the things God had done with them.

This passage includes segments which illustrate churches functioning as one body – i.e. as a unit or cohesive community.

The concept represented by the term “church” – often used to translate the Greek word “ekklesia” – involves believers meeting together and functioning as a community or one spiritual body. As such, they worship God together and cohesively further the cause of their head, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they live in relationship with each other, in which they minister to each other.

**The church body grows – spiritually and numerically**

**EPH 4:15–16** [PAUL, TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH:] But practicing the truth in love, *we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head.* <sup>16</sup>*From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body grows in love.*

**ACTS 16:5** So *the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number every day.*

In what sense is a church a “body”?

---



---



---

As the body of Christ, what features should distinguish churches from other bodies/groups of people?

---



---



---

Why is it important to meet together with other Christians?

---



---



---

## d) Help Each Other

### Be concerned for each other

**1COR 12:24B–25** [PAUL, SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH BODY:] Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member,<sup>25</sup> so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may *have mutual concern for one another*.

### Consequently, help each other

**GAL 6:2** *Carry one another’s burdens*, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

**HEB 6:10** God is always fair. He will remember *how you helped his people in the past and how you are still helping them*. You belong to God, and he won’t forget the love you have shown his people. CEV

### Meet each other’s needs . . .

**2COR 9:12** [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] For *this service you perform* not only *meets the needs of God’s people*, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God. GNT

### . . . Share what you have with those in need

**ROM 12:13** *Share what you have with God’s people who are in need*. Be hospitable. GW

**ACTS 2:44–45** All who believed were together and *held everything in common*,<sup>45</sup> *and they began selling their property and possessions and distributing the proceeds to everyone, as anyone had need*.

### Also, help others who are doing God’s work

**ROM 16:2** [PAUL, SPEAKING TO THE ROMAN CHURCH ABOUT PHOEBE:] I ask you to accept her in the Lord in the way God’s people should. *Help her with anything she needs, because she has helped me and many other people also*. NCV™

Explain what encouragement is and how it helps people.

---



---



---

What have other Christians done that has encouraged you?

---



---



---

What could you do this week to encourage a particular Christian you know?

---



---



---

## b) Be in Unison

### Be united as one

**ACTS 4:32** *The group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but everything was held in common.*

**1COR 1:10** [PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose.*

In the last clause, Paul urges his readers to be united by having the same Christ-centered thinking and objective/s.

### Live in peace with each other

**1THES 5:13B** [PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA:] *Be at peace among yourselves.*

**ROM 14:19** [PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN ROME:] Therefore, *let's keep on pursuing those things that bring peace* and that lead to building one another up. ISV

### Submit to one another

**EPH 5:21** [PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS:] *Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.* GNT

### Avoid foolish arguments and quarreling

**2TIM 2:23–24** [PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] *Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they grow into quarrels.* <sup>24</sup>*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel* but must be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and patient. NCV™

### However, sometimes disputes and differences may be necessary

**1COR 11:18–19** [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] For in the first place, *when you come together as a church I hear there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.* <sup>19</sup>*For there must in fact be*

*divisions among you, so that those of you who are approved may be evident.*

Where there is sin or false beliefs in the church, differences will be needed so that those who act and believe in accordance with God's will may distinguish themselves from those who do not (v. 19). It is in fact necessary for believers to take a stand against sin and false beliefs in the church.

**Note: Have any internal legal disputes judged by people of God**

**1COR 6:1–2, 6–7** [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] *When any of you has a legal dispute with another, does he dare go to court before the unrighteous rather than before the saints? <sup>2</sup>Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to settle trivial suits? ... <sup>6</sup>Instead, does a Christian sue a Christian, and do this before unbelievers? <sup>7</sup>The fact that you have lawsuits among yourselves demonstrates that you have already been defeated. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?*

With his first statement in v. 7, Paul appears to refer to spiritual failure, either: in seeking retribution, as opposed to being meek and forgiving; or in being at odds with a fellow believer/s, as opposed to being unified as parts of the body of Christ.

who, as they spoke with them, *urged them to continue in the grace of God.* ESV

Continuing in God's grace primarily involves remaining true to God and holding to the faith. As such one remains under God's grace, staying right with him (just as one received God's grace in originally being made right with him). It also encompasses relying on God's grace for God to meet one's needs, notably spiritual needs.

**Encourage each other by what you do . . .**

**COL 2:1–2** [PAUL, TO THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSE:] *I want you to know what a struggle I am going through for you, for God's people at Laodicea, and for all of those followers who have never met me. <sup>2</sup>I do it to encourage them.* Then as their hearts are joined together in love, they will be wonderfully blessed with complete understanding. And they will truly know Christ. CEV

**. . . and do not do anything that will cause another to “stumble”**

**ROM 14:13B** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Instead, you should decide never to do anything that would make another stumble or fall into sin.* GNT

**Comfort each other . . .**

**2COR 1:4** He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can *share that same comfort with others in trouble.* CEV

**. . . Comfort those in need by visiting them**

**JOHN 11:18–19** Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup>and many people had come from the city to comfort Martha and Mary because their brother had died. CEV

### c) Encourage Each Other

The Hebrew and Greek words translated “encourage” often imply meanings such as “strengthen”, “exhort” and “comfort”. Believers are to strengthen each other, particularly in regard to faith and work for the kingdom; they are to exhort each other to press on and to live as God wants; and they are to comfort each other in difficult circumstances.

#### Encourage each other . . .

**HEB 10:25** Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, *let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.* GNT

#### . . . and strengthen each other spiritually

**1SAM 23:16** And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and *strengthened his hand in God.* ESV  
Jonathan helped David find strength in God.

#### Encourage and strengthen each other by what you say

**2CHR 32:6–8** He [Hezekiah] appointed military officers over the army and assembled them in the square at the city gate. *He encouraged them, saying,* <sup>7</sup>*“Be strong and brave! Don’t be afraid and don’t panic because of the king of Assyria and this huge army that is with him! We have with us one who is stronger than those who are with him. <sup>8</sup>He has with him mere human strength, but the LORD our God is with us to help us and fight our battles!”* *The army was encouraged by the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.*

**EPH 4:29** *When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you.* NCV™

#### Encourage others to continue in God’s grace

**ACTS 13:43** And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas,

When differences arise in a church, what things can one do to promote unity and peace?

---



---



---

Do you find it hard to submit to other people in your church? What attitudes help us to submit to others?

---



---



---

When should we oppose others in church? What things should we bear in mind if the need arises?

---



---



---

### c) Be in Fellowship

The concept of “fellowship” involves sharing and participating in a partnership concerning a mutual interest or purpose, which for believers is their common faith and life in Christ. This is shown in the Greek word translated as “fellowship” (“koinonia”) which emphasizes participation. Believers participate in Christ and church activities, and in each other’s lives.

Note that a number of the verses in this section show that fellowship occurs amongst believers across the worldwide church, in addition to the local church context.

#### Have fellowship together . . .

**ACTS 2:42** *They [the believers] were devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

#### . . . Believers have fellowship collectively with God and Jesus Christ

**1JN 1:3** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *What we have seen and heard we announce to you too, so that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ).*

The fellowship believers have together is not only based on their mutual relationship in Jesus Christ, but is also a fellowship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

#### Participate together in church activities

**ACTS 1:14** *They [the disciples] gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.* GNT

**1COR 16:15B–16** [PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] *I urge you<sup>16</sup> also to submit to people like this, and to everyone who cooperates in the work and labors hard.*

Church members should participate together in God’s work, cooperating with each other.

#### Ask God to help and take care of them

**1KI 8:52** [SOLOMON, TO GOD:] *May you be attentive to your servant’s and your people Israel’s requests for help and may you respond to all their prayers to you.*

**PS 5:11B** [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Protect those who love you; because of you they are truly happy.* GNT

What Christian work and workers do you or could you pray for? How do or how could you find out specific prayer requests from them?

---

---

---

This week identify at least one person in your church who particularly needs prayer for God’s help and care? Commit yourself to pray for them for a period of time (e.g. one month).

---

---

---

Compose a prayer for another Christian you know – perhaps one in view in one of your previous answers. Use your own ideas and ideas from at least one of the verses in this section. (This prayer does not need to be shared.)

---

---

---

## b) Pray for Each Other (II): What to Ask

### Ask that other believers will live as God wants . . .

**2COR 13:7** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong, not so that we may appear to have passed the test, but so that you may do what is right even if we may appear to have failed the test.

### . . . and pray for their spiritual growth

**PHIL 1:9–11** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight <sup>10</sup>so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

The phrase “the fruit of righteousness” (v. 11a) could refer to either good deeds (cf. CEV, NCV) or to righteous qualities (cf. GNT). The concept of being “filled with the fruit” seems to favour the second interpretation.

### Ask God to forgive them when they do sin

**NUM 14:19–20** [MOSES, TO GOD:] Please forgive the iniquity of this people according to your great loyal love, just as you have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.” <sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said, “I have forgiven them as you asked.

### Pray for them in their work for the kingdom, asking God to aid them in the work

**ROM 15:30A** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Brothers and sisters, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. NCV™

**2THES 1:11** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] God chose you, and we keep praying that God will make you worthy of being his people. We pray for God’s power to help you do all the good things that you hope to do and that your faith makes you want to do. CEV

### Share together in the sufferings that come because of Jesus Christ . . .

**2TIM 1:8** [PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord or be ashamed of me, his prisoner. Instead, by God’s power, join me in suffering for the sake of the Good News. GW

### . . . and share together in the joy that comes in being of the church

**JOHN 4:36** The one who reaps receives pay and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that the one who sows and the one who reaps can rejoice together.

Those who work together in bringing people to faith, share together in much joy over the fruits of their labor.

### Similarly, share in each other’s troubles and joy

**ROM 12:15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Fellow believers may well be primarily in view here.

### As such, keep in touch about each other’s welfare – and keep the others informed of your own

**PHIL 2:19** [PAUL, TO THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH:] Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged by hearing news about you.

**EPH 6:21–22** [PAUL, TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH:] Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you too may know about my circumstances, how I am doing. <sup>22</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

Although Paul was not actually a member of the Philippian and Ephesian churches, he was effectively a leader of them and very much a part of them. As such these verses illustrate how church members should be aware of each other’s welfare – and keep the others informed of their own.

**Note: Believers share together in spiritual blessings**

**1COR 9:23** [PAUL:] I do it all for the sake of *the gospel*, that I may share with them [other believers] in its blessings. ESV

**JUDE 1:3** [JUDE, TO BELIEVERS:] My dear friends, I was doing my best to write to you about *the salvation we share in common*, when I felt the need of writing at once to encourage you to fight on for the faith which once and for all God has given to his people. GNT

What is involved in having fellowship with other believers?

---

---

---

Can you think of a time when you shared in something significant with another believer/s? What effect did it have on your relationship with them?

---

---

---

What do you value most about having fellowship with other believers? Why?

---

---

---

*all the saints*, <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember you in my prayers.

**. . . and thank God because of their service**

**PHIL 1:3–5** [PAUL, TO THE PHILIPPIAN BELIEVERS:] *I thank my God for you every time I think of you;* <sup>4</sup>*and every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy* <sup>5</sup>*because of the way in which you have helped me in the work of the gospel from the very first day until now.* GNT

What steps could you take in order to pray more consistently for members of your church?

---

---

---

Which believers do you know of who are facing serious persecution because of their faith? Determine to pray for them. Additionally, you could look up websites of groups who provide information and prayer points regarding persecuted Christians (e.g. Open Doors and Voice of the Martyrs) – and choose to receive their updates.

---

---

---

State at least three reasons to thank God for other Christians who you know, preferably ones in your church.

---

---

---

## a) Pray for Each Other (I): General

### Pray earnestly for other Christians

**ACTS 12:5** So Peter was kept in prison, but *those in the church were earnestly praying to God for him.*

### Pray constantly for other Christians

**EPH 6:18** *Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.*

CEV

**ROM 1:9–10** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For God, whom I serve in my spirit by preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how *constantly I mention you* <sup>10</sup>*in my prayers at all times*, asking that somehow by God's will I may at last succeed in coming to you. ISV

### Pray for those facing persecution

**2THESS 3:2** [PAUL:] *Pray also that God will rescue us from wicked and evil people*; for not everyone believes the message. GNT

**PHIL 1:18B–19** [PAUL:] Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that *this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers* and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Paul speaks of the Philippians' prayers for him while he was imprisoned because of his work for God's kingdom (cf. v. 17).

### Pray for those spreading the gospel

**2THESS 3:1** [PAUL:] Finally, our brothers and sisters, *pray for us, that the Lord's message may continue to spread rapidly and be received with honor*, just as it was among you. GNT

### Additionally, always thank God for other Christians because of their faith and love . . .

**EPH 1:15–16** [PAUL, TO THE EPHESIAN BELIEVERS:] For this reason, *because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for*

## d) Love Each Other (I): General

(⇒ 31. Love)

### Love one another

**1JN 3:11, 23** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that *we should love one another*. . .

<sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and *love one another, just as he has commanded us.*

ESV

### Love one another more and more

**PHIL 1:9** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And it is my prayer *that your love may abound more and more*, with knowledge and all discernment, . . . ESV

### Loving other Christians is indicative of being of God and Jesus Christ . . .

**JOHN 13:34–35** [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] “I give you a new commandment – to love one another. *Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.* <sup>35</sup>*Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples – if you have love for one another.*”

**1JN 4:7, 12, 16B** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] Beloved, *let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* . . . <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; *if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.* . . . <sup>16</sup>*God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* ESV

Love is the essence of God's nature – “God is love” (v. 16; cf. v. 8). Everyone who loves exhibits God's nature, demonstrating that they have been “born of God” (v. 7b). In addition, loving one another shows that we know God (v. 7), and that we live in God and he lives in us (vv. 12, 16b).

**... In contrast, not loving other Christians has negative implications**

**1JN 3:10, 14** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *This is how God's children and the devil's children are distinguished. No person who fails to practice righteousness and to love his brother is from God. ...*<sup>14</sup> *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love one another. The person who does not love remains in death.* ISV

**Love is vital for Christian service and living**

**2PET 1:7–8** [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] ... to your godliness add Christian affection; and to your Christian affection *add love*.<sup>8</sup> *These are the qualities you need, and if you have them in abundance, they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

GNT

**1THES 5:8** [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But since we are of the day, *we must stay sober by putting on the breastplate of faith and love* and as a helmet our hope for salvation.

This figuratively illustrates that love – along with faith and hope – provides significant spiritual protection for the believer, helping them to live godly lives.

**Further blessings of loving each other**

**COL 2:2** [PAUL, REFERRING TO PEOPLE HE SOUGHT TO HELP IN THEIR FAITH:] *I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love so that they may be rich in their understanding. This leads to their knowing fully God's secret, that is, Christ himself.* NCV™

As Christians exist together united in love, they increasingly experience and comprehend spiritual blessings and truths.

**1JN 4:17–18** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *By this love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world.*<sup>18</sup> *There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love.*

This is speaking of having the love that comes from God, expressed in loving others. Such love, an expression and extension of God's love, makes judgment from him inconceivable

## II. Caring for the Body

(⇒ [Leaders:] *Caring for Church Members*, in *30. Church Leadership*)

The care that church members ought to show each other should be one of the defining characteristics of every church, evidencing Christian love. This care should include both spiritual and practical care, with the former largely involving prayer and encouragement.

How can we love each other as Jesus Christ loved us? What attitudes are needed and what kinds of actions may be involved?

---



---



---

What is the connection between loving/obeying God and loving other believers (cf. 1Jn 5:2)?

---



---



---

How do you show love to people in your church? What else can you do?

---



---



---

and so annuls any fear of judgment. Conversely, whoever fears has “not really learned to love” (CEV, v. 18b); they do not have perfect love (cf. GNT, NCV, NLT).

Why does loving other Christians indicate that we are people of God?

---



---



---

Do you agree with the assertion that love is vital for Christian service and living? If so, why do you think it is vital?

---



---



---

What blessings or benefits are there of loving other believers? (Do not limit your answer to what is mentioned in this study.)

---



---



---

## e) Love Each Other (II): How

(⇒ *What love is . . .*, in 31. Love; II. Caring for the Body, p. 17)

### Love is expressed with actions

**1JN 3:17–18** [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *Suppose someone has enough to live and sees a brother or sister in need, but does not help. Then God's love is not living in that person.* <sup>18</sup>*My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring.* NCV™

### Love each other as Jesus Christ loved us, even laying down his life

**JOHN 15:12–13** [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] My commandment is this – to love one another just as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>*No one has greater love than this – that one lays down his life for his friends.*

Jesus disciples were to love each other as he had loved them, a love which he would show to be unsurpassed by laying down his life for them.

### Accordingly, love each other sincerely and earnestly

**1PET 1:22** [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] Now that by your obedience to the truth you have purified yourselves and have come to *have a sincere love for your fellow-believers, love one another earnestly with all your heart.* GNT

### Love each other as brothers and sisters

**HEB 13:1** *Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.* NCV™

### As such, keep each other in your hearts . . .

**PHIL 1:7** [PAUL, TO THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH:] For it is right for me to think this about all of you, because *I have you in my heart*, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all of you became partners in God's grace together with me.

When Paul talks of having others in his heart, he implies that they are an integral part of himself and his consciousness.

### . . . and long for each other

**PHIL 4:1** [PAUL, TO THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH:] So then, *my brothers and sisters, dear friends whom I long to see*, my joy and crown, stand in the Lord in this way, my dear friends!

### Note: Obedience to God and other aspects of the faith are essential for love

**1JN 5:2** *This is how we know that we love God's children: we love God and keep his commandments.* ISV

**1TIM 1:5** [PAUL:] But the aim of our instruction is *love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.*