

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Adopted in Christ

EPHESIANS 1:4-6

OVERVIEW

Everything—literally everything—in heaven and on earth is being united in Christ (1:10). Only when we understand who Christ is can we begin to understand who we are. We often read Paul’s letters thinking about all Scripture calls us to do. But before Ephesians calls us to do anything, it reminds us what God has done in Christ.

Our identity is not based on what we do, but who we are. Our identity is not earned and achieved but declared and received. Our identity, as Christians, is found “in Christ.” We are united to Christ—and that changes everything about us! Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus explains what we were (apart from Christ), who we are (in Christ), and then how we should live as followers of Christ, all for the glory of Christ.

APPLY // EPHESIANS 1:3-4

1. Paul is in prison while writing this letter (3:1; 6:20) and he still begins by praising God. What enables Paul to do this? What often keeps us from praising God when circumstances are not as we like?
2. How does praising God orient our lives so we truly flourish in the way God made us?
3. Paul says God is worthy of praise because he has “*blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.*” The first specific blessing he lists is “he chose us before the foundation of the world.”
 - a. How does the truth that God chooses us before the foundation of the world promote humility?
 - b. How does it promote assurance?
 - c. How does it promote thankfulness?
4. What are some ways we can apply the truth we are “holy and blameless” when we sin? How about when we are sinned against? How can we use this truth to encourage one another?

STUDY // EPHESIANS 1:4-6

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-14.
2. Trace Paul’s thought flow from 3 through 6. What type or “argument” is he making?
3. List the blessings with which God has blessed us in verses 3-6.
4. For what purpose did God predestined us? What is his motivation for doing so? What does this tell us about the character of God?

5. What does adoption mean? See also Rom 8:14-15 and Galatians 4:4-7.
 6. How are we “adopted” as children?
 7. Notice Paul says we are adopted “as sons.” Why doesn’t he say he adopted us as “sons and daughters”?
 8. Paul says this is all “according to the purpose of his will.” What does this phrase mean? What does this phrase tell us about the character of God?
 9. What is the ultimate end for all that God is doing? What does “to the praise of his glorious grace” mean?
 10. How does the phrase “with which he blessed us in the Beloved” fit into this passage?
 11. Notice “blessed” is in the past tense. What does this tell us?
 12. Notice we have been blessed “in the Beloved.” Why is it important to realize we can’t separate God’s blessings from God’s beloved Son?
- General Bible study questions:
 - **God:** What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
 - **Humanity:** What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
 - **Christ:** How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
 - **Response:** How should I respond with my affections and my actions?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: Do you doubt that God eagerly blesses us in Christ? How can you praise him for the ways he has blessed you, especially for spiritual blessings (i.e. not just material/circumstantial ways)?