

Ephesians for Teens

by
Sharon Williams Brown

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PREFACE

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I'm so glad you decided to take a look at Ephesians for Teens, because it has been written especially for you. You might wonder why I've said that, since most likely I don't know you. Well, let me explain how I came to write these devotionals and you will understand.

When two of my nieces were in their early teens, I wanted to encourage them to get into the habit of reading their Bible every day. So I searched for a devotional book suitable for their age group but it was really hard to find one. Most books I found were written for adults. However I knew that is much easier to form the habit of daily devotions when we are young. That's when the idea came that perhaps I could write a devotional book that would encourage young people to have a time of reading God's Word and praying as a regular habit every day.

I believe it is truly important if you are a Christian that you make time every day to communicate with God by listening to Him as you read His Word and by talking to Him in prayer. That is the only way to grow as Christians. However, sometimes it is hard to understand some Bible passages without some extra help and that is where devotional books can be helpful. It is my wish that all Christian young people develop the habit of a daily devotional time so they can come to know God better. So that is why I've said that this book is written especially for you.

A few suggestions on the way to get the most out of this book:

- Try to have your devotional time at the same time every day so it does become a habit. Getting up fifteen minutes earlier in the morning so you can be sure to have your devotions may be hard, but it is really worth it when we start our day with time for God.
- Be sure to read the Bible passage, not just the daily thought. Becoming familiar with God's Word is the real aim of the devotional time. Use a modern translation like the New International Version or the New King James which makes it much easier to understand what the Bible is saying
- Think about the Scripture and the reading that follows and see how you can apply it to your daily life. Knowing what the Bible says without doing it does not help us at all
- Although there is a brief prayer at the end of each reading, this is only a suggestion of how to start your prayer time. Be sure to spend time talking to God, giving Him thanks as well as talking to Him about anything that concerns you.

I do hope you will enjoy using this devotional book and that it will encourage you to make reading the Bible a habit for life. Most of all, I pray that it will help you to get to know, love and obey God more.

I am truly grateful to God for enabling me to write Ephesians for Teens. I am thankful too for my parents, Mervyn and Greta Williams,

who by both example and teaching encouraged all their children from an early age to love and obey God's Word. It is truly a blessing to have Christian parents.

I also appreciate the encouragement and help of my husband Lodian in this project. I am happy too that the devotionals are being published by a Caribbean publisher and want to thank Sam Rice for the vision and hard work that has made it possible for this book to be a reality.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my nieces Lesley-Ann and Joanna since it was their needs that started me thinking about this project. I hope that they, along with their little sister Jordana, will enjoy this book and be blessed by it.

*Sharon Williams Brown
December 2006*

Ephesians for Teens

Day 1

Verses to read - Ephesians 1:1-2

Suppose you had a very good friend who was in a foreign country and was not able to visit you? What if that person had been unjustly put in prison? Wouldn't you be anxious to get some news about them? If one day a letter arrived from them, imagine how excited you would be! You'd probably read that letter over and over and be able to tell everyone just what your friend said!

That's the story behind the book of Ephesians. The apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to his Christian friends at Ephesus, a town where he had lived and worked for several years. I'm sure they were very excited to get this letter from Paul, who had actually been the one to start the church there in Ephesus. They would have paid lots of attention to what he said. As we read through the book of Ephesians for our devotions this month, let us remember the circumstances under which the book was written.

When we write letters nowadays we often say, Dear ___, How are you? Or something like that. The first two verses of chapter 1 are the greeting part of the letter. Usually we just skim the greeting and go on to the real information. However in Paul's letters even his greetings contained important information (compare his greetings in verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter

of Galatians and Colossians - two of his other letters).

So what does Paul's greeting in Ephesians tell us? It tells us that Paul considered his Christian friends at Ephesus "saints". Nowadays we think of saints as people we see in stained glass windows in church buildings or people who are so good they are a lot better than the rest of us ordinary folks. But Paul called his everyday, ordinary Christian friends "saints". If you were living in Ephesus and were part of the church there, Paul could have called you saint Keisha or saint Neil or saint whatever your name is. Saints are really just people who have asked Jesus to be their Saviour and have decided to live their lives to please Him.

So are you a saint? If you are not and you would like to be one, here is how. Ask Jesus to forgive and cleanse you of your sins (the wrong things you have done) and to make you His child. Let Him know that from now on you will love and obey Him. If you did that you just became a saint! So let's see what you can learn along with the saints at Ephesus as we read the rest of Paul's letter.

Prayer: *Thank God for making you one of His saints and ask Him to remind you to act like one today by doing the things which please Him.*

Ephesians for Teens

Day 2

Verses to read: Ephesians 1: 3-10

Do you know anyone who has been adopted? Usually children are adopted because their birth parents have died or are not able to look after them at all. Often the people who adopt children wanted to have babies of their own but were unable to. Sometimes they spend a lot of time, effort and money trying to find a baby to adopt and be part of their family.

Children who are adopted are very special to their adoptive parents. Often when they tell their child about being adopted, they will emphasize how they chose them. They may have looked at pictures or gone to an orphanage. They may have seen several children, but eventually they decided this is the child they wanted. The child then came to live with them and became a part of the family for the rest of his or her life. The child was given a new name - the parents' surname - as a sign that they are now permanently a part of that family. Adopted children are often very glad that they now have a family they can be part of. As they grow up they show love for their parents by trying to please them as much as possible.

Paul uses this picture of adoption to describe how Christians become part of God's family. We don't start off life as part of God's family. He created us but we are not automatically His children. We become His children when we

accept Jesus as our Saviour. Paul says we are then like adopted children. We are part of God's family forever. We are given a new "family" name - we are called Christians. Verse 5 tells us that God is glad to have us as part of His family. And as His children He gives us many gifts. Some of these are mentioned in our passage. Can you find at least three in our passage for today? Look in verses 3, 6 and 7 in particular.

Just like children who show by their behaviour how happy they are to be part of a new family, we too have a responsibility to please our Heavenly Father. Verse 4 tells us that He expects us to be holy - that is to do the things which please Him and not the things which we know to be wrong. This is the best way of saying "Thank you for letting me be a part of Your family"

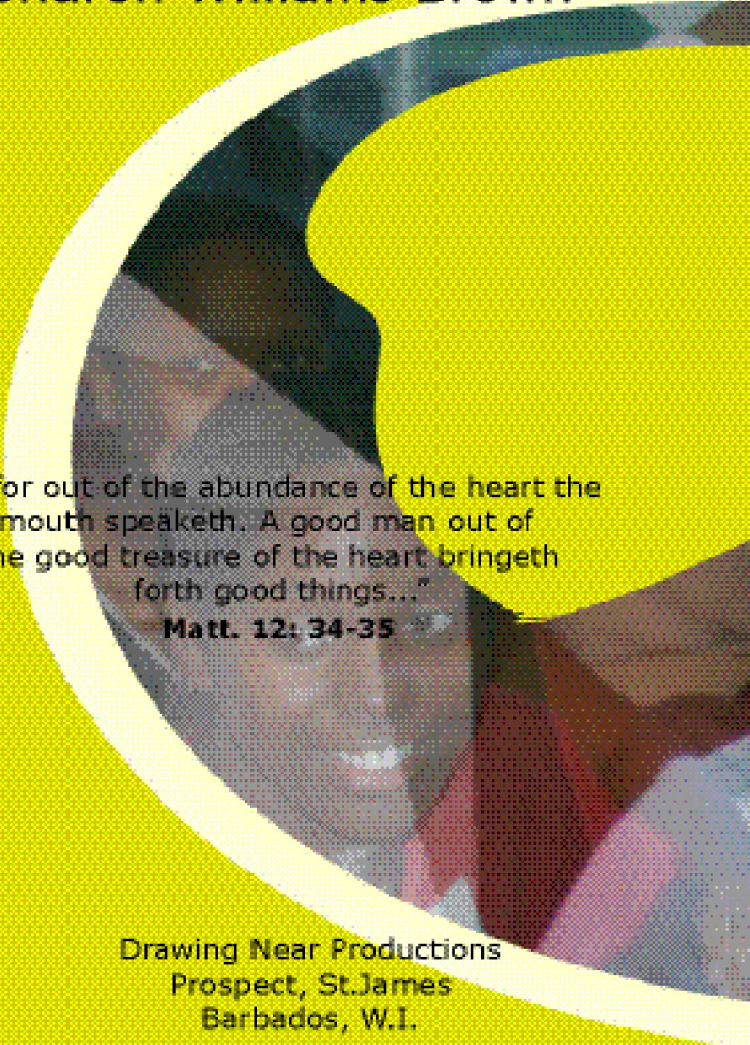
Prayer: Thank God for adopting you as His child. Ask Him to help you to live a holy life today.

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"...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things..."

Matt. 12: 34-35

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