

# L O V E

l n c o r r u p t i b l e

## **Introduction:**

We begin our study of Ephesians with what I once heard called an “avalanche of praise.” After a brief greeting we are met with one sentence containing 202 words (studies show that the optimum sentence length is 15-25 words) designed specifically to move the heart and mind of all who hear and read it. This first sentence, however, is not moving because of the beauty of its rhetoric but because of the profundity of its subject matter. God the Father has blessed believers with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” He has done this “in love” so that the corporate collection of believers, the church, would praise him for this amazing display of grace.

Ephesians 1:1-14 shows that the church has been part of God’s plan since before time and that the plan God has for his church is to praise him. The church can praise God in any circumstance because he has given it every spiritual blessing. These blessings are not found in the frailty of precious stones, safety deposit boxes, or life-long relationships. Rather, the blessings God grants in Christ are found in the “heavenly places.” This is important because it means that they are secure from our present circumstances but also available to draw on, as we will see later in the book of Ephesians.

The blessings of God the Father are meant to reassure us in the midst of any circumstance and propel us into lives spent praising God for the work he has done in Christ.

But before we launch into our study, here are few, quick tips to get the most out of this study:

1. **Read** each passage multiple times throughout the week before attending your small group.
2. **Watch** the RightNow Media video that correlates with this week’s study
  - a. Some groups will watch the videos ahead of time, some will prefer to watch them during your group time - find the option that works best for your group.
3. **Think** about the questions beforehand so that you can best **engage** with your group.
4. **Pray** that God’s word would take root in your hearts and minds.
5. **Attend** the weekend sermon ready to dive even deeper with Pastor J.D.!

## **This week’s:**

- Scripture Passage: [Ephesians 1:1-14](#)
- RightNow Media Video: [Session 1](#)

## **RightNow Media Video Recap:**

1) What stood out to you from Pastor J.D.’s video?

2) What were the last three things mentioned in the video - the three major takeaways from this text?

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## **Bible Study Questions:**

3) According to Ephesians 1:3-10, list specifically what God has done, what he is doing, or what he will do.

4) From these same verses, what do we “have” from God, in Christ?

5) Verses 9 and 10 mention the “mystery” of God’s will. What is this mystery?

6) What is the relationship of “spiritual blessings” to the rest of what God does and gives in this passage? What does it mean that these blessings are “in the heavenly places?”

7) Look at verses 11 - 14. What do they say about who we are as Christians?

8) What does it mean that we are made for “the praise of his glory?” How can we bring him praise?

9) Looking back over this entire passage, who does the main activities in this passage? What, specifically, do “we” do?

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## **Application Questions:**

- 10) If we begin to see that our life's purpose is to bring God praise, how would that change your decision making, priority structures, and calendar?
- 11) God has given each Christian everything to enjoy in eternity. How does this excite and comfort you today?
- 12) Think back to the three, main takeaways Pastor J.D. mentioned for this passage. Share one way they will help you apply these verses this week.

## **Prayer:**

Look back to Question #3. Using the list your group made, go around and have each person pray and thank God for one of the ways in which he has blessed us in Christ.

## **A Note on Predestination:**

The idea of God pre-choosing us for salvation, often called predestination, has spawned a lot of arguments among Christians - it might in your small group. Often those arguments can distract us from our main purpose - living for the praise of God's glory.

There are also some unbiblical ideas swirling around the teaching on God's choosing. Should we stop sharing the gospel because God has already chosen the ones he wants? No, of course not. Should we worry that maybe he hasn't chosen us, even if we have chosen him? No, of course not.

If we're trusting him, the Spirit in our hearts is a guarantee that he has chosen us.

This first chapter of Ephesians is a beautiful presentation of God's amazing plan. He has chosen to provide redemption and forgiveness, exalting his name forever - and we are right in the middle of it.