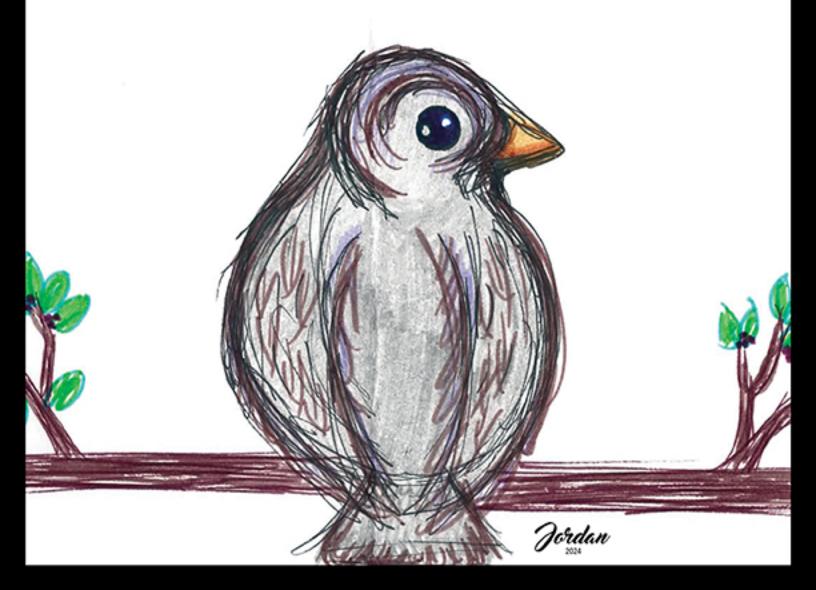
Opercomers for Shrist

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" Matthew 6:26-27



Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Ehrist January 2025









Ephesians - Unveiling God's Mysteries By Michelle Anderson

Ephesians is the only letter that Paul wrote that did not address a specific error or issue, Ephesians was written around 60-62 A.D. Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians so that they would have a deeper understanding of God's eternal purpose and His grace. Paul wanted the Ephesians to appreciate God's plans for the church and His goals for the church. The Book of Ephesians tells believers who they are in the spiritual realm and shares how to practically apply this knowledge in the believer's life. Ephesus, located in modern-day Turkey, is a city with a rich history. It was originally built by the Greeks and then the city changed hands between many conquerors, then in 189 B.C. it was conquered by the Romans.

Ephesus was the fourth largest city in the world around 60 A.D. It was a major metropolis that was a commercial, political and religious center in the Mediterranean region. Ephesus was one the most important cities that Paul visited, it was significant to Paul because of the strategic location, religious significance, a place where he had an effective ministry, and where he wrote many of his letters. This strategic location allowed Paul to reach a diverse audience. Ephesus was known for its worship of the goddess Artemis, and her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Paul's mission in Ephesus involved challenging the prevailing religious practices and introducing the Christian faith. In approximately 53-56 A.D., Paul spent about three years in Ephesus during which he had a profound impact on the community. He converted many people to Christianity and established a strong Christian community. Paul taught extensively in Ephesus, which helped to solidify his influence and the spread of Christianity in the region. Paul's time in Ephesus was a pivotal period in his missionary work, contributing significantly to the growth of early Christianity.

This article will explore one of the mysteries that Paul mentions in Ephesians and explain how an understanding of this mystery is important for today's believers. God has gifts for His children. One of these gifts is Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, which made Salvation possible to all mankind, whether you were born as a member of His chosen people or not. Paul was eager to share the Good News of this gift with the people of Ephesus.

Paul's teachings to the Ephesians were to share with them the importance of understanding God's mysteries. The definition of "mystery" in the biblical context means "something that could not be known by men except by divine revelation, but that, though once hidden, has now been revealed in Christ and is to be proclaimed so that all who have ears may hear it." God's mysteries are only hidden from believers when they do not seek Him fully and with an open heart. For believers who soften their heart and seek God, He will reveal His mysteries to them. In *Jeremiah 29:11* (NKJV), the Lord says that "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." God's Word tells believers that they are always in His thoughts and that their hope is in Him. *Jeremiah 29:12-13* (NKJV) goes on to say, "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." God's Word tells believers to continue to seek Him with all their heart. The mysteries of God are hidden for His children, not from His children. When the believer earnestly seeks God, the Holy Spirit will reveal to the believer the truths of God, God's mysteries.

God has gifts for His children. One of these gifts is Salvation that Jesus made possible to all mankind, whether you were born as a member of His chosen people or not. Paul was eager to share the news of this gift with the people of Ephesus. In the Passionate Life Bible Study of Ephesians (2021), it states, "Your ethnicity, your social standing, even your past behavior, none of it matters where God's love for you is concerned. That's the greatest mystery of all, the secret that Paul can't wait to share." Salvation was for both Jews and Gentiles; God wanted all people to be united as one body in Christ.

In *Ephesians 3:1-5* (NLT), Paul spoke to the Gentiles and told them that God revealed His mysterious plan to him. This plan was communicated to Paul through the Holy Spirit. In *Ephesians 3:6* (NLT), Paul shared with the Gentiles God's plan, "Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus." This would have been a revelation to the Gentiles, because Jews and Gentiles were not united, they did not share things. The unity of believers is a central theme in this mystery. This message was not popular with the Jews, Paul was imprisoned due to teaching the Gentiles the message of Salvation and that it was for all mankind. Paul was honored to be imprisoned due to caring out God's plan for mankind (*Ephesians 3:13* NLT).

Paul acknowledged to the Ephesians that God gave him this privilege to share this Good News to all people. In Ephesians 3:9 (NLT), Paul says, "I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning." The church is the manifestation of God's multifaceted wisdom, God does not see race, ethnicity, or social standing. Paul wanted the church in Ephesias to understand all were equal in the sight of God, the church needed to break down of barriers between Jews and Gentiles. In Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT), Paul states, "God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety. This was His eternal plan, which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord." This Scripture is a powerful reminder of the church's role in God's grand plan. In these verses, Paul is emphasizing that the church is not just a community of believers, but a divine instrument through which God displays His wisdom. The "rich variety" suggests the diverse ways in which God's wisdom

is revealed through different cultures, peoples, and experiences unified in the body of Christ. This was the eternal plan, carried out through Jesus Christ. The church is meant to reflect the complexity and beauty of God's wisdom to all creation. It's a profound testament to the transformative power of God's plan, executed through His Son, and manifested in the unity and diversity of the church.

Understanding God's mysteries for today's believers. In *Ephesians 3*, the Holy Spirit reveals to Paul God's plan of redemption. Paul explains to the Ephesians that Jesus executed this plan at the Cross. God did not reveal His plan until after Jesus was crucified and then resurrected. The time after Jesus' resurrection is considered the church age. The Christian church was formed after Pentecost, which was the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In *Ephesians 3:12* (NIV), Paul tells the Ephesians, "In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence." This Scripture reveals that the believer is free to approach God and that their relationship with Jesus allows this freedom and confidence to operate under the authority that Jesus has given them.

Today's believers can apply the teachings of *Ephesians 3* in several meaningful ways, reflecting on the unity and wisdom of God's eternal plan through the church. Today's believers can promote unity, live out God's wisdom, witness to their community, exhibit spiritual strength, and reflect on God's divine plan. Believers can promote unity within the church and in their community through diversity and reconciliation. Embrace diversity within the church and the workplace, fostering an inclusive environment where people from different backgrounds and cultures feel welcomed and valued. When believers have conflict, they can actively work towards reconciliation both within the church and in broader society, embodying the unity that Paul describes. The Bible clearly describes that God created mankind as one body, there is no difference amongst His people that should create division. In *1 Corinthians 12:12-13* (NIV), it states, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." This unity message was revolutionary, prior to Jesus' sacrifice, the Jews considered themselves God's chosen people. If a person was born a Jew and followed the Jewish customs and religious laws, then they were in God's family and would receive God's blessings and Salvation. Jesus changed that, anyone who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior were part of God's family.

Today's believers can live out God's wisdom through personal growth and ministry service. The believer seeks personal spiritual growth through prayer, studying Scripture, and cultivating a deeper relationship with Christ, allowing God's wisdom to guide everyday decisions. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV), it states, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." The believer engages in service and ministry opportunities, using individual gifts and talents to contribute to the church's mission and display God's manifold wisdom. In 1 Peter 4:8-10 (NIV), the believer is instructed to love each other, offer hospitality, and use whatever gift the believer has received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace.

Believers are called to witness to their community through evangelism and speaking out when social injustice occurs. Believers should share the message of Christ with others, demonstrating the transformative power of God's grace and the unity of believers. In *Matthew 28:16-20*, Jesus tells the disciples that they have the authority from heaven to go to all nations and make disciples of people and baptize them in the Holy Spirit and teach believers to obey Jesus' commands. *Matthew 28:16-20 – "Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in bearan and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and main disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Pather and of the San and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey evarything I have sommanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the vary and of the age." The Great Commission applies today, believers are called to share Christ with others. Believers should also address social issues and advocate for justice, showing the world the practical implications of God's wisdom and love in action.*

The body of Christ exercise spiritual strength through intercessory prayer and community support. The believer prays for the spiritual strength and unity of the church, as Paul did for the Ephesians, asking God to empower believers with His love and wisdom (*Ephesians 1:15-19* NIV). The body of Christ provides emotional and spiritual support to fellow believers, helping to strengthen the church community.

Believers reflect on God's purpose for their life through meditating on God's plan and putting their faith into action, faith is not passive, it is an action. The believer meditates on the eternal purpose of God, recognizing the role of the church in His plan and seeking ways to contribute to its fulfillment. The believer puts their faith into action through acts of kindness, compassion, and love, reflecting God's wisdom in everyday interactions. *Galatians 6:10* (NIV) states, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." The body of Christ is called to support each other and be God's hands and feet.

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THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US. AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US - WHATEVER WE ASK - WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE WHAT WE ASKED OF HIM. 1 JOHN 5:14-15 (NIV)

PRAYER REQUESTS

So ... my chronic care checkups will now only be once a year as opposed to twice a year ... everything looks good ... I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in ... LOL! Continue to pray for God's supernatural healing in my body – Foot

I'm excited to let ya'll know that I am going for my Clemency!! Praise God you guys at ©&& keep me in your prayer's, that I would be reunited with my family soon!! I've been with the ©&& family for 10+ years, and I have nothing but good news and blessings to share with you all. I am still in college and getting high scores, praise God for that. I'm also getting ready to become a yoga instructor here. Good blessings!! Keep in touch, I am praying for us and the world to be saved, as our King is coming soon! Love ya'll ... your sister in Christ!!!! - L.R.

Pray for the Owncomers for Official family, inside and out ... I sure do pray for Owncomers for Official every night. My heart and thoughts are always there with all of you. – C.P.

Like always I continue to pray for you and all the Ocac volunteers thanking Christ for always being there for your spiritual guidance. As for myself, I'm doing well. Thanks to our Heavenly Father that will never forsake nor leave us. — I.S.

Please pray for my grandson, pray that he places his relationship with Jesus first. That he does not get distracted by worldly girls. God has a plan for his life, and he is anointed for Kingdom work. God bless you all and my prayers are with you all. God knows each need and desire and He is faithful to answer prayers. – L.A.

PRAISE REPORTS

I have a praise report of the Spirit of God moving here. A couple of weeks ago our Father had put it on one of the brothers hearts, to do a haircut ministry on the unit. Well, it happens that the best barbers on this yard are all believers in Christ and not only do they believe, but they also pick up their crosses daily and follow Jesus. Amen! Well, the brother that received that call is a barber, so on Sunday we went out to the yard with the four barbers. We played music from the tablets and spread the love and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It started at 8:00 am - 10:30 am, then we went back out after count time at 11:30 am till 2:00 pm. Praise Jesus! We had prayer circles with different faiths and denominations, as the Spirit of God poured out on this unit. Later that evening we have a worship service on Sunday evenings outside on the yard and there was 20-25 people out praising Jesus, as loud as we could, Hallelujah! I found out today that at the end of the night one of the brothers was outside with another person and that person told him to look at the moon ... where there was a silhouette of a dove with rays on the light of the moon. WOW, Praise Jesus! Amen. – P.G.

PRAISE GOD! I love you all! I'm a child of The Most High God and I am free to serve Him! I just wanted to send a quick message to let y'all know I'm thinking of you, and all is well with me. My incarceration situation hasn't changed physically; however, I am joyful and wiser today than I was yesterday because of Father's continuing patient teaching. He has revealed so many mysteries during this disciplinary season of my life! This 8-10 year sentence isn't punishment to me; it's loving and patient discipline applied by my Father. I guess I'm just wanting to share with my family how immensely grateful I am right now. Amen? Amen indeed!! – J.S.

Some other news ... S.M. and his wife were both baptized last week THANK YOU JESUS! My heart is even fuller now knowing that more of my 'family' will be able to follow me home. I've got my eye on a couple a hundred acres of prime ranch land on the south side of Heaven where my 'family' can all gather and enjoy God's company in etemity. And a big OL' thank you from me to all the newer OVERCOMERS and their help with our mission. In the meantime, I shall continue to praise the Lord and hopefully point others towards Him with my example. – Foot

I have enjoyed reading the newsletters and they always take me back to when you and Michelle first started doing them. Look how far the Lord Jesus has brought all of it, forging glory of His kingdom. Just a little under two months now to the gate. I can barely wait. There just isn't anything better than family. NEVER AGAIN will I hurt my family this way. I should have listened to God and others when they were warning me about my choices and the people I was hanging around. Well, now it's on to a brighter future! I have so many wonderful things to share with you all when I get out, I just can't wait. Praise God! – D.F.

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Blessings Follow Obedience By D.F.

Praise Jesus! I am so happy to hear you are doing so much better and you sound really good. At times when we hear man's answer or solution to things something doesn't set well within our spirits so as you did, we go to the Word of God and get the answer the Lord has prepared for us beforehand. And then we learn to walk in it just like you did.

You are a very real inspiration to me, Wade. No matter what, you keep fighting the good fight regardless of what the enemy has thrown at you. God honors those who fear and honor Him, and you absolutely do just that. This whole time here has given me one of the greatest gifts ever, and that is my intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus that I would have never had unless I came here. Plus, there has been numerous women I could share the Gospel with and mentor which results in the fruits of my obedient relationship with Him. Still this past year has been a trying one and I am ready to move on to the next chapter or season of my life.

Thoughts of Psalm 139 By M.G.

Hello, my friend in Christ and man on the move! Well, I was reading more about Joshua and how he was put into a leader's role and trusted God through it all. He did what God told him too and he never wavered, trusting God! Then I read Psalm 139:1-18,23-24 and seen how wonderful we were made and God knew us in the womb and any place we are God is.

"You have searched me, Lord, and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You. For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are Your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with You ... Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

This helped me see that God wants the best for you, and me! I just need to trust and lean on our LORD!!

The Watchman and His Message By J.D.

Ezekiel 33:1-11, "The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and

takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.'

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, 'You wicked person, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

Son of man, say to the Israelites, 'This is what you are saying: Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?" Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?"

This is a pretty profound piece of Scripture that can be used in many different ways but always means the same thing. As men and women of God we are called to be watchmen. The word 'watchmen' in Hebrew means "to watch in anticipation". The Lord is our Shepard, and we are the watchmen of the flock. Watching in anticipation to make sure that danger and harm don't affect the sheep.

When we see our brother or sister going down a path that isn't righteous it's our responsibility to speak up and correct them. When we see brothers and sisters in Christ heading down that broad road and we keep quiet and don't say anything to try and redirect them then 'their blood is on our hands', is what the Scripture says. I see people here who get caught up in their own schedule and routine so deeply that they lose touch with the rest of the body. Then, when it comes to the light that a brother has been slipping and backsliding people act shocked and confused. A watchman's job, OUR JOB, is to remain vigilant and to watch in anticipation of these things.

We are our brothers and sister's keeper. We must always make sure we're in tune with the members of our congregation and that happens through fellowship. Everyone is going through their own struggles, and you never know, you might save a life today just by starting a conversation with someone new. I pray a prayer of boldness over all our brothers and sisters out there and I hope this message finds you having a good day!

THIS LITTLE LIGHT By M.D.

"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light." (Luke 11:33)

Has God lit your lamp? Have you passed from death to life? Then allow God to put you on a lampstand so that THE LIGHT can be seen. We live, those of us incarcerated, in a dark and sinful, lost and broken world where the blind lead the blind and where the light of God in you is SO desperately needed!

The Bible says of Jesus, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (Matthew 4:16)

When we share one on one or preach Christ crucified for the sin of the world, we give light to those who are sitting in darkness and light His overcomes the darkness. The night ALWAYS flees when the morning sun rises: "FOR WE DO NOT PREACH OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, AND OURSELVES YOUR BONDSERVANTS FOR JESUS' SAKE. FOR IT IS THE GOD WHO COMMANDED THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, WHO HAS SHONE IN OUR HEARTS TO GIVE THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST." (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

My fellow overcomers let the powerful love of Christ shine through you today by sharing the Gospel with an unsaved person! And by doing so make a difference in this lost and broken world for the glory and the Kingdom of God! Step out of your comfort zone and be strong in doing your part in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)! Because that's what we Trecomers for Cfrist do! May His light shine through us all!

Foot's Bible Study

Obadiah 1:1-12

The Edomites were proud of their city carved right into the rock. Today, Sela or Petra is considered one of the marvels of the ancient world, but only as a tourist attraction. The Bible warns that pride is the surest route to self-destruction.

Proverbs 16:18 – "Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall."

Just as Petra and Edom fell, so will proud people fall. A humble person is more secure than a proud person because humility gives a more accurate perspective of oneself and the world (1:4)

Revelation 4:1-11

The point of this chapter is summed up in this verse. All creations in heaven and earth will praise and honor God because He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. (4:11)

Psalms 132:1-18

The 'increase' of David's power refers to one of his mighty descendants. David's son, Solomon, was indeed a glorious king. 1 Kings 3:10-14 – "The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. So God replied, 'Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies. I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

But these verses look ahead even further to another descendant of David, Jesus the Messiah. Matthew 1:17 – "All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah."

The power, might, and glory of the Messiah will last forever. (132:17-18)

Proverbs 29:24-25

Fear of people can hamper everything you try to do in extreme forms. It can make you afraid to leave your home. By contrast, fear of God, respect, reverence, and trust is liberating. Why fear people who can do no eternal harm? Instead, trust God who can turn the harm intended by others into good for those who trust Him. (29:25)

"Foot" Notes

Hey family check this out ... "Black Sheep" ... Just so yá know ... Bert Hellinger said that "Black Sheep of the family (they should be called family lions) are actually seekers of paths of liberation for the family tree.

Those who wince childhood constantly sought to revolutionize beliefs, leaving paths marked by family traditions, those criticized, judged and even rejected, those are usually called to free the tree of repetitive stories that frustrate entire generations.

Those who do not adapt, those who shout rebellion, play a basic role within each family system. They repair, detoxify and create a new, flourishing branch of the family tree. Thanks to these members, our tree renews its roots. Their rebellion is fertile soil, their madness is water that feeds, their stubbornness is new air, their passion is fire that rekindles the hearts of ancestors. The black sheep, rebels, family lions are the dream come true of all ancestors.

So never think that the path you've traveled has been for naught.

Love to you all short and tall ... Vaya con Dios ... Don't ride faster than your angels can fly!

Ephesians - Unveiling God's Mysteries By Michelle Anderson ... continued from page 4

By applying the principles of Ephesians, believers can enhance their spiritual lives, strengthen their communities, and effectively witness to the transformative power of God's redemptive plan through Christ. This holistic approach helps to manifest the wisdom of God in diverse and tangible ways, offering a transformative vision of divine inclusion and grace that remains profoundly relevant and inspiring for contemporary faith and practice.

Paul passionately unravels the profound mystery of God, which had been hidden for ages but is now revealed through Christ. This mystery, centered on the unification of Jews and Gentiles into one body, highlights the inclusive nature of God's Salvation plan. By granting Paul the stewardship of this divine revelation, God underscores the importance of grace and faith over mere adherence to the law. This divine revelation not only transformed the religious landscape of Paul's time but continues to inspire today's believers to seek unity, reconciliation, and a deeper understanding of their faith. Believers are to embrace the unity and diversity within the body of Christ, striving to manifest God's wisdom and love in our own lives and communities.

Overcomer's Testimonies

I'm Not Going My Own Way Anymore By R.H.

Howdy my new brother in the Lord! I must say, after reading your words in the newsletter, God has blessed you, with the commitment to share the Gospel with the lost, for the advancement of His Kingdom. You never know whose ears your words will fall on, or just how they will receive the message. I'm one of those and new here to the Overcomers for Oficial family. I picked up a newsletter along the way, somewhere, and decided that I wanted to write and share my brief testimony with everyone.

First, like so many others, I'd always believed in the mighty name of Jesus. Even though I took my eyes off of Him, I still am and always will be, a child of the Most High God!

In 2016, after I picked up this current charge for attempted murder, I soon landed in Pelican Bay State Prison for three years. It was there, while watching a Joel Osteen message that I felt the Spirit tugging at my heart. That was when I refocused, and I prayed that simple little prayer with him at the end of his service.

After that short prayer with Joel, I also said, "Lord, I am a sinner of the worst kind. Although I was brought up knowing 'about' who You were, I decided to go my own way. And as You have seen, Lord, my decision has led me to 35 years of hard-core drug addiction, 6 different prison terms, a handful of parole violations and close to 30 years spent on prison yards. Lord, only You know the countless victims from my addictions. You know that I've ruined every family relationship I've had, lost both my paternal units and two siblings. I'd burnt all my other family members, and they have rightfully cut ties with me."

At that point I was so broken hearted and done that IF I would have died, I would have been okay with where I was. Instead, I continued in prayer, "God, I know that You are REAL. I know that You love me, and I know that You sent Your Son Jesus to die for me. I know that I willingly turned my back on You because I thought I knew best, but I obviously don't! Lord, not only have I been a sinner of the worst kind, I also have an addiction to Meth along with all of my other problems. I REALLY NEED YOUR HELP! Please help me by first taking away the desires for Meth and drinking. As I release these worldly habits to You, please take the desire for those things so that I might live a sober life and follow You. With Your help, I can work on all of the other issues in my life, but not if I'm still high!"

I wish that I could say that at the end of those prayers that that was it and that I got it all figured out. But that was not the case. I'm not saying that God has not been faithful on His end, but like everyone else I still have my struggles. Even though my life is way better today than it's ever been, even here at Pelican Bay, I understand that I still have a very long road ahead of me.

For anyone that reads these words, I pray that you begin to understand that regardless of what you may believe you have done against God, Jesus loves you, even in your misguided life, enough to go to the Cross for you! Like myself, with God on your side, you don't have to be tripping about your past!

Your Ministry of Appreciation By Rick Warren

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." - Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Radical gratitude means you're going to walk through life being grateful in every situation, no matter what—in times of plenty, when times are tight, when times are good, bad, right, wrong, whatever. You can develop an attitude of gratitude by choosing to be grateful in every situation. The attitude of radical gratitude actually serves others; it becomes a ministry.

Have you realized that every believer is a minister? You are a minister! Because every Christian is a minister, that means you should be serving other people. In fact, you're saved to serve. And one ministry you can develop is the ministry of appreciation.

Do you know what the word "appreciation" means? If you've ever bought a car, you know the meaning of depreciation. The moment you drive it off the lot, it's worth less than you paid for it, even if it's a brand-new vehicle. Depreciation means "to decrease in value." Appreciation is the opposite. It means "to increase in value."

When you appreciate your husband, you raise his value. When you appreciate your wife, you raise her value. When you appreciate your co-workers, you raise their value to you and to the company. When you appreciate your boss, you raise his or her value.

The ministry of appreciation raises the value of people. As you develop radical gratitude, you can make a ministry out of raising the value of people simply by appreciating them.

The Bible says it like this: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

One of the things I've discovered is that everyone needs massive doses of encouragement. I've never met anybody who's said, "Oh no! I don't need a compliment! I have too many. Please, stop! I'm too affirmed. Don't give me anymore."

You have an unqualified need to be affirmed, to be loved, to be appreciated—and so does everybody else. If you want to be used by God, here's one way: Affirm everyone. Appreciate everyone. Show gratitude to everyone.

That's how you develop a ministry of appreciation.

Talk It Over

- How does it feel when someone shows appreciation to you?
- What are some ways, besides speaking, that you can show appreciation?
- How have other people's appreciation and affirmation drawn you closer to God?

Did You Know?

Pete Rose had 4,256 total career hits, which remains the Major League Baseball record.

Joke of the Month

A priest, a rabbi, and a minister walk into a bar. The bartender says, "What is this, a joke?"

Quote Worthy

"People celebrate Easter with their near and dear ones. Nothing can be a better holiday to spend with your family than to celebrate the journey of the life of Jesus."

- Roma Downey - an actress, producer, and author from Northern Ireland. She gained recognition for her role as Monica the angel, in the CBS television series *Touched by an Angel*, which ran for nine seasons. Downey portrayed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Emmy Award-winning miniseries *A Woman Named Jackie*. Downey stars in and produces the television series *The Baxters*. She has a stage career, performing with the Abbey Theatre, the National Theatre of Ireland, and appearing on and off Broadway.

WORD OF THE MONTH

Carceral

Pronunciation - car·cer·al kar-sa-ral

Adjective - of, relating to, or suggesting a jail or prison

"The door opened, whining, rattling and groaning in keeping with all the rules of carceral counterpoint." – Vladimir Nabokov, Invitation to a Beheading, 1959

Did You Know ... Our earliest known evidence of carceral – an adjective borrowed directly from Late Latin – dates to the late 16th century, with evidence of incarcerate (to imprison) appearing shortly thereafter; they're both ultimately from carcer, Latin for 'prison'. The English verb cancel is also linked to carcer via Latin cancelli, a word meaning 'lattice' that likely developed from an alteration of carcer. Carceral is a word that is generally not found outside the confines of academic or legal texts.

Super Sudoku

3	7			5				9
				9	1	7	3	6
	9	1		3	2		5	
1	3			6		5		
4	6			7			8	1
		7		8			4	3
	4		6	2		8	1	
5	1	6	9	4				
5				1			6	4

To play sudoku, you fill a 9x9 grid with the numbers 1–9, making sure no number repeats in any row, column, or 3x3 box.

How to play

- Start by filling in the given numbers.
- Use the process of elimination to figure out which numbers go in the blank spaces.
- Scan the grid, looking for opportunities to place a number.

Sudoku tips

- Use the scanning technique to eliminate numbers or squares.
- Look for naked pairs, which are cells that have only one possible candidate.
- If a cell only has one possible entry, fill it



Living Word Bible Church Locations

Mesa - 3520 E. Brown Rd. Mesa, AZ 85213 Ahwatukee - 14647 S. 50th St. #165 Phoenix, AZ 85044
Scottsdale - Contact us for current location Gilbert - 202 S. Gilbert Rd. Gilbert, AZ 85296
Phoenix - 3525 W. Lewis Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85009 Español Mesa - 3520 E. Brown Rd. Mesa, AZ 85213

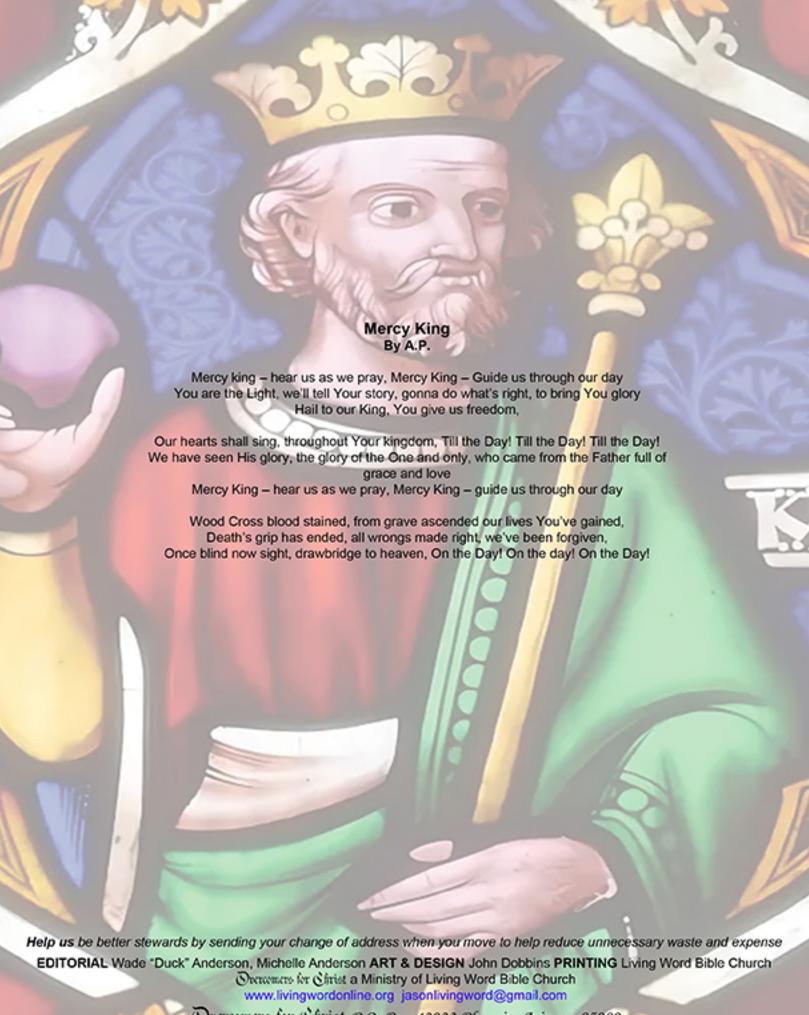


Ministry Tithes & Offerings

Here is how you can give to the Oppromers for Offrist ministry:

By check or money order – Make checks payable to Living Word Bible Church and in the memo section put "For Overcomers for Christ". Mail your check or money order to PO Box 42023, Phoenix, Arizona 85080

Your giving does qualify as a charitable contribution on your taxes. For donations of less than \$250, your cancelled check is sufficient proof for taxes. For donations of \$250 or more, you will receive a contribution statement from the organization. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.



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