



# UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Fully Alive: Ephesians

March 23-29

Ephesians 1:3-14

## Things to Know

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## Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## Sermon Recap

This week, we stepped into one of the richest passages in all of Scripture. Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long, beautiful sentence. Paul erupts in praise, reminding us that God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. In a world that constantly tells us we need more, Paul redirects our attention. The Christian life is not about chasing blessings. It's about recognizing the blessing we've been given in Christ.

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# Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 1:3-14?
2. When you hear the word “blessing,” what do you usually think of?
3. How does Paul redefine blessing in this passage?
4. Which trust stands out to you about the identity Christians have: being chosen, adopted, redeemed, or sealed? Why?
5. What does it mean that you are “sealed with the Holy Spirit”?
6. Paul repeats, “to the praise of His glory” three times. What does that tell us about the purpose of our lives?

## Read

**Read Ephesians 1:3-14 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
- What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
- Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
- What do you need help understanding about this passage?

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## Scripture

*Ephesians 1:3-14*

### Spiritual Blessings in Christ

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us[a] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, **8** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known[b] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ[c] **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

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**11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,[e] to the praise of his glory.

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Ephesians 1:3-14

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## Living on Mission In Community

This identity should propel us outward. Three times, Paul says our salvation is “to the praise of His glory,” which means our lives are meant to point beyond ourselves. As we live in community (loving one another, forgiving one another, walking in unity) we become a testimony to the world of what God has done in Christ. Mission is not just something we do; it is something we are together. When we live as people who are secure, forgiven, and adopted, we invite others into that same reality. A gospel-centered community becomes a living display of God’s glory, drawing others to see and savor Jesus.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources - March 23-29*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 1:3-14**

### **1. Session Overview**

Ephesians 1:3–14 is one of the most theologically rich passages in Scripture, where Paul opens with a sweeping declaration of praise for all that God has done for us in Christ. In one unified movement, he shows that every spiritual blessing flows from the work of the Triune God. He says we are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This passage shifts our perspective from striving to receive blessing to recognizing that, in Christ, we already possess everything we need. The emphasis is not on what we lack, but on what God has already given.

As you lead your group, help them see that these blessings are not merely personal. These blessings are meant to shape how we live together and how we live on mission. Our identity in Christ forms a new community marked by unity, security, and grace, and it fuels a life of worship “to the praise of His glory.” Encourage your group to move beyond head knowledge into heart response: to replace a mindset of scarcity with gratitude, to live from identity rather than for it, and to respond to God’s grace with lives surrendered in worship, both within community and out on mission.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Prayer:**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we come together with the Bible open asking that You would remind us once again of the identity You’ve given us in Christ. Father, please help us live “to the praise of Your glory.” In Jesus name, amen.

Icebreaker question:

#### **Ask:**

“What is one gift you received that you didn’t fully appreciate until later?”

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 1:3-14 out loud.

## **4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)**

### **1. Chosen by the Father**

Ephesians 1:3-6

Paul unfolds the incredible reality that our salvation is the work of the Triune God, beginning with the Father. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us in Christ, not based on anything we would do, but according to His own will and grace. His purpose was not only to save us, but to adopt us into His family as sons and daughters, giving us full access, full belonging, and a future inheritance. Our identity, therefore, is not something we achieve, but something we receive. We are chosen and adopted by the Father, and all of this is ultimately "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

### **2. Redeemed by the Son**

Ephesians 1:7-12

Paul then turns to the work of the Son, showing that in Jesus we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of our sins. Redemption means that we have been bought out of slavery to sin at the cost of Christ's life, and forgiveness is not given sparingly, but lavished upon us according to the riches of God's grace. Through Jesus, God has also made known His greater plan. His plan is to unite all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. Our lives, our past, and our future are now caught up in His redemptive purposes. Because of Christ, we are no longer defined by our sin or our past, but by His finished work. This too is "to the praise of His glory."

### **3. Sealed by the Spirit**

Ephesians 1:13-14

Finally, Paul highlights the work of the Holy Spirit, who seals us at the moment we believe. The Spirit is God's mark of ownership, showing that we belong to Him, and He is also the guarantee of our inheritance; this is the down payment that assures us that what God has promised, He will complete. We now live in the tension of the "already, not yet," fully saved and secure in Christ, while awaiting the fullness of what is to come. Because of the Spirit, we do not have to wonder or worry about our standing

before God—we are sealed and secure. And once again, the purpose is clear: our lives are meant to be lived “to the praise of His glory.”

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 1:3-14?
2. What does it mean to personally that God “chose you before the foundation of the world”?
3. How does seeing yourself as adopted by God change the way you relate to Him?
4. Do you tend to approach God more like a servant earning approval or a child who already belongs? Why?
5. What does it look like in real life to live as someone who is truly forgiven and redeemed?
6. How does knowing you are sealed and secure in Christ affect your confidence in your relationship with God?

## 6. Application

We are called to live lives of worship in response to God’s grace. Paul makes it clear that everything God has done is “to the praise of His glory.” Worship is not just something we do on Sundays; it’s the way we live. This week, consider how your life can reflect gratitude to God through obedience, generosity, time with Him, and love for others.

## 7. Closing Reflection and Prayer

### Reflection:

Because believers are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sealed by the Spirit, they can trust that God’s work is enough.

### Prayer:

“God, help us live as if we believe this is true. Thank You for choosing us, for redeeming us, and for sealing us. Please help us live lives to the praise of your glory. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

## 8. Memory Verse

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,”

Ephesians 1:7