

**First Love: A Deeper Understanding of Church
From the Book of Ephesians
Northern Virginia Church of Christ Fall 2017
Teachers: Brett Kreider / Mark Templer**

Date	Class	Memory Verse
October 1	Ephesians 1: Restore Awe	Ephesians 1:18
October 8	Ephesians 2: Get Grace	Ephesians 2:10
October 15	Ephesians 3: Behold the Bride	Ephesians 3:10
October 22	Ephesians 4: The Battle for Unity	Ephesians 4:15
October 29	Ephesians 5: The Song of Life	Ephesians 6:18
November 5	Ephesians 6/Revelation 2: First Love	Test

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 3:10, NIV)

Background on Ephesians: Acts 18-19

Acts 18 First Contact

- Paul was welcomed in the Synagogue → Pattern in Acts – first to the Jews, then the Gentiles
- Paul returned to Jerusalem and then back to Antioch
- Priscilla and Aquila instructed APOLLOS (18:24-28)

Acts 19 Two Years in Ephesus

- Converted “the twelve” disciples of John the Baptist
- After 3 months in the synagogue, Paul was rejected
- After 2 years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus → All in ASIA heard the word

Devotional Thoughts from Ephesians 3: Behold the Bride!

Prisoner of Christ (3:1)

“For this reason” – Paul reminded them why they were Christians

- Always start with the “WHY” before the what!
- “Prisoner of Christ” – Paul embraced his circumstances

*“God can change our circumstances, but more often he aims to **change us.**”
(First Love)*

The Mystery = Marriage (3:6)

The gospel unites Jews and Gentiles

- God married the Jews to the Gentiles – both are now heirs in one body
- “Sharers together in the promise” – God treats us all as his favorites!

God’s Wisdom Revealed (3:10)

“God has a purpose and a plan in this: he wants to display to the entire world the brilliance of his creation, the glory of his unified body.” (First Love Paraphrase Ephesians 3:10)

- “Through the church” – we are God’s plan
- Manifold = many facets – like a diamond
- WE make God’s wisdom known

God captivates the hearts of people on both sides of the battlefield.

Jews embrace Jesus and then embrace Gentiles.

Men embrace Jesus and then recognize the value and spirituality of women.

Slaves embrace Jesus and then forgive and help convert their masters.

This mass movement of unity and love proclaims a message to every creature, whether physical or spiritual, across the entire planet and even into the spiritual realms.

*The message? Glory to the God whose wisdom, power, and love can defeat any rebellion, treachery, sedition, or hatred and **unify all people in love in his body, the church.***

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Confidence in Him (3:12)

That “we may approach God with freedom and confidence”

- *We are now in Christ, approaching God through FAITH*
- *Like a Bride approaching her Groom*
- *Our view of the church affects our confidence before God*

Prayer Power Principles (3:12-21)

- **Confidence** – to trust him, even when we suffer
- **Posture** – “on my knees”
- **Strength** – power* through his Holy Spirit
- **Invitation** – “invade me”
- **Desire** – to know him better
- **Understanding** – the height, depth, width of God’s love
- **Knowledge** – “of that which surpasses knowledge”
- **Filled*** – “with the fullness of God!”

“Lord, may I be filled in every ounce of my soul with your love until it overflows into everything I do.”

(First Love)

Word Studies from Ephesians

Fullness (Strong’s 4138: πλήρωμα or plérōma) – “completion, super abundance.” Also, **Full** (Strong’s 4137: πληρόω or pléroó) – “filled to capacity.” Five significant verses from Ephesians. ***We are filled with the Spirit (5:18) of Christ who is exalted to God’s throne, “that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God,” (3:19) who fills the entire universe with his presence, power, and activity (4:10-13) with “the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” (1:23).***

Power (Strong’s 1411: δύναμις or dunamis) – the mighty strength to achieve “by applying the Lord’s *inherent abilities.*” Used in Ephesians to describe the supernatural force and understanding available to men and women of faith but only through the gift of the Holy Spirit. ***God’s power (3:7, 6:10) works through us by faith (1:19) to strengthen us by his Spirit (3:16) so that we may understand his love (3:18) and live out the calling God has given us in Christ (3:20) – to bring his power to this earth (3:16,6:10).***