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Ephesians 1 – 2

“Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ”

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Ephesus was a prosperous city along a major trade route on the Aegean Sea, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was a large city, with an estimated population between 300,000 and 500,000 in Paul’s day. Ephesus was also well known for the Temple of Diana, which was a center of idolatry. Diana was the goddess of sex and fertility, and there would have been at any given time as many as 1,000 temple prostitutes at the temple! Paul spent three years in Ephesus, which was more time than any other city he visited during his ministry. ([Acts 19–20](#)) Paul wrote this letter from prison, about 60-62AD. The book of Ephesians is neatly divided into two parts. The first three chapters deal with the doctrinal aspects of what God has done for us, and chapters four, five and six deal with the practical aspects of man’s response to all that God has done to save us and bring us into right relationship with him.

It’s interesting to note that in the original Greek language, [Ephesians 1:3–14](#) is one sentence! Once Paul stops to take a breath, so to speak, he writes another run-on sentence in verses 15 through 23! What is Paul so excited about? He’s excited about all that God has done. He writes that God has *“blessed us...with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”*

In this study we’ll see that God has blessed us by letting us know seven things about who we are in him: chosen, loved, predestined, adopted, redeemed, saved, and sealed. God wants us to be secure in understanding our position in Christ.¹ He wants us to grow in the knowledge of who we are in Christ, to have our identity securely rooted in him. He wants us to rest in the assurance of our salvation and of God’s love for us. But, God knows that these things are often a struggle, because we sometimes question God’s love for us, and sometimes we lack the assurance of our salvation and wonder where we stand with God. And, if there ever was someone who had reason to wonder about his standing with God or whether or not God loved him, it was Paul, and all the evidence to prove the point is seen in a quick look at Paul’s difficulties in ministry. ([2 Corinthians 11:24–27](#))

¹ Twenty times in the first two chapters Paul reverses the *“in Christ”* to *“us in Christ or in him.”*

There are many Christians who look at their circumstances and automatically translate that into their relationship with God. So, if they are in a bad place, they think that “God must not love me” or worse, “Maybe I’m not really saved?” It’s interesting to note that even in spite of the things previously mentioned, that Paul was never moved by his circumstances. The reason was that he knew who he was and whose he was, and no one and no thing was ever going to change that. The difference-maker was that he was “*in Christ*”!

We Are Chosen

1. To be chosen means to be selected.
2. Jesus said in **John 15:16**, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last...*”
3. **Romans 3:11** – “*...there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.*”
4. We only respond to God, because he is the one who sought us and chose us.

We Are Loved

5. Think of it, God is in love with each one of us!
6. **Jeremiah 31:3** – “*...I have loved you with an everlasting love...*”
7. **1 John 3:1** – “*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*”
8. In **Ephesians 3:17b–19**, it is Paul prayer that every believer would know God’s love.

We Are Predestined

9. Predestined is one of the most controversial words in the Bible.
10. Yes, we are predestined, but that does not mean that God “*predetermined*” those that are his and those that are damned.
11. The best way to interpret Scripture is with Scripture.
 - a. **Romans 8:29** says, “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...*”
 - b. We are predestined according to God’s foreknowledge, and since he knows all things, he knows those who are his.

12. In **1 Peter 1:2**, we read concerning God's elect that they are those *"who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..."*
13. The Bible teaches election and predestination but those things work in harmony with the free will of man.
- a. **Revelations 22:17** – *"...whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* (KJV)
 - b. Election and free will seem incompatible to us and we want to make it one or the other.
 - c. We only see one dimension, but God has a higher perspective and election and free will are compatible to him.
14. The main point is that God has a plan for your life; he saw you and knew you before time.

We Are Adopted

15. Adoption means to possess the rights, privileges, and position that were otherwise not naturally there.
- a. **Romans 8:17** – *"Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ..."*
 - b. We are God's children, but strictly speaking, this only true of those who have been adopted.
16. In **John 8:44**, Jesus had something to say about who was a child of God and who was a child of the devil.
- a. *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire."*
 - b. John, having been there when Jesus made these remarks to the Pharisees, wrote in **1 John 3:10**: *"This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother."*

We Are Redeemed

17. To be redeemed means deliverance by paying a price, and has the idea of paying ransom.
18. Sin has held us captive and we're slaves to sin.
19. We're delivered from sin because Jesus came to purchase us with his blood.
- a. **Revelation 5:9** – *"...and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

We Are Saved

20. We were all lost and on our way to hell, but Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin and death, which is the message of the Gospel.

21. **Luke 19:10** says, “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*”
22. **Acts 2:21** – “*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*”

We Are Sealed

23. Cargo would always be coming and going in the seaport city of Ephesus, so it was sealed with the mark of the owner by using a hot wax impression of the owner’s signet ring.
24. Paul is saying that God has placed the imprint of himself upon our lives, and we’re marked with the Holy Spirit; sealed and identified as belonging to him until the day of Christ Jesus.
25. **2 Corinthians 1:21–22** – “*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*”

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Ephesians 1:1–14** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Briefly review each of the seven “*spiritual blessings*” listed above.
 - a. It may be that there are folks in your group who have been dealing with situations and circumstances that might cause you to spend focused time on one or more of these points.
4. Allow the people in your group to share personal experiences about times when it seemed as though God no longer loved them or that they weren’t saved.
 - a. What were the circumstances and how did you “come out of it”?
 - b. Did the Lord send someone to encourage you and help you have a better understanding of God’s love. (i.e. Evangelist in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.)
 - c. What role did the Bible and/or prayer have in helping you come to a Biblical understanding of God’s love.
5. Be careful to make sure your study time does not end up being a debate on Calvinism vs. Arminianism, etc. If you or folks in your K-Group would like to read more about these theological positions, please contact Pastor Mike Emerson for a free Word version of Pastor Chuck Smith’s book *Calvinism, Arminianism and the Word of God: A Calvary Chapel Perspective*.
6. You may want to allow time for people to share their salvation testimony if they have not previously had an opportunity.

7. This may be one of those meetings that you spend a greater portion of time in prayer, especially since there are many Christians who struggle with the assurance of God's everlasting love, and the assurance of salvation or their relationship with the Lord.
8. Close your time in prayer by: asking the Holy Spirit to help them know that God is in love with them and has done the incredible to adopt them and make them his child; prepare someone in advance to be ready to read the list of seven "*spiritual blessings*" as a way of providing a final reminder of the extent of God's love for each one; prepare someone in advance to read [Ephesians 3:17b-19](#) as a way of emphasizing the extent of God's love.