

Small Group Bible Study

EPHESIANS 1 (KJV) · AUGUST 27, 2026

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1. Study Title

Every Spiritual Blessing: Tracing Grace from Eternity Past to the Praise of His Glory

2. Focus Passage

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1:3–6

3. Big Idea / Main Point

Believers have been unconditionally chosen, redeemed, and secured in Christ according to God's eternal decree, moving us from breathless wonder at sovereign grace to a life lived wholly for the praise of His glory.

4. Session Overview (for the leader)

- **Suggested time:** 60–90 minutes
- **Goal of the study:** To ground the group in the unshakable security of our salvation in Christ, moving from theological awe to personal assurance, worship, and love for the church.
- **Special notes:** This text is rich with profound doctrines of grace (election, predestination, redemption). Frame these truths not as dry theological abstractions, but as fuel for heartfelt praise, deep humility, and profound comfort. Give space for quieter members to process these grand concepts.

5. Opening (10–12 min)

- **Leader welcome:** "Welcome, everyone! It is so good to gather around God's Word tonight. We are diving into one of the most magnificent letters in the New Testament, starting right at the breathtaking beginning of Ephesians."

- **Icebreaker question:** "Think of a time you received an unexpected, deeply meaningful gift or inheritance. What was it, and how did it change your view of the person who gave it?"
- **Opening prayer:** "Father, thank You for bringing us together tonight. As we open Your Word, open our eyes to see the staggering height, depth, and width of Your grace in Christ. By Your Spirit, grant us wisdom and hearts overflowing with praise. In Jesus' name, amen."

6. Context & Setting the Scene (3–5 min)

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter from a Roman prison around A.D. 60–62, likely meant as a circular letter to the church at Ephesus and surrounding congregations in Asia Minor. Ephesus was a massive, bustling pagan city dominated by the temple of Artemis, where identity was tied to civic pride, wealth, and idolatry. Right out of the gate, Paul bypasses typical greetings to launch into an explosive, unbroken doxology (verses 3–14) that reads like a hymn of praise. He wants these believers—and us—to understand that our true identity, security, and spiritual wealth are anchored not in our performance, but in God's eternal sovereign plan enacted through Christ. Let's read the passage together.

7. Read the Passage

1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And

what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and

every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:1–23

(Note: Invite one person to read verses 1–14, and another to read verses 15–23.)

8. Observation Questions (“What does the text say?”)

1. According to verse 3, where are these "spiritual blessings" located, and who is the source of them?
2. Looking at verses 4 and 5, when did God choose His people, and according to what standard or motivation?
3. What specific transactional and relational terms does Paul use in verses 6–7 to describe our status before God?
4. How do verses 13–14 describe the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer after they hear and believe the gospel?
5. In Paul’s prayer in verses 18–20, what three things does he ask God to open the believers' eyes to understand?
6. According to verses 22–23, what position has God given Jesus over the church?

9. Interpretation Questions (“What does the text mean?”)

1. Paul states that we were chosen "before the foundation of the world" (v. 4). What does this teach us about the origin of our salvation versus our own works or choices? *(Note: While some traditions emphasize human libertarian free will in initial choice, a redemptive-historical reading highlights that God's sovereign, unconditional decree is the ultimate bedrock of our security, ensuring that salvation rests entirely on His unchanging grace rather than our shifting faithfulness.)*
2. What does it mean to be "accepted in the beloved" (v. 6)? How does Jesus’ standing with the Father affect our own standing?
3. In verses 11–12, Paul notes that God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." How does this view of divine sovereignty comfort a believer facing uncertainty or suffering?

4. How does Paul connect the resurrection of Christ in verses 19–20 to the everyday spiritual life of believers? (*Hint: Look at "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."*)
5. Cross-reference connection: How does Paul's teaching here parallel Romans 8:29–30 regarding predestination, calling, and glorification?

10. Application Questions (“How should this change us?”)

1. **Personal / Real-life:** How does knowing that God chose you "before the foundation of the world" impact how you view your worth on days when you feel inadequate or fail morally?
2. **Personal / Real-life:** We are sealed by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance (vv. 13–14). Where are you currently looking for security or "seals" outside of Christ (e.g., career, approval, finances)?
3. **Group / Community:** Paul links his thanksgiving for the Ephesians directly to their "faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints" (v. 15). How can our small group cultivate a deeper, more tangible love for one another as fellow members of Christ's body?
4. **Gospel Reminder:** None of these spiritual blessings—adoption, redemption, sealing—can be earned. They are secured entirely by the blood of Christ (v. 7) and given according to the "good pleasure of his will" (v. 5). How does resting in this truth relieve the exhausting treadmill of religious performance?
5. **Hands:** Paul prays that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened to know "the hope of his calling" (v. 18). What is one practical way you can preach this hope to yourself or someone else this week when discouragement hits?
6. **This week I will...** (*Prompt: Have everyone take 30 seconds of silence to complete this sentence mentally or in a notebook: "This week, in light of my eternal security and adoption in Christ, I will stop trying to earn approval by _____, and instead rest in _____."*)

11. Response & Closing (10–15 min)

- **Reflective prompt:** Re-read verse 6 quietly to yourself: *To the praise of the glory of his grace...* Let that phrase wash over any anxiety you walked into this room with tonight.
- **Prayer requests:** Invite the group to share brief prayer needs, especially areas where they need to experience God's powerful grace and peace.
- **Closing prayer:** "Father, we stand amazed at the vastness of Your grace. You loved us, chose us, redeemed us, and sealed us in Christ before time even began. Forgive us for living as though our standing depends on our own strength. Fill us with the Spirit of wisdom, anchor our hearts in our secure inheritance, and make this group a radiant reflection of Your body, the church. To the praise of the glory of Your grace we pray, amen."
- **Memory verse:**

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Ephesians 1:4