

# Seven Images of Christ's Church in Ephesians

**NCBC NCCCE Virtual Annual Session 2026**

Vera Hollingsworth for the School for Christian Educators  
Friday, May 22, 2026

Rev. Damion Briggs, President, NCBC  
Rev. Dr. Artie Polk, President, NCBC NCCCE  
Sister Vera Hollingsworth, Dean, NCBC NCCCE

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Most Christians focus on growing as individuals and trying to be better in whatever roles we find ourselves. Few of us are aware of the collective images of Christianity. These images are scattered throughout the New Testament.

- ❖ The True Vine and Christians as Branches (John 15)
- ❖ The Good, Great, Chief Shepherd and Christians as the Flock (John 10:11-18; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- ❖ The Olive Tree and Christians as Engrafted Wild Branches (Romans 11:12-23)

This course identifies the images of the Church that the Apostle Paul presents in the book of Ephesians and challenges us to align our lives accordingly with their divinely-proclaimed purposes.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES



To demonstrate how to use hermeneutical principles to understand the images of the church in Ephesians.



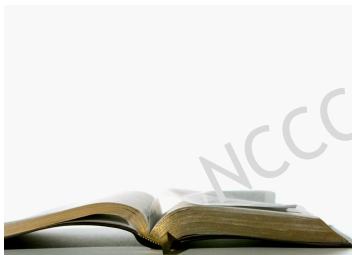
To set Christ-centered goals that align with the biblical collective views of Christ's Church.



To help Christians embrace a biblical perspective of the Christian faith and church that is collective, not individual.

## SYLLABUS SEVEN IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

**OBSERVATION (What does it say?):**  
**The Book of Ephesians**



**INTERPRETATION:**  
Images of the Church

**APPLICATION:**  
Goals Based on the  
Images of the Church

## OBSERVATION: THE AUTHOR

- ❖ The Apostle Paul visited Ephesus, the first-century center for worshipping the Asian goddess Artemis of the Greek pantheon.
- ❖ He founded the church there during his second missionary journey, recorded in Acts 15:36-18:22.

## OBSERVATION: AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS

- ❖ It is one of the four Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
- ❖ The Apostle Paul (1:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:20 “in bonds, chains) wrote this letter during his first imprisonment in Rome A.D. 60-63.
- ❖ Paul sent it to all the churches in Asia by way of an Ephesian named Tychicus (6:21).

## OBSERVATION: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### THE CITY OF EPHESUS:

- ❖ Commercially - was the finance center of Asia Minor
- ❖ Economically - was wealthy
- ❖ Politically - functioned as capital of the Roman empire
- ❖ Culturally - was a profitable commercial trading center that attracted people from every country and continent

Source: Hawthorne Gerald F Ralph P Martin Daniel G Reid and Daniel G Reid. 1993. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove Ill: InterVarsity Press. (249)

## OBSERVATION: CULTURAL CONTEXT

### RELIGION IN EPHESUS:

Jews were a minority - they worshiped Jehovah God in their synagogue

Gentiles were the majority - they worshiped:

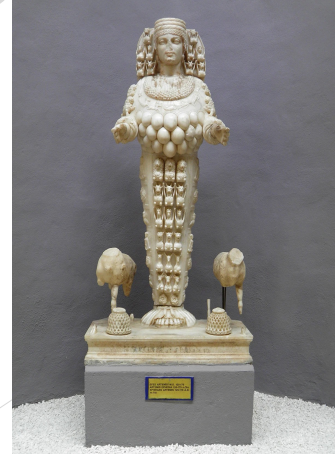
- ❖ the Roman emperors (“Caesar is lord”)
- ❖ the Greek and Roman pantheon (demons, based on 1 Cor. 10:20)
- ❖ demons (Ephesus was the Asian headquarters for magical arts and witchcraft)

## OBSERVATION: CULTURAL CONTEXT

### RELIGION IN EPHEBUS:

Even though Ephesus recognized 150+ deities, the majority of the people and their Asiatic area worshiped their primary goddess, Artemis of the Ephesians (Acts 19:24-35).

- ❖ Inscriptions and coins portray her with multiple breasts or rows of eggs, emphasizing fertility.
- ❖ Local myths taught that the sacred image “fell from heaven.”



## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

Paul wrote eight (8) very long sentences. Many English Bibles divide these into multiple sentences.	
1:3 - 14	2:14 - 19
1:15 - 23	4:1 - 6;
2:1 - 7	<b>4:11 - 16</b>
3:2 - 13	6:14 - 20

How many sentences make up **Ephesians 4:11-16** in your Bible?

## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

Paul wrote eight (8) very long sentences. Many English Bibles divide these into multiple sentences.		How many sentences make up <b>Ephesians 4:11-16</b> in your Bible?
1:3 - 14	3:14 - 19	KJV, NKJV, YLT = 1 sentence ESV = 2 sentences AMP, NET, NIV = 4 sentences AMPC = 6 sentences NLT = 10 sentences Message Bible = 12 sentences
1:15 - 23	4:1 - 6;	
2:1 - 7	<b>4:11 - 16</b>	
3:2 - 13	6:14 - 20	

## OBSERVATION: LITERARY DIVISION: BIPARTITE (2 PARTS)

<b>DOCTRINAL</b> <b>1:1 - 3:21</b>	<b>PRACTICAL</b> <b>4:1 - 6:20</b>
Belief	Behavior
High Calling	Holy Conduct
What we know	What we should do
Position	Practice
Privileges	Responsibility
Salvation	Sanctification
Wealth	Walk
Vertical relationship with God	Horizontal relationships with everyone else

**OBSERVATION:  
LITERARY DIVISION: TRIPARTITE (3 PARTS)**

<b>SIT</b> <b>1:1 - 3:21</b>	<b>WALK</b> <b>4:1 - 6:9</b>	<b>STAND</b> <b>6:10-20</b>
1:20 God raised up Christ and <b>seated Him</b> at His right hand in the heavenlies	4:1-16 <b>walk</b> worthy of the calling	6:11 you may be able to <b>stand</b> against the wiles of the devil
	4:17-32 <b>walk</b> not as other Gentiles	6:12 that you may be able to <b>withstand</b> in the evil day
2:6 God raised us up together and <b>seated us together in Christ</b> in the heavenlies	5:1-7 <b>walk</b> in love	6:13b and having done all, to <b>stand</b>
	5:8-14 <b>walk</b> as children of light	6:14 <b>Stand</b> , therefore, having your loins girt ...
	5:15 - 6:9 <b>walk</b> circumspectly	

**OBSERVATION:  
FREQUENTLY USED TERMS**

**PAUL FREQUENTLY USES SEVENS  
IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**

## OBSERVATION: FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

“in Christ” or “In Him”	... 36 times
“God”	... 34 times
“all”	... 32 times
“one”	... 15 times
“grace”	... 12 times
“body”	... 8 times (the Body of Christ)
“mystery”	... 6 times
“the heaventies”	... 5 times
“riches”	... 5 times
<b>“seven”</b>	<b>... 0 times ??????</b>

## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

### PAUL FREQUENTLY USES SEVENS

- ❖ **1:21-22 the sevenfold headship of Christ**
- ❖ 2:11-12 the sevenfold estrangement of non-Jews
- ❖ 4:3-6 the sevenfold unity
- ❖ 4:1 - 6:9 the seven walks
- ❖ 6:10-18 the seven-part armor
- ❖ Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church

1. Over ALL principality
2. Over ALL power
3. Over ALL might
4. Over ALL dominion
5. EVERY NAME in this world
6. EVERY NAME in the world which is to come
7. ALL things are under His feet

## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

### PAUL FREQUENTLY USES SEVENS

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- ❖ Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church

1. Gentiles in the flesh
2. Uncircumcised
3. Without Christ
4. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
5. Strangers from the covenants
6. Having no hope
7. Without God in the world

## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

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- ❖ Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church

1. ONE Body
2. **ONE Spirit**
3. ONE hope of your calling
4. **ONE Lord**
5. ONE faith
6. ONE baptism
7. **ONE God and Father of all**

## OBSERVATIONS: LITERARY FEATURES

### PAUL FREQUENTLY USES SEVENS

- ❖ 1:21-22 the sevenfold headship of Christ
- ❖ 2:11-12 the sevenfold estrangement of non-Jews
- ❖ 4:3-6 the sevenfold unity
- ❖ **4:1 - 6:9 the seven walks**
- ❖ 6:10-18 the seven-part armor
- ❖ Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church

1. old walk (according to the world)
2. ordained walk (in good works)
3. walk worthy of the calling
4. walk not as other Gentiles
5. walk in love
6. walk as children of light
7. walk circumspectly

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## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURES

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- ❖ 4:3-6 the sevenfold unity
- ❖ 4:1 - 6:9 the seven walks
- ❖ **6:10-18 the seven-part panoply**
- ❖ Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church

1. the girdle/belt of truth
2. the breastplate of righteousness
3. shoes prepared with the gospel of peace
4. the shield of faith
5. the helmet of salvation
6. the sword of the Spirit
7. prayer and watchfulness

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## OBSERVATION: LITERARY FEATURE

### PAUL FREQUENTLY USES SEVENS

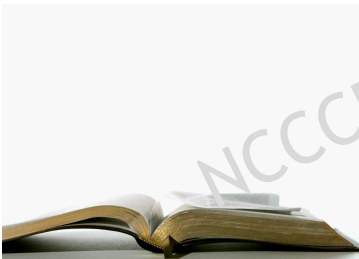
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- ❖ 6:10-18 the seven-part armor
- ❖ **Chapters 1-6 seven images of the church**

1. The Body of Christ
2. God's Family of Adopted Sons and Joint-Heirs
3. God's Building, Workmanship, and Dwelling Place
4. God's New Man/Humanity
5. Citizens of the Father's Kingdom
6. The Bride of Christ
7. The Army of God

## SYLLABUS: SEVEN IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

### OBSERVATION:

The Book of Ephesians



**INTERPRETATION (What does it mean?):  
Images of the Church**

### APPLICATION:

Goals Based on the  
Images of the Church

## INTERPRETATION: #1 THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Church is the Body of Christ  
and Christ (Who is over ALL things) is the Head

- ❖ Introduced in 1:20-23
- ❖ Explained in 4:11-16; 5:30
- ❖ Rom. 12:3-5; 1Cor. 12:12-27

## INTERPRETATION: #2 THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Church is God's Family of Adopted Sons, the  
Household of God, and Fellow-Heirs with Christ  
and Christ, Who is God's Only-Begotten Son, is the  
Heir

- ❖ Introduced in 1:5, 11-14, 18
- ❖ Explained in 2:19; 3:6, 14-21
- ❖ Gal. 6:10; Rom. 8:16; Gal. 3:26; Rev. 3:12

## INTERPRETATION: #3 THE BUILDING OF GOD

The Church is the Building/Temple, Workmanship, and Dwelling place of God and Christ is the Builder, the Foundation, the Head of the Corner, and the Cornerstone

- ❖ Introduced in Eph. 2:8-10; 2:20-22; 3:14-19.
- ❖ Prophesied: Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17.
- ❖ Fulfilled: Acts 4:11; 1Cor. 3:9-17; 2Cor. 6:14-18; Heb. 3:5-6; 11:10; 1Pet. 2:5-8.

## INTERPRETATION: #4 THE NEW MAN, NEW HUMANITY

The Church is a New Man, New Creation, New Humanity, a Perfect Man and CHRIST is the Second Man, the Last Adam

- ❖ Introduced in 1:9-10.
- ❖ Explained in 2:14-17; 4:11-13, 24.
- ❖ 1Cor 14:45-49; 2Cor 5:17; Col. 3:10-17.

## INTERPRETATION: #5 CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM

The Church is made up of Citizens and Ambassadors of a New Kingdom and Christ is the Blessed and Only Potentate

- ❖ Introduced: 2:1-1b.
- ❖ Explained: 5:5; 6:18-20.
- ❖ John 18:25-26; 2Cor. 5:20; 1Tim. 6:11-16; Heb. 11:10, Rev. 3:12; 19:1-27

## INTERPRETATION: #6 THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The Church is the Bride and Christ is Her Beloved Husband

- ❖ Introduced : 1:4.
- ❖ Explained: Eph. 5:25-33.
- ❖ 1Cor. 1:8; Rev. 21:9-17; 22:17.

## INTERPRETATION: #7 THE ARMY OF GOD

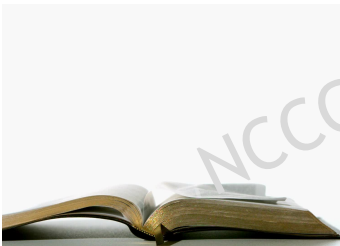
The Church is the Army, of God, His Host  
and Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords

- ❖ Introduced: 6:10-18.
- ❖ 2Cor. 10:3, 1Tim. 1:18; 6:12, 15; 2Tim. 2:2-4; Rev. 19:11-16.

## SYLLABUS: SEVEN IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

OBSERVATION:  
The Book of Ephesians

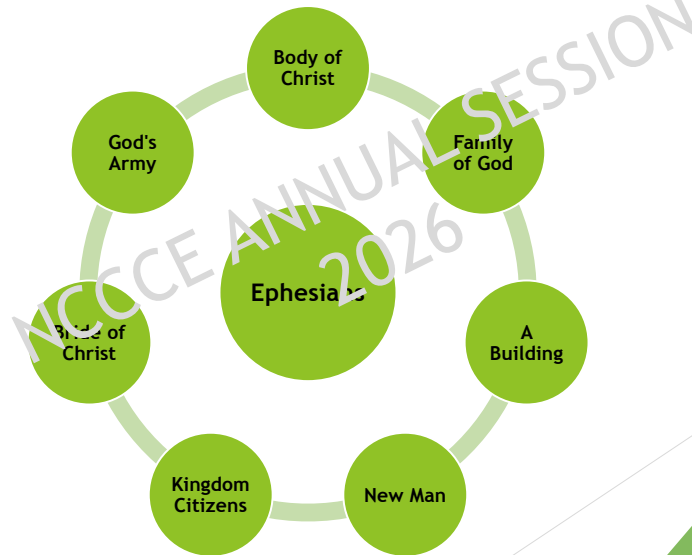
INTERPRETATION:  
Images of the Church



**APPLICATION (what does it mean for my  
life):**

**Goals Based on the Images of the Church**

## APPLICATION: WHAT GOALS CAN WE SET?



## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE BODY OF CHRIST?



Discover what our spiritual gifts are and start using them. We also need to grow up.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT INDICATORS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**

The gifts are given to help the collective BODY OF CHRIST to measure up.

## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE FAMILY OF GOD?



We have been adopted into  
THE FAMILY OF GOD.

We hold the positions of  
SONS and JOINT-HEIRS.

But now we need to  
cooperate as tribulation and  
the Holy Spirit develop  
within us the **character** of  
the Only-Begotten Son and  
True Heir of God.

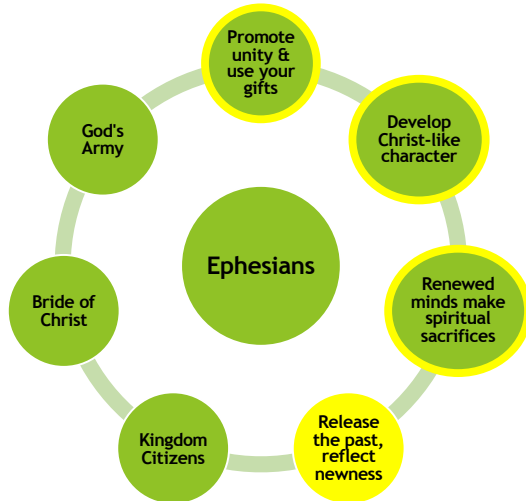
## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE BUILDING/TEMPLE OF GOD?



Let our lives be living  
testimonies of the Rock  
in Whom we trust.

By renewing our minds,  
we make spiritual  
sacrifices as living  
stones that make up the  
**BUILDING, THE TEMPLE,  
THE DWELLING PLACE  
OF GOD HIMSELF.**

## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE NEW HUMANITY?



Release the past!  
Let go of old things and old ways. Regularly choose to put on the new man, the new creation, the **NEW HUMANITY.**

## APPLICATION: GOALS AS CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM?



*"With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity." (Romans 12:1-2 Phillips NT)*

Resist the world. Present your body as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God.  
**We are KINGDOM CITIZENS.**

## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?



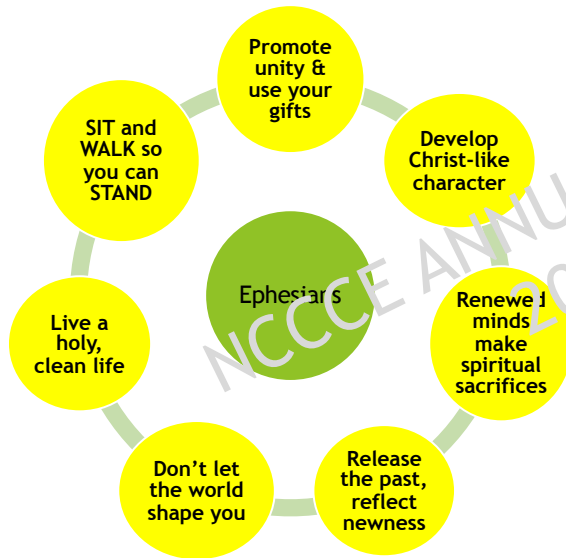
Live a clean, holy life. Repent quickly when we sin. Christ is coming back for a BRIDE who is holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle.

## APPLICATION: GOALS AS THE ARMY OF GOD?



We can first **SIT** (Eph. 1-3) and experience being seated with Christ. Then we can **WALK** (Eph. 4:1-6:9) the way God says to walk. Then we promise to **STAND** (Eph. 6:10-20) as **THE ARMY OF GOD**.

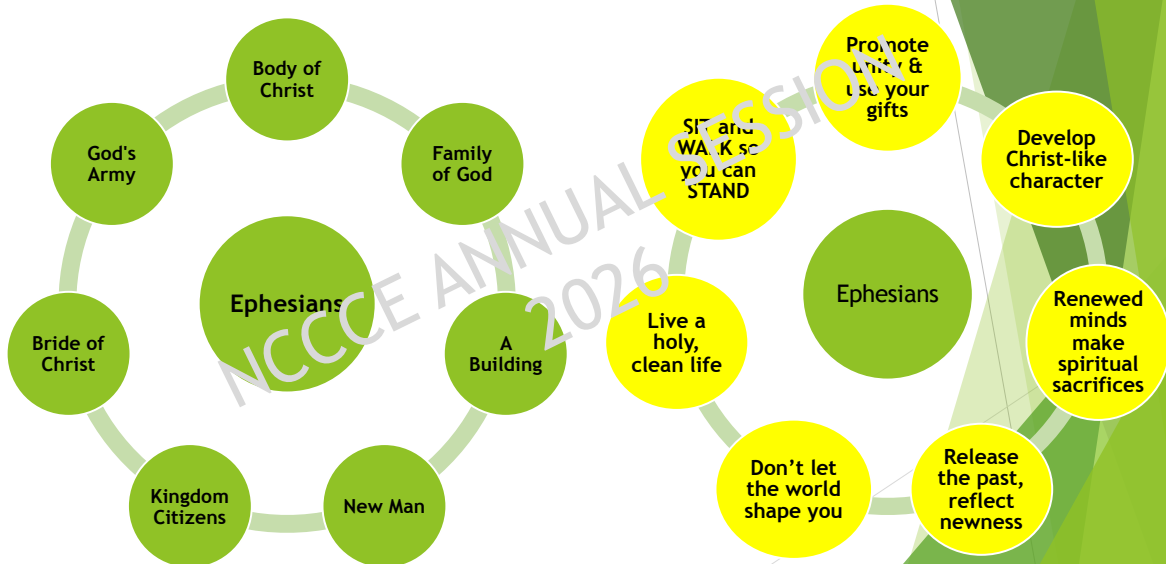
## CONCLUSION:



Aim for THESE goals in order to step up, to fit in, to help out, to be ready, to stand strong, and to stay focused on the BIG picture of God's collective church.

This is how we can fulfill God's vision for us as the Church Christ is calling to Himself.

## CONCLUSION: SEVEN IMAGES OF THE CHURCH



## RECOMMENDED READING

- ▶ *The Holy Bible* (any version)
- ▶ Nee, Watchman. *The Body of Christ: A Reality*. New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1978. PDF (47 pages) at <https://www.spiritualwarfareeschool.com/library/Watchman%20Nee/Watchman%20Nee%20The%20Body%20of%20Christ%20A%20Reality.pdf>
- ▶ Stedman, Ray C. *Body Life*. 3rd ed, Glendale, CA: GL Regal Books, 1972. PDF synopsis (9 pages) at [https://cdn.pbc.org/Main\\_Service/1970/04/25/0420.pdf](https://cdn.pbc.org/Main_Service/1970/04/25/0420.pdf)

## OUR PRAYER

Abba Father God, please show the exceeding riches of Your grace in Your kindness toward us through Christ Jesus our Savior (Eph. 2:7).

Help us, God Holy Spirit.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen