

BECOMING A PEOPLE OF GRACE

STUDY THREE

Ten Reasons to Give God Praise

Ephesians 1:3–14

This passage is a great declaration of blessing that comes to us because we are believers in Christ, and, therefore, these blessings are ours to claim and to enjoy.

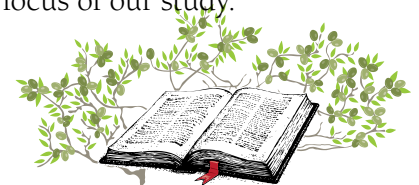
—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IF we want to sing God’s praises, we might naturally turn to the book of Psalms for inspiration. However, we might also open the first chapter of Ephesians. Surprised? Paul’s theological treatise in the opening of his letter seems more suited to the classroom than the sanctuary. Isn’t worship out of place with theology? Just the opposite! In fact, theology has no *closer* companion than worship, for the higher we scale the majestic heights of God, the more our hearts yearn to sing God’s praise!

Paul composed Ephesians 1:3–14 like a grand symphonic score interspersing refrains of praise with his theological themes. As if he were a choir director in Solomon’s temple, Paul gave the downbeat for voices to ring out in worship *four* times:

- “All praise to God” (Ephesians 1:3)
- “So we praise God” (1:6)
- “Bring praise and glory to God” (1:12)
- “So we would praise and glorify him” (1:14)

In Greek, this paragraph is a single sentence in which Paul’s ideas flow one after the other without pause. The sentence seems to never end! Like the angel’s chorus of worship in heaven, Paul’s lines go on and on declaring the many reasons God deserves praise—ten reasons, in fact, which comprise the focus of our study.



Ten Reasons to Give God Praise

Ephesians 1:3–14



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Open Ephesians 1:3–14 as you might enter a cathedral with ten magnificent stained-glass windows lining the walls and encircling you with reasons to give God praise. Pause for a moment of prayer and invite the Lord to fill your heart with wonder as you examine these truths about His character and deeds.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul's doxology in verses 3–14 begins with a call to worship: "All praise to God" (Ephesians 1:3). In Greek, the word for "praise" is *eulogētos*, which means "to speak well of," as when we eulogize someone. In the New Testament, however, the object of *eulogētos* is exclusively God.¹

God alone is praiseworthy. Why? Because He "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing" (1:3). In Greek, the words translated "blessed" and "blessings" are from the same root word for "praise." However, these words emphasize what God has *done* for us. Greek scholar Kenneth S. Wuest explains the distinction:

When we bless God, we praise Him, speak well of Him. When He blesses us, it is not that He speaks us good but He does us good. Our blessing is in word. His is in deed. He confers benefits upon us.²

According to Paul, each member of the Trinity takes a role in God's plan to bless us. The Father *initiated* the plan (1:3–6); the Son *implemented* the plan (1:7–12); and the Holy Spirit *empowered* the plan (1:13–14). Let's take a closer look at God's blessings.



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Observation: Ten Spiritual Blessings

Take a few moments to read *Ephesians 1:3–14* slowly in two Bible versions, giving attention to each phrase. Highlight the words that identify the Trinity: “Father” (1:3), “Son” (1:6–7), and “Spirit” (1:13–14). And make special note of what each member of the godhead does for us. Use the space below to make your initial observations.³ Can you find the blessings that the Father initiated in eternity past, the Son implemented through His sacrifice, and the Spirit empowered and continues to empower?

The Blessings the Father Initiated

The first three blessings were initiated by “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Ephesians 1:3*).

God Blessed Us with Every Spiritual Blessing—*Ephesians 1:3*

God’s blessings are not earthly, material, or temporal. What *kind* of blessings has God given us (*Ephesians 1:3*)? And what does this imply about their origin, nature, and quality?

These blessings are ours not because we deserve them but “because we are united with Christ” (1:3). Our union with Christ is the foundation for all our blessings.

Positionally, our heavenly Father sees His children as in the Son, and therefore all the blessings He set aside for the Son are ours to claim. —Chuck Swindoll



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God Has Chosen Us—Ephesians 1:4

What do you observe about the next blessing (*Ephesians 1:4*)? Remember, this is a blessing that the Father *initiated*. What is it? When did He initiate it? And for what purpose?

God chose us. Isn't that remarkable? He slipped His hand into the ranks of humanity and He chose you. —Chuck Swindoll

God Has Predestined and Adopted Us—Ephesians 1:5

How could God choose us “before he made the world” (*Ephesians 1:4*)? We weren’t born yet! God is not limited, not even by time—which leads to the third blessing. Motivated by love, what else did God the Father do for us in ages past (1:5)?

What does the concept of *adoption* imply about our relationship with our heavenly Father? For more insight, read *Galatians 4:4–6*.



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As adopted children, we have the same rights and privileges as the Son who is part of the Father. Isn't that a great thought? —Chuck Swindoll

The Blessings the Son Implemented

Now let's praise God for how the Son implemented the Father's plan.

God Has Redeemed Us—Ephesians 1:6–7

Once again, Paul invites us to “praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us” (Ephesians 1:6). Observe *Ephesians 1:6–7*. Write down who receives God's grace, what God did for us through Jesus, and how He did it.

The phrase, “purchased our freedom,” is a translation of the Greek word for *redeemed*. In his commentary on Ephesians, Chuck helps us understand this biblical term which is rich with meaning:

The word *redemption* describes the act of purchasing from bondage by paying a price. . . . Paul's use of this term points to the fact that God has redeemed believers, setting them free from the shackles of sin. In order to do so, however, a price had to be paid. How did He do it? Not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of His own Son, Jesus Christ.⁴



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God Has Forgiven Us—Ephesians 1:7

Paul adds God’s blessing of forgiveness to the blessing of redemption: “He . . . forgave our sins” (Ephesians 1:7). Paul connects our redemption (liberation from bondage) with God’s forgiveness (rescue from judgment) in *Colossians 1:13–14* as well. God’s forgiveness is the immediate result of redemption, and both are accomplished through the sacrifice of God’s Son. What does *Hebrews 9:22* say is necessary for sins to be forgiven?

*“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed your transgressions from you.”
You know what that means? You don’t have to live with shame. You don’t have to live with
guilt. They’re removed. You’re forgiven. —Chuck Swindoll*

God Has Lavished His Grace on Us—Ephesians 1:7–8

Read *Ephesians 1:7–8* in three versions and write down what you observe about Paul’s description of God’s grace.

God doesn’t merely drizzle His grace on us; He drenches us in it through His Son!

*You have what you have by the grace of God. You are what you are by the grace of God. You
do what you do by the grace of God. And you go where you go, ultimately, by the grace of
God! —Chuck Swindoll*



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God Made Known the Mystery of His Will—Ephesians 1:9–10

The Father cloaked His plan in mystery until His Son unveiled it. Can you find the truth revealed in *Ephesians 1:9–10* that God had kept hidden? Write down what you observe.

While sins like anger, greed, and pride split people into warring factions, God weaves together the frayed fragments. In the end, He will unite all created things under Christ (Revelation 7:9). How did Paul describe this unity that we can experience now in *Galatians 3:27–28*?

God Has Provided an Eternal Inheritance—Ephesians 1:11–12

Read *Ephesians 1:11–12* and write down the reason we have an inheritance from God—certainly not because we earned it!



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The Plan the Holy Spirit Empowers

The divine plan of salvation that the Father initiated and the Son implemented was and is continuing to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Let's look at the Spirit's role in the next two verses.

God Has Sealed Us in Christ—Ephesians 1:13

The final phase of Paul's grand benediction centers on our security in Christ. What words of assurance do you observe in *Ephesians 1:13*? Be certain to highlight the verbs and notice the prepositions "in" and "with" and to whom they refer. What does this verse say to you personally?

God Has Guaranteed Our Inheritance—Ephesians 1:14

What further assurance of our salvation do you observe in *Ephesians 1:14*?



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Interpretation: Security in Christ

In the interpretation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, we draw out Paul’s intended meaning for his original audience and formulate principles that we can apply in our day. In Ephesians 1:3–14, Paul taught that because believers are united with Christ, we are

1. Chosen by God “before he made the world” (Ephesians 1:4)
2. Adopted “into [God’s] own family” (1:5)
3. Redeemed “with the blood of his Son” and forgiven (1:7)
4. Sealed by the Holy Spirit, who is “God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised” (1:14)

Based on these rock-solid truths, formulate a principle about our security in Christ.

We are sealed! Permanently, eternally secure. It is impossible for us to diminish what God has done, having called us, brought us into His family, and chosen us, especially when we read that we are sealed. This means the transaction is complete. —Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Chosen, Called, and Right Standing

Paul taught on our security in Christ elsewhere in his epistles. Can you see the same theme in *Romans 8:29–30*? Write down the key words in this passage and the assurance they give you.

The ten blessings in Ephesians 1:3–14 ring from the rafters like bells in a tower, pealing God's praise to every nation! Let's conclude our study by giving ourselves in worship to our great God.



Application: Two Truths to Remember

Two truths stand out from these verses. First, *because all ten blessings are implemented by Christ, they're all dependent on His crucifixion and resurrection.* We must believe in Him to enter into His blessings. Second, *because all are initiated by God, they are all given to His glory.* Remember, it's all about glorifying God.

Write your praise in a poem if you wish. Or simply express your heart in flowing lines of prayer to the Lord. Thank Him for each of His blessings and conclude with your own benediction.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, may the bells ring out Your praise! Nothing on earth compares to the blessings we receive from Your hand. And all of them were given to us through Christ and guaranteed by the Spirit. I can hardly drink in all the grace that overflows my cup. I dedicate myself in lifelong service to You, the One who keeps my eternal inheritance secure. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 25.
2. Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*, 26.
3. To learn about Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
4. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Galatians, Ephesians*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 8 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 169.

