

I M M E R S E

The Reading Bible™



*MESSIAH*

## Welcome to IMMERSE The Bible Reading Experience

The Bible is a great gift to us from God. Through its words, God reveals himself to us and invites us into a relationship with him. And as we begin to better understand who God is, we also begin to better understand who we are—people who are loved by God, created in his image, and called into a new kind of life as members of his renewed creation.

The appropriate way to receive the Bible is to come to know it deeply, to lose ourselves in it precisely so that we can find ourselves in it. But the Bibles that most of us read are filled with artificial divisions and additions that, though originally meant to make the Bible easier to navigate, have had some unintended consequences. We now rarely read the Bible the way it was originally meant to be read. We most often break it into small, digestible chunks and pieces. We seldom read it at length and without distraction. Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience has been developed to reopen our eyes to the beauty of God's word in its amazing unity so that we can more easily discover its call to live into God's grand Story.

*Immerse: The Reading Bible* presents each book of the Bible without chapter and verse numbers, subject headers, or footnotes—all later historical additions. The entire text of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, is presented in a single-column format with easy-to-read type. To provide meaningful perspective, book introductions give historical and literary context, and the books are often reordered chronologically or grouped with books that share similar ancient audiences. This unique Bible enhances the opportunity for readers to approach God's word in simple clarity.

Immerse is more than just a series of books; it's a community growing experience rooted in God's word. This sampler provides information on the layout, features, and text found in *Immerse: The Reading Bible*, but it also provides an opportunity to experience what Immerse is all about. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is included in its entirety so you can experience firsthand the look and feel of *Immerse Messiah*, the New Testament volume. Take a deep breath, and drink deeply. Immerse yourself in God's beautiful, life-giving words.



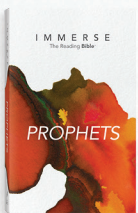
The entire Bible divided into 6 volumes provides the framework for the Immerse experience.

Each volume has been developed so it can be read according to an 8-week reading plan. The goal is for churches and other groups to read Immerse and then to come together each week to discuss what they've read. Meetings should feel more like a book club, where people gather to discuss the reading, freely sharing thoughts and opinions, all centered on God's word. Ultimately, the goal is to encourage God's people to read through the entire Bible in a regular 3-year rhythm, leading to a lifetime of deep Scripture engagement.



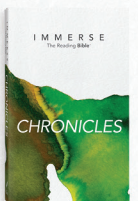
**Immerse: Beginnings** includes the first five books of the Bible, known as the *Torah* (meaning “instruction”). These books describe the origins of God’s creation, human

rebellion, and the family of Israel—the people God chose to be a light to all people. We follow the covenant community from its earliest ancestors to the time it is about to enter the Promised Land.



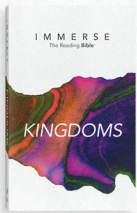
**Immerse: Prophets** presents the First Testament prophets in groupings that generally represent four historical periods: before the fall of Israel’s northern kingdom (Amos,

Hosea, Micah, Isaiah), before the fall of the southern kingdom (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk), around the time of Jerusalem’s destruction (Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel), and after the return from exile (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Jonah).



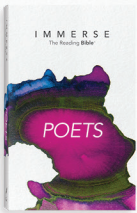
**Immerse: Chronicles** contains the remaining First Testament books: Chronicles—Ezra—Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel. These works were all written after the

Jewish people fell under the control of foreign empires and were scattered among the nations. They remind God’s chastened people of their identity and calling to faithfully represent God to the nations and that there is still hope for the struggling dynasty of David.



**Immerse: Kingdoms** tells the story of Israel from the time of its conquest of Canaan (Joshua) through its struggle to settle the land (Judges, Ruth) and the establishment of

Israel’s kingdom, which ends in a forced exile (Samuel—Kings). The nation of Israel, commissioned to be God’s light to the nations, falls to division and then foreign conquest for rejecting God’s rule.



**Immerse: Poets** presents the poetical books of the First Testament in two sections, dividing them between song books (Psalms, Lamentations, Song of Songs) and

wisdom writings (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job). These poetic writings all reflect the down-to-earth faith of God’s ancient people as they sought to live out their covenant relationship through their worship and wise living. These books now call us to do the same.



**Immerse: Messiah** provides a unique guided journey through the entire New Testament. Each major section is anchored by one of the Gospels, highlighting the

richness of Scripture’s fourfold witness to Jesus the Messiah, who fulfills all the longings and promises set in motion in the First Testament.

## To facilitate your reading experience, each volume comes with a Quick Start Guide.

**IMMERSE**  
The Bible Reading Experience™

### QUICK START GUIDE

3 ways to get the most out of your experience

- 1 Use *Immerse: Messiah* instead of your regular chapter-and-verse Bible. This special reader’s edition restores the Bible to its natural simplicity and beauty by removing chapter and verse numbers and other historical additions. Letters look like letters, songs look like songs, and the original literary structures are visible in each book.
- 2 Commit to making this a community experience. Immerse is designed for groups to encounter large portions of the Bible together for 8 weeks—more like a book club, less like a Bible study. By meeting every week in small groups and discussing what you read in open, honest conversations, you and your community can come together to be transformed through an authentic experience with the Scriptures.
- 3 Aim to understand the big story. Read through “The Stories and the Story” (p. 483) to see how the books of the Bible work together to tell God’s story of his creation’s restoration. As you read through *Immerse: Messiah*, rather than ask, “How do I fit God into my busy life?” begin asking, “How can I join in God’s great plan by living out my part in his story?”

**IMMERSE Resources:**

- Custom Immerse audio Bible
- Weekly preview videos
- Digital eBook version
- Dancer’s Guide
- Group Leader’s Guide
- Family Guide

Available at [www.ImmerseBible.com](http://www.ImmerseBible.com)

**TYNDALE**  
INSTITUTE  
FOR BIBLE READING

## MESSIAH

### 8-WEEK READING PLAN

<b>WEEK 1</b> Luke	<b>WEEK 5</b> Mark, 1&2 Peter, Jude
Day 1 pp. 1-12	Day 21 pp. 257-268
Day 2 pp. 13-27	Day 22 pp. 268-279
Day 3 pp. 28-37	Day 23 pp. 279-292
Day 4 pp. 37-47	Day 24 pp. 293-301
Day 5 pp. 47-59	Day 25 pp. 303-310
<b>WEEK 2</b> Acts, 1&2 Thessalonians	<b>WEEK 6</b> Matthew
Day 6 pp. 61-70	Day 26 pp. 311-324
Day 7 pp. 70-82	Day 27 pp. 324-336
Day 8 pp. 82-94	Day 28 pp. 337-345
Day 9 pp. 95-110	Day 29 pp. 345-358
Day 10 pp. 111-123	Day 30 pp. 358-366
<b>WEEK 3</b> 1&2 Corinthians,	<b>WEEK 7</b> Hebrews, James, John
Galatians, Romans	Day 31 pp. 367-377
Day 11 pp. 125-135	Day 32 pp. 377-387
Day 12 pp. 135-148	Day 33 pp. 389-396
Day 13 pp. 149-164	Day 34 pp. 397-411
Day 14 pp. 165-175	Day 35 pp. 411-423
Day 15 pp. 177-190	<b>WEEK 8</b> John, 1-3 John,
<b>WEEK 4</b> Romans, Philemon,	Revelation
Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians,	Day 36 pp. 424-437
1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy	Day 37 pp. 439-452
Day 16 pp. 190-202	Day 38 pp. 453-459
Day 17 pp. 203-214	Day 39 pp. 460-471
Day 18 pp. 215-224	Day 40 pp. 471-482
Day 19 pp. 225-241	
Day 20 pp. 243-255	

4 Questions to get your conversations started:

1. What stood out to you this week?
2. Was there anything confusing or troubling?
3. Did anything make you think differently about God?
4. How might this change the way we live?

## The guides provide

- + Useful background information for the reader
- + Ideas for getting the most out of the Immerse experience
- + An 8-week reading plan to guide the reading
- + Four questions to inspire conversation:

- 1 What stood out to you this week?
- 2 Was there anything confusing or troubling?
- 3 Did anything make you think differently about God?
- 4 How might this change the way we live?

## Natural Structure

The natural literary structures of each book are displayed by appropriate layout, simple line spacing, and graphic markers.

## Maximized Readability

Line length, line height, font size, and spacing have all been thoughtfully crafted for an optimal reading experience.

## Books Reunited

Books that were previously split apart have been put back together.

## Chapter and Verse Ranges

Displayed for quick orientation to the Bible text that falls on each page

# 1 CORINTHIANS



This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.

I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

+ + + Sets off opening and closing greetings from the letter's body

+ + +

I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

+ Marks significant transitions within the letter

+

I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ."

Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.) For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. As the Scriptures say,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise  
and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."

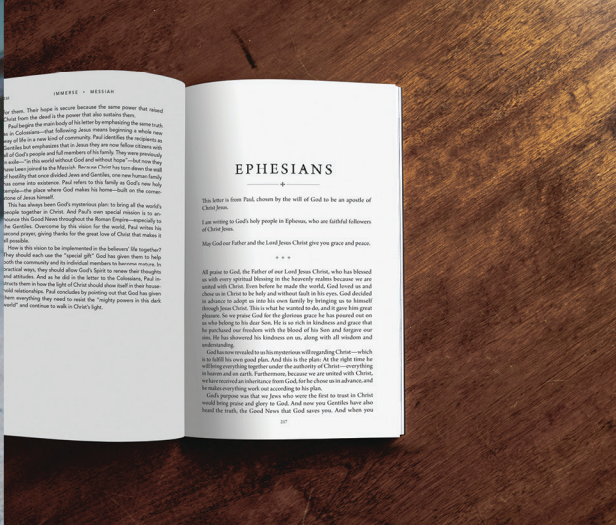
So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. Therefore, as the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD."

When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than



## IMMERSE: The Reading Bible...

Presents the entire *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation—a translation of the Scriptures designed to bring readers immediate clarity and a heart-language connection to God's word.

Sets different kinds of literature—poems, songs, stories, letters, genealogies, lists—in ways that help readers recognize them, facilitating more immediate understanding.



Lays out the entire Bible in a friendly single-column format with easy-to-read type.

Offers excellent book and section introductions that provide the historical and literary information necessary to accurately understand each inspired work on its own terms.

Presents each book of the Bible without the distractions of chapter and verse numbers, subject headers, or footnotes—all later historical additions to the text.

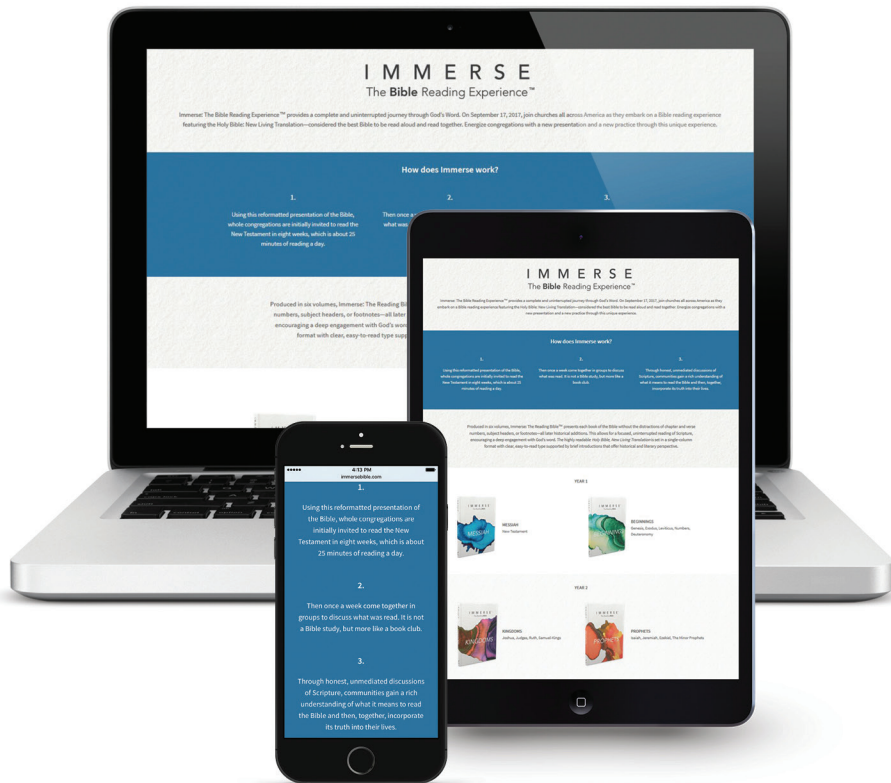
Arranges the Bible books in ways that offer readers additional context, grouping books together that share similar ancient origins, contexts, and audiences.



Provides subtle literary markers to pull forward the original structures of the books, helping readers to experience and progressively discover each book's flow as originally intended.

## Support Tools to Enhance Your Immerse Experience

The Immerse experience involves far more than just reading a series of books. Various support components have been purposely developed to enhance your community reading experience. These resources are included at no additional charge. And as resources are updated or added, your church will be given immediate access to them, allowing you to provide the most up-to-date tools and information to your community.



## Current resources available online:

- 1 Custom Audio Bible**  
Full audio recording that follows the natural literary breaks found in *Immerse: The Reading Bible*
- 2 Weekly videos**  
A 2-3 minute “trailer” highlighting what to expect and look for in the following week’s reading
- 3 eBook Version**  
Available for purchase, for use on Nook, Kindle, iPad, etc.
- 4 Pastor’s Guide**  
Guide to help pastors implement Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience in their church
- 5 Group Leader’s Guide**  
Guide for facilitating discussion during weekly group meetings
- 6 Quick Start Guide**  
Guide for participants, delivered as a bookmark within each book (also downloadable). One side gives the reading plan and helpful discussion starters; the opposite side provides other excellent tips for getting the most out of your reading experience.
- 7 Graphics Kit**  
For use in church programs, PowerPoint slides, etc.



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Experience Immerse yourself  
by reading Paul's letter to the Ephesians.  
Start with the book introduction, and then  
read Paul's letter without interruption.  
Encounter this letter much as the believers  
in the churches of Asia Minor would have  
at their first reading

Soak it in. . . .

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## IMMERSED IN EPHESIANS

**WHILE PAUL WAS LIVING AND WORKING IN EPHEBUS**, he sent his co-workers out to start churches across the Roman province of Asia. Epaphras planted churches in Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, but Paul was arrested in Jerusalem shortly after leaving Ephesus to deliver an offering for the poor. Paul was eventually brought to Rome and imprisoned while awaiting trial. By the time he heard about the situation in Colosse, he had been away from the province of Asia for at least three years.

Paul realized that by now other churches also needed advice, encouragement, and correction from him. (He likely got information about many of them from people who came to visit and help him in Rome.) So Paul gave his co-workers Tychicus and Onesimus a letter to read to these churches in addition to delivering his letters to the Colossians and to Philemon.

Today this letter is known as "Ephesians," even though the earliest and best copies of the letter are addressed to "God's holy people," not "God's holy people in Ephesus." (As is the case for all of Paul's letters, we no longer have the original.)

Paul is apparently writing to people he has not met personally because he tells the recipients that he has only "*heard of* their strong faith in the Lord Jesus." By contrast, when he writes to the Corinthians, he refers to "what *I told you* about Christ," and he reminds the Thessalonians of how "*we brought you* the Good News." In addition, the lack of specific personal greetings at the end also indicates that Ephesians was written for a more general audience.

Because this is a more general letter, Paul doesn't begin by explaining his connection to the recipients as he does in other letters. Instead, he writes a longer-than-usual opening thanksgiving, delivering a big-picture description of everything God has accomplished through Christ.

The Good News is the revelation of how God has brought his long-term plan to fulfillment. God is one, and he intends to unify all things under the authority of Christ. Paul's prayer is for the believers' understanding—that they would know the great scope of God's work

for them. Their hope is secure because the same power that raised Christ from the dead is the power that also sustains them.

Paul begins the main body of his letter by emphasizing the same truth as in Colossians—that following Jesus means beginning a whole new way of life in a new kind of community. Paul identifies the recipients as Gentiles but emphasizes that in Jesus they are now fellow citizens with all of God’s people and full members of his family. They were previously in exile—“in this world without God and without hope”—but now they have been joined to the Messiah. Because Christ has torn down the wall of hostility that once divided Jews and Gentiles, one new human family has come into existence. Paul refers to this family as God’s new holy temple—the place where God makes his home—built on the cornerstone of Jesus himself.

This has always been God’s mysterious plan: to bring all the world’s people together in Christ. And Paul’s own special mission is to announce this Good News throughout the Roman Empire—especially to the Gentiles. Overcome by this vision for the world, Paul writes his second prayer, giving thanks for the great love of Christ that makes it all possible.

How is this vision to be implemented in the believers’ life together? They should each use the “special gift” God has given them to help both the community and its individual members to become mature. In practical ways, they should allow God’s Spirit to renew their thoughts and attitudes. And as he did in the letter to the Colossians, Paul instructs them in how the light of Christ should show itself in their household relationships. Paul concludes by pointing out that God has given them everything they need to resist the “mighty powers in this dark world” and continue to walk in Christ’s light.

## EPHESIANS



This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.



All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you

believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles . . . assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

And this is 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. By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence. So please don’t lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

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Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of all,  
who is over all, in all, and living through all.

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,  
he led a crowd of captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”

Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
rise up from the dead,  
and Christ will give you light.”

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body.

As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on

salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

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To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

## The Partnership

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## The Art

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A Word from Rachel Van Dyke, Illustrator:

When I was approached by Tyndale House Publishers to consider creating art work for the covers of their new Reading Bible series, I had already been in prayer for a few months about how God might use my artistic gifts for His Kingdom. There was a deep need in me to see a direct connection between my artistic expression and bringing people to the saving knowledge of Christ.

The title, Immerse, is so visually expressive for me. I was thrilled to create a series of works that would embody this feeling of immersion in Christ's love and God's word.

I was given the book titles for the Immerse series, each one inspiring in me a color and gesture. Throughout the series, the cover art represents a set of harmonious colors to express the title to that particular Reading Bible volume. It feels alive and in motion, much like the Spirit of God in our lives.

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