



02/2016

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

...even as He chose us in Him
before the foundation of the
world, that we should be holy
and blameless before Him.

EPHESIANS 1:4 (ESV)



02/2016

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

...even as He chose us in Him before
the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy
and blameless before Him.

EPHESIANS 1:4 (ESV)

Also available online at www.cefc.org.sg



MEMORY FOCUS

FROM EPHESIANS (ESV)

2016

JANUARY

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...

EPHESIANS 1:3

FEBRUARY

...even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that
we should be holy and blameless before Him.

EPHESIANS 1:4

MARCH

In love He predestined us for adoption as sons
through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.

EPHESIANS 1:5

APRIL

For by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

MAY

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than
all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all
generations, forever and ever. Amen.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

JUNE

I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner
worthy of the calling to which you have been called...

EPHESIANS 4:1

JULY

...with all humility and gentleness, with patience,
bearing with one another in love...

EPHESIANS 4:2

AUGUST

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:3

SEPTEMBER

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

EPHESIANS 6:10

OCTOBER

Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able
to stand against the schemes of the devil.

EPHESIANS 6:11

NOVEMBER

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

EPHESIANS 6:12

DECEMBER

...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer
and supplication. To that end keep alert with
all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...

EPHESIANS 6:18

FORE BY SENIOR PASTORS 2016 WORD

BACK TO THE ESSENTIALS IN 2016!



The more you grow as a Christian, the more you realise you have to return to the bare essentials of Christian living. Perhaps it is the discipline of **starting again**, the devotion to **persevere** or the decision to **stop doing something** so that we can start doing something.

Spiritual Growth is a choice!

This year, the Lord gave us Acts 20:28 as a spiritual anchor towards Covenant EFC's Golden Jubilee in 2028.

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

These are the bare essentials God wants us to return to in the midst of increasing messiness in the world and the glaring weaknesses within the Church:

- **Pay Attention to Yourself.** We seem to have grown up thinking in this order: Jesus first, others second and yourself last! While there is some validity in this order of living, there is also a flaw. If we do not take care of ourselves, we cannot take care of others. Our mission as a Church is clear: To raise authentic disciples and intentional disciplemakers of *A Certain Kind*. This is why we led the *Covenant Groups* to do a spiritual audit on their *Authentic Discipleship and Intentional Disciplemaking (A.D.I.D.)* growth journey and action plan – to find out where we are spiritually so that we can chart our growth intentionally. It is not only to grow as an individual but to grow as a community. There is rampant nominalism and powerlessness within the Church! It's time to let the Spirit break those chains over our lives and let the Word of God bring forth newness. Pay attention to yourself – not selfish narcissism but spiritual realism!
- **Pay Attention to Your Family.** The family institution is under attack. No one can take better care of your family than you. You are the 24/7-best-children-and-youth disciplemaker. The Church will complement and support you. The truths of God must be taught, caught and made real in times of distraught. So use this journal in family devotions and take proactive steps and establish a household of faith!
- **Pay Attention to Others.** Your spiritual growth will be capped until you give of yourself to care for others. In the process, you will discover what God is saying through the Word. And the ultimate test is: **What are you going to do about it?** Without obedience, there is no growth. Without growth, you cannot impart. Without impartation, there is no legacy. Would you want to be remembered as someone who lived for himself or lived for others?

For 2016, the book of Ephesians is the overarching frame for the daily devotional. This Epistle was written a few years after the account in Acts 20. It points us to the essential Doctrines (Eph 1-3) and Discipleship (Eph 4-6) of our lives. As we plough through this fascinating Epistle, we will be challenged to anchor our lives in Jesus as the only Lord and Saviour and to pay allegiance to the only Master and King of our lives. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! (Eph 1:2)

Rev Tony Yeo and Rev Tan Kay Kiong

GUIDE TO USING THIS DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

1 Prepare your heart in God's presence

- Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence. Centre down.
- Begin with a song of worship. Meditate on the lyrics even if you are unfamiliar with the tune. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- Ask God to open your heart to hear Him.

The English Standard Version (ESV) is the default Bible version translation unless otherwise specified.

2 Allow God to **S.O.A.P.** you with His Word and Spirit

- Scripture – Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.

- **Observation** – Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. You could use the guiding questions provided. *The “Deeper Reflection” section is to aid your contemplation of the Scripture. It is not to replace your own observation, for the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture to you as you seek Him earnestly.*
- **Application** – Note down a specific and practical commitment to God's Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.
- **Prayer** – Bring your heartfelt response to God in prayer.

WHAT'S NEW IN 2016?

Suggested prayers are included twice weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays, to serve as an aid to those who may find them helpful in their prayer response. On each Friday, there is a prayer pointer for the leaders (Covenant Group leaders, ministry leaders, Board and staff) whom God brings to your mind to pray for.

Examining your life is essential in your faith journey. Your redeemed life as a disciple of Christ deserves careful examining. May you take root and bear fruit in Him!



WORSHIP SONGS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOUR

Verse

Jesus beautiful Saviour
 God of all majesty, risen King
 Lamb of God, holy and righteous
 Blessed Redeemer, bright morning star

Pre-chorus

All the heavens shout Your praise
 All creation bows to worship You

Chorus

How wonderful how beautiful
 Name above ev'ry name exalted high
 How wonderful how beautiful
 Jesus Your name name above ev'ry name Jesus

Bridge

I will sing forever
 Jesus I love You
 Jesus I love You

Ending

Jesus beautiful Saviour
 (Repeat)

Words & Music: Henry Seeley
 Year & Publisher: © 2006 Planetshakers Ministries Int. Inc.
 (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing (IMI))
 For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use.
 All rights reserved. www.ccli.com
 CCLI License #324618

YOUR GRACE IS SUFFICIENT

Chorus

Your grace is sufficient for me
 Your strength is made perfect when I am weak
 All that I cling to I lay at Your feet
 Your grace is sufficient for me

Verse 1

I'm no longer striving to merit Your love
 I rest in Your promise to me
 That all of my sins have been washed in Your blood
 Your mercy is all that I need

Verse 2

You see me as righteous
 Because of the blood
 That made the atonement for me
 Your mercy has triumphed
 Where I should be judged
 So now, by Your grace, I am free

Words & Music: Martin Nystrom
 Year & Publisher: © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music
 (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
 CCLI License #324618

SCANDAL OF GRACE

Verse 1

Grace, what have you done?
Murdered for me on that cross
Accused in absence of wrong
My sin washed away in your blood

Too much to make sense of it all
I know that your love breaks my fall
The scandal of grace, you died in my place
So my soul will live

Chorus

Oh to be like you
(To) Give all I have just to know you
Jesus, there's no one besides you
Forever the hope in my heart

Verse 2

Death, where is your sting?
Your power is as dead as my sin
The cross has taught me to live
In mercy, my heart now to sing

The day and its trouble shall come
I know that your strength is enough
The scandal of grace, you died in my place
So my soul will live

Bridge

And it's all because of you, Jesus
It's all because of you, Jesus
It's all because of your love
And my soul will live

Words & Music: Joel Houston | Matt Crocker
Year & Publisher: © 2012 Hillsong Music Publishing
CCLI Song #324618

JUST AS I AM

Verse 1

Just as I am without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Verse 2

Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Chorus

I come broken to be mended
I come wounded to be healed
I come desperate to be rescued
I come empty to be filled

I come guilty to be pardoned
By the blood of Christ the Lamb
And I'm welcomed with open arms, praise God
Just as I am

Verse 3

Just as I am I would be lost
But mercy and grace my freedom bought
And now to glory in Your cross
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Ending

Praise God just as I am
Just as I am

Words & Music: Charlotte Elliott | David Moffitt | Sue C. Smith | Travis Cottrell |
William Batchelder Bradbury
Year & Publisher: © 2009 CCTB Music (Admin. by Universal Music Publishing
MGB Australia Pty Limited); First Hand Revelation Music (Admin. by Universal
Music Publishing MGB Australia Pty Limited); Universal Music - Brentwood Benson
Publishing (Admin. by Universal Music Publishing MGB Australia Pty Limited)
CCLI License #324618

YOU ALONE

Verse

You are the peace that guards my heart
 My help in time of need
 You are the hope that leads me on
 And brings me to my knees
 For there I find You waiting
 And there I find release
 So with all my heart I'll worship
 And unto You I'll sing

Chorus

For You alone deserve all glory
 For You alone deserve all praise
 Father we worship and adore You
 Father we long to see Your face
 For You alone deserve all glory
 For You alone deserve all praise
 Father we love You
 And we worship You this day

Words & Music: Don Harris
 Year & Publisher: © 1990 Integrity's Hosanna! Music
 (Admin. by CopyCare Asia Ltd (Singapore Branch))
 CCLI License #324618

KNOWING YOU

Verse 1

All I once held dear, built my life upon
 All this world reveres and wars to own
 All I once thought gain I have counted loss
 Spent and worthless now compared to this

Chorus

Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You
 There is no greater thing
 You're my all, You're the best
 You're my joy, my righteousness
 And I love You, Lord

Verse 2

Now my heart's desire is to know You more
 To be found in You and known as Yours
 To possess by faith what I could not earn
 All surpassing gift of righteousness

Verse 3

O to know the power of Your risen life
 And to know You in Your sufferings
 To become like You in Your death, my Lord
 So with You to live and never die

Words & Music: Graham Kendrick
 Year & Publisher: © 1993 Make Way Music
 CCLI License #324618

OCEANS (WHERE FEET MAY FAIL)

Verse 1

You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail
And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep my faith will stand

Chorus 1

And I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Verse 2

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sov'reign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now

Chorus 2

So I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Interlude 1

Oh and You are mine oh

Bridge

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Saviour

Interlude 2

Yeah yeah yeah yeah
Oh Jesus yeah my God

Chorus 3

I will call upon Your name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in Your embrace
I am Yours and You are mine

Words & Music: Joel Houston | Matt Crocker | Salomon Ligthelm
Year & Publisher: © 2012 Hillsong Music
CCLI License # 324618

NO OTHER NAME

Verse 1

One Name
 Holds weight above them all
 His fame
 Outlasts the earth He formed
 His praise
 Resounds beyond the stars
 And echoes in our hearts
 The greatest One of all

Verse 2

His face
 Shines brighter than the sun
 His grace
 As boundless as His love
 He reigns
 With healing in His wings
 The King above all kings
 The greatest One of all

Chorus

Lift up our eyes, see the King has come
 Light of the world
 Reaching out for us

There is no other Name
 There is no other Name
 Jesus Christ our God oh

Seated on high the undefeated One
 Mountains bow down as we lift Him up

There is no other Name
 There is no other Name
 Jesus Christ our God oh

Verse 3

Find hope
 When all the world seems lost
 Behold
 The triumph of the cross

His power has trampled death and grave
 Our life found in His Name
 The greatest Name of all

Interlude

Jesus

Bridge

The earth will shake
 And tremble before Him
 Chains will break
 As heaven and earth sing
 Holy is the Name
 Holy is the Name of Jesus, Jesus, Jesus

Ending

There is no other Name
 There is no other Name
 Jesus

Words & Music: Joel Houston | Jonas Myrin
 Year & Publisher: © 2014 Hillsong Music
 CCLI License #324618

MAN OF SORROWS

Verse 1

Man of sorrows, Lamb of God
By His own betrayed
The sin of man and wrath of God
Has been on Jesus laid

Silent as He stood accused
Beaten mocked and scorned
Bowing to the Father's will
He took a crown of thorns

Chorus

Oh that rugged cross
My salvation
Where Your love poured out over me
Now my soul cries out
Hallelujah
Praise and honour unto Thee

Verse 2

Sent of heaven God's own Son
To purchase and redeem
And reconcile the very ones
Who nailed Him to that tree

Bridge

Now my debt is paid
It is paid in full
By the precious blood
That my Jesus spilled
Now the curse of sin
Has no hold on me
Whom the Son sets free
Oh is free indeed

Verse 3

See the stone is rolled away
Behold the empty tomb
Hallelujah God be praised
He's risen from the grave

Words & Music: Brooke Ligertwood | Matt Crocker
Year & Publisher: © 2012 Hillsong Music
CCLI License #324618

GIVE THANKS

Verse

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ His Son

Chorus

And now let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us
And now let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us

Ending

Give thanks

Words & Music: Henry Smith
Year & Publisher: © 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music
CCLI License #324618

YOUR GRACE IS ENOUGH

Verse 1

Great is your faithfulness O God
 You wrestle with the sinner's heart
 You lead us by still waters into mercy
 And nothing can keep us apart

Pre-chorus 1

So remember your people
 Remember your children
 Remember your promise, O God

Chorus 1

Your grace is enough
 Your grace is enough
 Your grace is enough for me

Verse 2

Great is your love and justice, God
 You use the weak to lead the strong
 You lead us in the song of your salvation
 And all your people sing along

Pre-chorus 2

So remember your people
 Remember your children
 Remember your promise, O God

Chorus 2

Your Grace is enough
 Heaven reaching down to us
 Your Grace is enough for me

God, I see your grace is enough
 I'm covered in your love
 Your grace is enough for me

Words & Music: Matt Maher
 Year & Publisher: © 2003 Thankyou Music CCLI License #324618

FOREVER

Verse 1

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King,
 His love endures forever
 For He is good, He is above all things,
 His love endures forever
 Sing praise, sing praise

Verse 2

With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm
 His love endures forever
 For a life that's been reborn
 His love endures forever

Pre-chorus

Sing praise, sing praise
 Sing praise, sing praise

Chorus

Forever God is faithful
 Forever God is strong
 Forever God is with us
 Forever and ever

Verse 3

From the rising to the setting sun
 His love endures forever
 And by the grace of God we will carry on
 His love endures forever
 Sing praise, sing praise
 Sing praise, sing praise

Bridge

His love endures forever
 His love endures forever
 His love endures forever
 Forever

Words & Music: Chris Tomlin
 Year & Publisher: © 2001 sixsteps Music
 CCLI License #324618



THE CHURCH BEYOND

THE GOSPEL IN JAPAN

2015 was a pivotal year for Japan; 70 years had passed since the end of the Second World War.

In July and August, Japanese TVs and newspapers revealed some new facts regarding our forefathers' evil deeds based on newly discovered records. My visit to Changi Museum confirmed that Japan was like an extremist militant group 70 years ago. Our forefathers destroyed millions of people and their futures. The gravity of their sins became my burden.

Is there anyone who can forgive my nation? Will our grave sins be forgiven? In November 2015, Dr. Franklin Graham came to Tokyo and preached at the heart of the city. He declared, "Your sins are forgiven because Jesus has died on the cross for you. Your sins are forgiven!" In the hall where Dr. F. Graham preached, there was a huge Japanese flag hanging from the ceiling. God had spoken, the gospel was preached and surely Japan has heard.

Despite all the efforts of missionaries and pastors, the nation keeps turning a deaf ear to the gospel. The percentage of Christians there has stagnated at around one percent. Why? I personally think the major reason is our pride. We are too proud to repent; we cannot admit our sins and say "sorry". Pride is our national sin, which has allowed strongholds to dominate our country for centuries.

But I have hope in Christ. *"The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it."* Isaiah 60:22

On behalf of Japan I sincerely apologise for what my forefathers did to

"On behalf of Japan I sincerely apologise for what my forefathers did to Singapore and I seek your forgiveness."

Singapore and I seek your forgiveness. Can you please forgive my nation? Can you please intercede for Japan so that Japan will turn to the Lord with broken and contrite hearts?

May 2016 be marked as a year of victory and harvest in Japan. All glory to God.

» PRAY

True repentance of Japanese Christians to depend only on God Almighty

Unity of churches

Believers to be equipped as disciples of Jesus Christ

Openness of pre-believers' hearts to be set free from pride

"The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it."

ISAIAH 60:22



DAYS OF PASSION

FAST.PRAY.BLESS

17 FEBRUARY – 27 MARCH 2016

This year's 40 days of prayer is intentionally designed to coincide with the period of Lent¹.

Lent is a season of prayer and fasting as we walk with Jesus to the cross and the empty tomb. The theme of this year's 40-day prayer season is **40 Days of Passion**. We desire to have our spiritual passion for God renewed as we contemplate the Passion of the Christ, which culminated in His crucifixion on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Sunday. Are you ready to have your spiritual passion reignited?

There are three things we will focus on:

Fasting

As a church, we will fast every Wednesday and spend this time in prayer. A weekly prayer guide will be provided in the preceding Sunday's bulletin. You can participate by doing a full fast, partial fast or liquid fast. You can also fast from potentially distracting and time-consuming things like TV, gaming or Facebook!

Praying

We will engage in prayer at three main levels. At a personal level, we will synchronise our prayer time at 10pm daily. The Devotional Journal entries during this period will provide a daily 10pm prayer point for us to focus our prayers, based on the book of Ephesians. As a Covenant Group (CG), we will gather for extended prayer and to learn about fasting, praying and blessing. As a church, we will gather for corporate prayer at our 26 February Prayer and Praise, and 21-24 March revival prayer meetings.

Blessing

As we sincerely draw near to God, we trust Him to lead us to different people through the B.L.E.S.S. initiative, and so reach them for Christ towards this coming Good Friday Service and other outreach opportunities.

We would love to hear about your experience of this 40-day prayer journey. Email us at prayer@cefc.org.sg. May you meet Jesus afresh and have your spiritual passion for Him reignited!

¹ Lent in 2016 is from 10 February (Wednesday) to 26 March (Saturday), for a total of 46 days. Six Sundays are traditionally excluded from the count of 40 days. However, 10 February is also the second day of Chinese New Year, which is a period of feasting. Thus we are beginning our 40 days a week later on 17 February, which is exactly 40 days from 27 March (Easter).



MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016

God Is All in All!

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:1-2

■ OBSERVATION

How does Paul show that he is theocentric in his life in verses 1 to 2?

DEEPER REFLECTION

“The basic framework of the opening of Ephesians (vv. 1-2) follows the conventions of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek letters for centuries both before and after Paul’s time.”¹ But Paul’s greetings is not merely social in nature, but **highly theocentric**, “adorned with theological content.”² Paul’s intent is “to alert his readers to the theological significance of the letter”³. God and Jesus Christ are mentioned throughout the greetings. There is “the close linking of Christ with God”⁴, especially in the prayer (v. 2), showing that “God and Christ are entirely one” in nature and status as divine, and “in securing and bestowing salvation”⁵. We recall Jesus’ divine self-revelation: “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30). The greetings consist of three parts: the writer – “Paul” (v. 1a), the readers – “God’s holy people in Ephesus” (v. 1b), and a prayer – “Grace to you and peace” (v. 2). All three elements are together **highly Christocentric**: the writer is an apostle “of Christ Jesus”, the readers are “in Christ Jesus”, and grace and peace are “from...the Lord Jesus Christ”. Our lives – what we are, do, say and have, must be increasingly marked by “of Christ”, “in Christ” and “from Christ”. The Christian faith is fundamentally “Follow Me” (Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17).

■ APPLICATION

How do I want to gear my life to be increasingly marked by “of Christ”, “in Christ” and “from Christ”?

■ PRAYER

*God, O God, You are God who is all in all!
For everything comes from You and exists
by Your power and is intended for Your
glory.⁶ I bow in humble worship to
You, Creator, Possessor, Sustainer
and Ruler of all things – all things in
heaven and on earth, in the past, present,
future and eternity. I want You to be my all
in all. Help me, O Eternal God, my Father.
Amen.*



¹ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Baker, 2010), 31

² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Baker, 2002), 133

³ Frank Thielman, 31

⁴ Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentaries (Apollos, 1999), 88

⁵ Peter O'Brien, 88

⁶ Romans 11:36 (NLT)



TUESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2016

An Apostle of Christ Jesus

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:1; Acts 20:17, 31

■ OBSERVATION

What did Paul do as “an apostle of Christ Jesus” (v. 1) during his three years’ stay in Ephesus according to Acts 20:31?

DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul as “an apostle of Christ Jesus” (v. 1) means he “was an official delegate of Jesus Christ, commissioned for the specific tasks of proclaiming authoritatively the message in oral and written form, and of establishing and building up of churches”⁸. God gave Paul a “special apostolic mission” of “pioneer preaching”⁹ of the gospel – preaching the gospel only “where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (Ro 15:20, NIV). Paul’s “strategy was to evangelise the populous and individual cities, and plant churches there, and then leave to others the radiation of the gospel into the surrounding villages”¹⁰. Yet in his apostolic calling, Paul’s ministry was never too big, nor was he too busy, to pour out his life to intensive personal discipling – which he did in Ephesus: “**night and day, for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears**” (Acts 20:31). He did the same in Thessalonica, “exhorting and encouraging and imploring **each one of you**” as a spiritual parent (1 Th 2:11). It is a life-touching ministry, where the discipling’s life speaks: “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Co 11:1). This is a 1 Corinthians 11:1 leader.

■ APPLICATION

How do I want give my life to influence at least one other life in Christ as a discipling?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

⁷ Acts 20:17-38 is Paul’s farewell address at Miletus to the leaders of the Ephesian church.

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, 136

⁹ John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, The Bible Speaks Today (IVP, 1994), 382

¹⁰ John Stott, *Romans*, 383



WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2016

By the Will of God

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:1; Acts 18:18-21; 1 Corinthians 16:5-7; Romans 1:9-12
(cf. Acts 19:21)

■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about Paul and the will of God in the verses above?

DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul was an apostle of Christ “by the will of God” (v. 1). **What is God’s will?** “God’s will is His desire or divine resolve ‘which cannot remain in the sphere of thought but demands action.’”¹¹ God’s will is the “divine resolve” that will surely come to pass; nothing can thwart it (Job 42:2; Isa 14:24, 27). God’s will is the divine requirement on humans that “demands action” – submission. **Walk in God’s will:** Paul “had not appointed himself to this position; God chose him. Hence the words ‘by the will of God’ have overtones of God’s unmerited grace, and emphasise that there was no personal merit on Paul’s part either in becoming an apostle or continuing as one”¹². “It was never by personal drive or presumptuous human ambition but by God’s will and initiative.”¹³ To Paul, his apostleship was a “stewardship of God’s grace” (Eph 3:2). Paul walked by divine agenda, assignment and appointment. For Paul, walking by God’s will is characterised by both certainty and uncertainty – like his prayerful “if perhaps now at last by the will of God” in planning to visit Rome (Ac 19:21; Ro 1:10). “If God wills” is not a lack of faith as some deem so, but rather it is surrender to God.

■ APPLICATION

How have I been consciously walking in the will of God in my life?

■ PRAYER

O Lord my God, in all my many imperfections, by Your grace and mercy, I dedicate my life to You as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to You. Help me not to conform to this world, but transform me by changing the way I think. Then, I will learn to know Your will for me, which is good and pleasing and perfect.¹⁴ Amen.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

¹¹ Harold W. Hoehner, 137

¹² Peter O’Brien, 84

¹³ Harold W. Hoehner, 136

¹⁴ Romans 12:1-2



THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2016

God's Holy People in Ephesus

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:1; Exodus 19:4-6

■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean that Christians are “God’s holy people” (v. 1; Ex 19:4-6)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul addresses the Ephesian Christians as “saints” (v. 1), literally, “holy ones” – “God’s holy people” (NIV). **Who God is:** Only God alone is holy. God is holy means “God is wholly other, distinct and separate from everything that He has made”¹⁵ – “God’s unique character”¹⁶. **Whose we are:** God’s “holy ones” takes its meaning from the Old Testament, which speaks of God choosing and redeeming a people to be “My possession among all peoples” and “a royal priesthood and a holy nation” (Ex 19: 4-6; 1 Pe 2:9), and into a covenant relationship marked by “I am your God, you are My people, and I dwell among you” (Lev 26:11-12; 2 Co 6:16). We are God’s holy ones not because we are inherently holy in ourselves. On the contrary, we may have practiced unholy things (Eph 5:3). But we “have been sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Co 1:2) – a position of grace. **How we live:** We must first grasp who God is – knowing God, and whose we are – set apart for God, belonging to Him. Holy living is not just moral, but relational. Holiness is lived out of a growing relationship with God. It is growing in godly character – “like the Holy One who called you” (1 Pe 1:15; Eph 5:1).

■ APPLICATION

What area(s) in my life do I need to pay attention to in living as being set apart as holy to God?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

¹⁵ David G. Peterson, Holiness, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (IVP, 2000), Editors: T. D. Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, Graeme Goldsworthy; 544

¹⁶ Harold W. Hoehner, 138



FRIDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2016

In Ephesus...in Christ Jesus

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2

■ OBSERVATION

What is the theological significance of God's redeemed people being "in Ephesus" and "in Christ Jesus" (v. 1)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul's description of Christians is "comprehensive"¹⁷: "holy ones" because we belong to God, and believers who have trusted Christ for salvation (Eph 1:13) and continue as "faithful followers of Christ Jesus" (v. 1, NLT). To be "in Christ" is "to be personally and vitally united to Christ, as branches are to the vine and members to the body, and thereby also to God's people"¹⁸. It is union with Christ, in which is communion with Christ – "a living fellowship"¹⁹, at both personal and communal levels. Biblical discipleship takes place in two spheres: "in Ephesus" and "in Christ Jesus" – not as two separate realities, but together as one reality. Christians "have two homes, for they reside equally "in Christ" and "in Ephesus" – "both in Christ and in the secular world, or 'in the heavenlies' [Eph 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12] and on earth"²⁰. "Many of our spiritual troubles arise from our failure to remember that we are citizens of two kingdoms. We tend either to pursue Christ and withdraw from the world, or to become so preoccupied with the world and forget that we are also in Christ."²¹ Life in marriage, family and the workplace, is to be lived out in Christ (Eph 5:22-6:9), which makes it different and distinct in the world. This is holy living.

■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for me personally to live my life "in Christ" and "in Ephesus"?

.....

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:
Christ to shine in their daily lives

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

¹⁷ John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (IVP, 1979), 23

¹⁸ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 22

¹⁹ Peter O'Brien, 87

²⁰ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 23

²¹ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 23



SATURDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2016

Grace to You and Peace

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2

■ OBSERVATION

What is the “grace” and “peace” in Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church that he begins with in the letter (v. 2)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Paul begins Ephesians with a simple prayer of “profound theological import”²² (v. 2). “Grace”, with its idea expressed in various ways, is very prevalent in the New Testament (NT). “Grace” occurs 155 times in the NT – 100 times in Paul’s writings and 12 in Ephesians.²³ Grace is for the unworthy: it “characteristically denotes...God’s unmerited or undeserved favour in providing salvation for sinners through Christ’s sacrificial death”²⁴. Grace “is the gospel in one word”²⁵. The salvation that Christ brought at His First Coming is called “grace” (1 Pe 1:10-11), and we are to “fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to you” at His Second Coming (1 Pe 1:13). Grace is for the unable: it is “enablement for the believer”²⁶ in our weaknesses – “My grace is all you need, for My power is greatest when you are weak” (2 Co 12:9, GNB). Grace calls for humble dependence on God (cf. Jas 4:6). “Peace”²⁷ is “the effect of God’s gracious work”²⁸. It is “the sinners’ peace with God (Eph 2:14, 17) and the believers’ peace with one another (Eph 2:15; 4:3)”²⁹. We truly know God’s grace and peace when we are gracious to and seek peace with one another in Christ.

■ APPLICATION

In what ways do I want to see God’s grace and peace prominent in my relationship with God and with people?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

²² Harold W. Hoehner, 149

²³ “Grace” in Ephesians: 1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 29; 6:24

²⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, 149

²⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, 149

²⁶ Harold W. Hoehner, 149

²⁷ “Peace” occurs 8 times in Ephesians: 1:2; 2:14, 15, 17; 4:3; 6:15, 23

²⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, 150

²⁹ Harold W. Hoehner, 150



SUNDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ PRAYER

.....
.....
.....
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REFLECT

What is one key thing that God said to me this week
in light of what has happened?

RESPOND

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

COMMIT IN PRAYER

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

February 2016 – Week 1

**LONG AGO, GOD KNEW YOU**

Before the earth was created, God already knew you and your future.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4-5

ACTIVITY BITE

Try to predict these events: a) Will it rain in three days' time? b) Will there be flying cars in 10 years' time? c) Will elephants be extinct in the future?

CHAT TIME

- Q1: If you can see into the future and predict that you will fail in your year-end exams, what will you do now?
Q2: Why can't we know exactly what will happen in the future?
Q3: Since only God can know you and your future, why is trusting Him a good thing to do?

LEARNING POINT

It is so amazing that God knew you even before the earth was formed; an even greater miracle is that God knows your future. God knows you because He loves and cares for what will happen to you in the coming days. So there is no need for you to worry if there is food to eat and clothes to wear. There is no need for you to feel lonely too because He is there for you. This is why you can fully trust God to take care of everything. He is a great God.

ACTION POINT

Name one thing that you want God to help take care of. Commit that to Him in prayer.

PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, I am so thankful because You know me and will take care of my future. I want to trust You even more daily. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2016

Knowing the Glorious Triune God

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

How is the Triune God presented in verse 3?

DEEPER REFLECTION

Verses 3 to 14, one of the eight lengthy sentences in Ephesians,³⁰ is “marked by an accumulation of relative clauses and phrases whose relation to one another is often difficult to determine”³¹. So, read verses 3 to 14 carefully every day this week, seeking to grasp this magnificent passage as a whole. Verses 3 to 14 is a grand celebration of the “divine saving purposes from eternity to eternity...clearly set forth as the work of the triune God”³². **God the Father is the source** of “every Spiritual blessing”: He Himself is the subject of almost every main verb in the passage, like “He has blessed us” (v. 3), “He chose us” (v. 4), “He predestined us” (v. 5), “He freely bestowed” (v. 6) and “lavished” His grace on us (vv. 6, 7-8a), “He made known to us” His will and purpose (v. 9). **Christ is the sphere**: “In Christ” and “in Him” occur 11 times throughout the whole doxology. **The Holy Spirit is the seal** guaranteeing us our heavenly inheritance (vv. 13-14). Learn to consciously relate and commune with each person of the Divine Trinity and know the Triune God. I long to see in heaven what the unfathomable mystery of God in three distinct persons is like, and how the Triune God is both visible and invisible.

■ APPLICATION

What do I seek to consciously relate with and know the Triune God as three distinct persons?

■ PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, I thank You for graciously saving me from sin, and lovingly watching over me and providing my needs.
Lord Jesus, I thank You for loving me and giving Yourself up for me. I want to live for You as my Lord, for You are Lord before whom every knee must bow. Holy Spirit, fill me and empower me to live my life worthy of the glorious Triune God.
Amen.*

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

³⁰ Peter T. O'Brien, 90 – Ephesians 1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:2-13, 14-19; 4:1-6, 11-16; 6:14-20

³¹ Peter T. O'Brien, 90

³² Peter T. O'Brien, 91



TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2016

Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about “blessing” in verse 3?

DEEPER REFLECTION

“Blessing” – the antithesis of curse – is the key idea in verse 3. **Glorious of divine blessing:** the blessing is Trinitarian. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in blessing us – unworthy sinners who deserved only the divine curse. The divine blessing is “in Christ” – made possible because Christ Himself has “become a curse on our behalf” (Gal 3:13-14). See the glory of this immensely gracious full divine condescension! **Fullness of divine blessing:** God “has blessed us” – not “is blessing us” or “will bless us”. It is already done in Christ. And God has blessed us with “every” blessing that He wants to bless us with. Grasp the eschatological already-and-not-yet nature of this redemptive blessing. We must walk with God and grow in maturity, in order to appropriate and experience what God has already blessed us with. **Nature of divine blessing:** “Spiritual” – which “means pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit”³³, not “a contrast to what is material, secular or worldly”³⁴. Thus, to be filled with and empowered by the Spirit is vitally essential to grow towards the fullness of “every” blessing (cf. Eph 3:16; 5:18). **Response to divine blessing:** “Blessed be God.” High worship bursting out of deep gratitude!

■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for me in practical terms that God has already blessed me with every Spiritual blessing in Christ?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

³³ Peter T. O'Brien, 95

³⁴ Peter T. O'Brien, 95



WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2016

“Wow! God, You Chose ME?”

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about the first Spiritual blessing in Christ that Paul mentions in verse 4?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

The foundational “Spiritual blessing” in Ephesians 1:3-14 is God “chose us in Him” (v. 4). **Mystery of divine election:** “Scripture nowhere dispels the mystery of election, and we should beware of any who try to systematise it too precisely or rigidly. It is not likely that we shall discover a simple solution to a problem which has baffled the best of brains of Christendom for centuries.”³⁵ Don’t attempt to harmonise chronologically what God did in eternity and in time. The eternal God and eternity is not defined or bound by finite time created by the infinite God Himself (cf. 2 Pe 3:8). God just simply revealed that in pre-creation eternity “He determined to make us (who did not yet exist) His own children through the redeeming work of Christ (which had not yet taken place).”³⁶ **Glory of divine election:** Divine election “arose from His entirely unmerited favour, since He chose us ‘to be holy and blameless before Him’, which indicates that we, when in His mind He chose us, were unholy and blameworthy, and therefore deserving not of adoption but judgment”³⁷. No one deserved to be chosen. When we are gripped by God’s sovereign grace in His choice of us, we only humbly ask with deep gratitude, “God, why ME?”

■ APPLICATION

What does it mean to me personally that God chose the yet-to-exist me in Christ in pre-creation eternity to be His beloved child?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

*Eternal God, my Father,
when I look at myself
against the infinitely vast
universe that You have
created, I am tinier than
a speck of dust. But in
pre-creation eternity, You
foreknew me and chose me
personally, way long, long,
long before I came into
existence to be Your child.
Your love and grace toward
me is too overwhelming
for me!*

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

³⁵ John Stott, Ephesians, 37

³⁶ John Stott, Ephesians, 36

³⁷ John Stott, Ephesians, 36



THURSDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2016

Predestined to the Highest Privilege

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

How do you understand God predestining “us for adoption to sonship” (v. 5, NIV)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

God “predestined us” (v. 5) “describe[s] God’s choice [v. 4] more fully”³⁸. “Predestine”, which means “decide upon beforehand”³⁹, is “used exclusively of God⁴⁰ and serves to emphasise His sole initiative and authority in our salvation”⁴¹. **Highest Privilege:** God “predestined us to adoption as sons”. Sonship⁴² is the highest privilege God has given us, for through our union with Christ, “Jesus Christ shares His divine sonship with us”⁴³. The resurrected Lord calls His disciples, “My brethren” (Jn 20:17). God looks at us as His sons in the same way He looks at His Son. God says to us personally, “You are My beloved Son,” as He says to Jesus (Mk 1:11). And we are to look at God as our Father in the same way Jesus looks at His Father: “My Father and your Father” (Jn 20:17). “God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit that cries out, ‘Father, my Father’” (Gal 4:6, GNB). **Holy Purpose:** We are “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Ro 8:29). This is the “good” God works all things together for in our lives (Ro 8:28). “Adoption as sons” (v. 5) and “to be holy and blameless” (v. 4) are “parallel”⁴⁴ ideas. Thus, God lovingly “disciplines” us as His sons “so that we may share His holiness” (Heb 12:5-7, 10).

■ APPLICATION

What significance does the Son of God sharing His divine sonship with me have in my life?

.....

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

³⁸ Frank Thielman, 51

³⁹ Peter T. O'Brien, 102, footnote 62

⁴⁰ “Predestine” appears six times in the NT (Rom 8:29, 30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11; Acts 4:28)

⁴¹ Peter T. O'Brien, 102

⁴² Sonship is a God-given status and has nothing to do with gender.

⁴³ Frank Thielman, 52

⁴⁴ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 40



FRIDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2016

Kind Intention of God's Will

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

What is the significance of “according to the kind intention of His will” in God’s predestination of us to become His children (v. 5)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

The object of divine predestination is “**us**” (v. 5). At the personal level is **me**. But it is to be a **theocentric me**. It is God who predestined me towards God Himself to be God’s own beloved child, who once was among “the sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” (Eph 2:2-3). It is done “through Jesus Christ” – with no merit or effort on my part. It is God’s “pleasure” and God’s “will”. Recognise how special you are to God. It is here you find your true significance – significance that is from God, in God and before God. God is supreme in the theocentric me, who consciously guards against self-centeredness and human-centeredness. God is our Father and we are His children “according to the kind intention⁴⁵ of His will” – “what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure” (NLT). God’s “pleasure” “speaks of God’s sovereignty”⁴⁶. God is God, and “He does whatever He pleases” (Ps 115:3; 135:6). And “God’s pleasure is expressed freely from His own will, which is not influenced by any other person or thing”⁴⁷. God’s will is the best thing we can ever have. In everything that God purposes or permits in our lives is always His “kind intention” with our best and highest interests at heart.

■ APPLICATION

How does “the kind intention of God’s will” affect the way I live my life in today’s challenging world?

.....

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Secure in God’s will and pleasure

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

⁴⁵ Or, “pleasure” (NIV)

⁴⁶ Harold W. Hoehner, 199

⁴⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, 199



SATURDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2016

The Magnificence of God's Grace

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

How does Paul describe God's grace in verse 6?

DEEPER REFLECTION

In verse 6, Paul carefully uses a string of significant words to “slow the discourse and emphasise the grandeur or gravity of the thought”⁴⁸, so that we may capture in our mind and heart the magnificence of God's grace, manifested in His election and predestination of us to sonship (vv. 4-5) “as an utterly free gift, accomplished before we even existed”⁴⁹.

Glorious Grace: God's glory is “the manifestation of God's presence with His people”⁵⁰ (see Ex 25:8; 40:34) – “His saving presence”⁵¹. God's grace is glorious means “it reflects His glory, His revealed character”⁵².

Generous Grace: “Freely bestowed” is the verbal form of “grace”, which “emphasises the abundance of God's gift of salvation as well as implying His generous attitude as the giver”⁵³. God graciously and generously “graced” upon us His glorious grace. “In the Beloved”: Paul “has in mind Jesus' embodiment within Himself of the beloved and elect people of God”⁵⁴. It is “in the Beloved” that we are “beloved by God” (1 Th 1:4; 2 Th 2:13; Eph 5:1). “There is little distinction between God's love and His grace.”⁵⁵ Ponder and wonder at God's magnificent grace towards you – until “the praise of His glorious grace” fills your heart!

■ APPLICATION

How do I respond to God's magnificent grace towards me in Christ the Beloved?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

⁴⁸ Frank Thielman, 53

⁴⁹ Frank Thielman, 54

⁵⁰ Peter T. O'Brien, 104

⁵¹ Peter T. O'Brien, 104

⁵² Peter T. O'Brien, 104

⁵³ Peter T. O'Brien, 104

⁵⁴ Frank Thielman, 54

⁵⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Eerdmans, 1984), 257-58



SUNDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ PRAYER

.....
.....
.....
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REFLECT

What is one key thing that God said to me this week
in light of what has happened?

RESPOND

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

COMMIT IN PRAYER

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

February 2016 – Week 2

**LONG AGO, GOD INVITED ME**

God invited me to be part of His big family even before the earth was created.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4-5

ACTIVITY BITE

Ask your grandparents or parents to tell you more about how their lives were like when they were younger. Look at their childhood photos if they are available.

CHAT TIME

- Q1: Did your grandparents know that you would be their grandchild one day?
Q2: When you were young, what were your parents' future plans for you?
Q3: If God knew you even before the earth was created, what does this tell you about who He is?

LEARNING POINT

God is the only one who is able to see way beyond the future, even before the earth was created. He knew that you would be born to your parents even before they were born. He arranged that on purpose because He has a reason for you to be here right now. In fact God planned for everyone in the world to be born at the exact time that they did. We should marvel at His ability and be filled with awe that He knew you even before everything in the universe existed.

ACTION POINT

Say a prayer of thanks to God for having you in His mind all this time. Thank Him for the family He has given you and the good future He has planned for you.

PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

God, thank You for the family You have given me. Help me to love them always. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2016

Redemption and Forgiveness in Christ

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:6-7

■ OBSERVATION

How does the idea in verse 7 flow from verse 6?

DEEPER REFLECTION

The specific way God “freely bestowed” His grace on us “in the Beloved” (v. 6) is “redemption” and “forgiveness” (v. 7). Redemption “is equated with” forgiveness, “for it involved a rescue from God’s just judgment”⁵⁶. **Precious to God:** Redemptive forgiveness “was extraordinarily costly: it was bought with the price of the violent death of God’s Beloved Son”⁵⁷ – “through His blood”, “the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Pe 1:19, NIV). God Almighty could speak creation into existence (Heb 11:3), but not redemption. To the holy and just God “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:23; Lev 17:11). Redemption reveals God’s heart toward His redeemed people: we are extremely precious to Him. **Possessed by God:** “You are not your own; you were bought at a price” (1 Co 6:19-20, NIV). Therefore, we “no longer live for” ourselves, but for Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour (2 Co 5:15). **Pardon of God: In reality,** Biblical discipleship is a three-steps-forward-two-steps-back process, in which divine forgiveness is needed frequently. “We all stumble in many ways” (Jas 3:2). Redemptive discipleship is us following the Lord faithfully, and the Lord forgiving us fully (1 Jn 1:7).

■ APPLICATION

How do I respond to God’s redemption and forgiveness in Christ?

■ PRAYER

Holy and righteous God, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glorious standard. Yet You graciously and freely made us sinners righteous before You – through Your Son, whom You presented to Yourself as the sacrifice for sin and freed us from the penalty for our sins. Help me to live my life worthy of this redemptive price. Amen.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

⁵⁶ Peter T. O’Brien, 106

⁵⁷ Frank Thielman, 56



TUESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2016

Exalted Vision of God's Grace

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:6-8a

■ OBSERVATION

How does Paul see the grace of God in verses 6 to 8a?

DEEPER REFLECTION

In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul “wishes to evoke a cognitive and emotional response in the readers by reminding them in a fresh way of their redemption in Christ and their experience of salvation”⁵⁸, which is summed up as “grace”. Paul wants us to behold and be held by the immeasurable immensity of God’s grace, by which he is greatly overwhelmed into worship: the first wave of “the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us” (v. 6), and then the second wave of “the riches of His grace which He lavished on us” (vv. 7b-8a). Observe how Paul describes God’s grace: “glory”, “freely bestowed”, “riches” and “lavished”. But “words are hardly adequate to describe the inexhaustible nature of God’s giving”.⁵⁹ “God’s nature is not merely to be gracious, but also to be lavishly gracious”⁶⁰ and “overwhelmingly gracious”⁶¹ to His people. Framed by the two verses of God’s extravagant grace toward us is the redemption and forgiveness through the cross (v. 7a). Verses 6 to 8a must be viewed as one theological picture. We must grasp and be gripped by this exalted vision of the grace of God and “the God of all grace” (1 Pe 5:10).

■ APPLICATION

In what area(s) of my life am I not living by God’s grace and what do I want to do about it?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

⁵⁸ Peter T. O’Brien, 93 – citing Clinton E. Arnold

⁵⁹ Peter T. O’Brien, 107

⁶⁰ Frank Thielman, 56

⁶¹ Frank Thielman, 56



WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2016

Revelation of God's Mysterious Will

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:8b-9

■ OBSERVATION

What do you observe about God in verses 8b to 9?

DEEPER REFLECTION

“God made known to us the mystery of His will” (Eph 1:8a, NIV). “The term ‘mystery’ refers in a general sense to God’s gracious revelation to His people of something they could not possibly know unless He had made it known (cf. Da 2:17-30)”⁶². This divine mystery is “God’s saving purposes, planned from eternity, which had as their final goal the uniting of all things in heaven and earth in Christ [Eph 1: 10]”⁶³. God may have made known to us His “unified plan with eschatological and cosmic dimensions”⁶⁴, but whether we know it is another matter. It is possible that we still do not know when God has made that known to us. We must seek to know what God has made known to us. God has revealed His eternal purposes in the **Word of God** – unpacked in Genesis to Revelation through God’s progressive revelation over 1,600 years. We need the **wisdom of God** (“with all wisdom and understanding”) in order to know what God has made known. We prayerfully acquire this wisdom from the Scriptures and through “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation” (Eph 1:17), as we **walk with God** on a daily basis. The result will be looking at life and living life in the **ways of God** – God’s perspectives.

■ APPLICATION

How can I relate God’s eternal purposes of eschatological and cosmic dimensions to my life and living in today’s world?

■ PRAYER

Eternal God, my Father, I confess that I fail to grasp Your eternal purposes of eschatological and cosmic dimensions. But You have made them known in Your revelation in Scripture, and it is Your intention for me to know and to live my life accordingly. Help me to want and seek to know through the Holy Spirit that I may live purposefully in today’s world. Amen.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray “Your kingdom come” (Mt 6:10) upon pre-believers in terms of their salvation in Christ.



⁶² Frank Thielman, 63

⁶³ Peter T. O'Brien, 108

⁶⁴ Peter T. O'Brien, 109



THURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2016

Everything Summed Up in Christ

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:9-10

■ OBSERVATION

What do you learn about God and Christ in verses 9 to 10?

DEEPER REFLECTION

How are we to live in a world greatly plagued by global warming, erratic weather, geological catastrophes, “endless cruelty” of terrorism (cf. Na 3:19), increasing “lawlessness” (Mt 24:12), blatant immorality going “from bad to worse” (2 Ti 3:13), and economic uncertainty? The answer? God is “summing up all things in Christ” (v. 10). The fall of humanity brought disorder and disharmony into God’s creation and human history. But God is in the process of “summing up and bringing together the fragmented and alienated elements of the universe (‘all things’) in Christ as the focal point”⁶⁵ – “a universe that is centred and reunited in Christ”⁶⁶. Proclaiming “the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19), leading to God reconciling humans to Himself, and humans to humans in Christ (Eph 2), is part of this divine process. God’s “summing up of all things in Christ” continues until “the fullness of the times”, whether humans acknowledge Christ or not. At the present moment since Christ’s ascension – and until the end of history – “all things are under His feet” and He is “the head over everything for the Church” (Eph 1:22). Meanwhile, we wait with steadfastness and security in Christ under His supreme Lordship.

■ APPLICATION

How does knowing that God is in the process of summing up all things of the decaying universe in Christ shape the way I live in today’s world?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

DAYS OF PASSION
FASTPRAYBLESS

PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that God will open pre-believers’ eyes to see and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, to whom every knee must bow.

DAYS OF PASSION
FASTPRAYBLESS

⁶⁵ Peter T. O’Brien, 112

⁶⁶ Peter T. O’Brien, 112



FRIDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2016

We Were Made God's Inheritance

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:11a; Psalm 106:40-46

■ OBSERVATION

What does Psalm 106:40-46 tell us about God and “His people” and “His inheritance”?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

“In Him we were made His inheritance” (v. 11a). “The Christ who is at the centre of God’s plan to sum up all things in heaven and on earth [Eph 1:10] is also the one in whom we were claimed by God as His portion”⁶⁷ – “as His personal possession”⁶⁸. “We are God’s personal possession” is tied to us “having been predestined” “for adoption to sonship” (Eph 1: 5). God’s people as God’s possession has “the Old Testament background”;⁶⁹ and thus “the spiritual continuity between”⁷⁰ Israel and the Church. How does God relate with us as His possession?

God’s watchful guidance (Dt 32:9-12): God cares for us in our wilderness wanderings, as an encircling protector who guards us as He would the very pupil of His eye (Dt 32:10), and as a kindly shepherd who alone guides His people without any other to help Him (Dt 32:12).⁷¹

God’s faithful grace (Ps 106:40-46): When we sin against God, He lovingly disciplines us with His redemptive judgment (Ps 106:40-42; cf. 1 Co 11:32). But in our distress, He hears our cry and delivers us (Ps 106:43-44). It is because He remembers His covenant with us and acts “according to the abundance of His steadfast love” (Ps 106:45, ESV).

■ APPLICATION

How can being God’s personal possession give me security in living my life?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Confidence in God as His portion

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that pre-believers will cry to God in their troubles and God will answer them that they may come to know Him.



⁶⁷ Peter T. O'Brien, 115; F. F. Bruce, 263

⁶⁸ Peter T. O'Brien, 115

⁶⁹ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 46

⁷⁰ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 47

⁷¹ J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1974), 299



SATURDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2016

God Works Out All Things

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:11-12

■ OBSERVATION

What does verses 11 to 12 tell us about God working out all things?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

We are God's personal possession because He predestined us to this special privilege. And this is "according to His purpose who works out all things after the counsel of His will" (v. 11) towards "the summing up of all things in Christ" at "the fullness of the times" (Eph 1:10). Paul piles up the words "purpose", "works", "counsel" and "will", one upon another to "emphasise God's meticulous planning and sovereign control"⁷². Observe the comprehensiveness and totality of God's purposeful action – "all things". God "works out all things" (v. 11) in the present, and will "sum up all things in Christ" (Eph 1:10) in the future. "All things" – good and bad – that happen in our lives are not without God's sovereign permission or outside His intended purpose. We are to be God's people "who have placed their hope firmly in Christ"⁷³ and "continue to do so"⁷⁴ – even when we are in "hope against hope" situations (Ro 4:18). Our present and future are in God's hand. And we know where God is taking us to and what we are to be in our hope in Christ: "to the praise of His glory" (v. 12b)! In "all things" we pray like Jesus, "Father, glorify Your name" (Jn 12:28).

■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for you to fix your hope in God who works all things after the counsel of His will in your "hope against hope" life situation?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that pre-believers will be open to the gospel in their "hope against hope" life situations.



⁷² Frank Thielman, 74

⁷³ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2010), 91

⁷⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, 91



SUNDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ PRAYER

.....
.....
.....
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REFLECT

What is one key thing that God said to me this week
in light of what has happened?

RESPOND

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

COMMIT IN PRAYER

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

February 2016 – Week 3

**CHOSEN AND BLESSED**

I am chosen to receive the great blessings of God.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:7-12

ACTIVITY BITE

People are willing to give their best for something or someone who is very important to them. Ask your parents to tell you some of the best things they have done for you.

CHAT TIME

- Q1: What motivates your parents to want to give their best to you?
Q2: Are there important things in your life that you are willing to give your best to?
Q3: If God has chosen to give the best of everything to you, what would He expect from you in return?

LEARNING POINT

God has chosen to love and bless everyone that He has created. He wants everyone to receive this love and to know that they have a purpose on earth before living with Him in heaven. The least we can give back to Him are our praises and obedience to His commands. One of the best things you can give to God now is to do your best in your studies. Study hard and be diligent to complete your school assignments. When we do what He tells us to, we are fulfilling the purposes of why we are created at such a time.

ACTION POINT

Name one thing that you know God wants you to do. Ask your parents to help you do it to the best of your ability.

PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

Dear God, thank You for choosing to love and bless me. I want to give my best to You too in everything. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2016

Gospel of Our Salvation

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:13-14

■ OBSERVATION

How do you understand “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (v. 13, NRSV)?

DEEPER REFLECTION

The day we received Jesus Christ into our lives was when we “had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and had believed” (v. 13, NRSV). That is **the point** of hearing and believing, resulting in converting an unbeliever into a believer. Paul is recalling this for his readers. Biblically, “the gospel of your salvation” is not to be understood and applied in the same way we oftentimes do today, namely, the “gospel” for evangelising unbelievers. “The gospel of your salvation” is “the whole counsel of God” (Ac 20:27, NKJV), or “all Scripture” (2 Ti 3:16). The gospel which “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Ro 1:16) is what Paul expounds in the whole book of Romans, with its ultimate goal of transformation into Christ-likeness (Ro 12:1-2; 8:29). This is “the gospel of God” (Ro 1:1). In other words, “the gospel of your salvation”, even “the word of truth”, has ongoing daily relevance to believers. Therefore, following the point of hearing and believing must be the **progressive** hearing and believing. We need “to grow up in your salvation” through the Word of God (1 Pe 2:2) until the “salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pe 1:5).

■ APPLICATION

How am I grasping the word of truth and the gospel of my salvation, in my everyday life?

■ PRAYER

God of the gospel, help me to grasp in my mind, my heart and my life, the centre of the gospel of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; that I may walk in obedience that comes from faith.⁷⁵ Christ is the Light of the world, and those who follow Him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.⁷⁶ Help me to follow Jesus faithfully in my everyday life. Amen.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that the word of truth shared with pre-believers will lead to conviction of their need for salvation in Christ.



⁷⁵ Romans 1:1-5

⁷⁶ John 8:12



TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Holy Spirit: God's Promise

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:13-14; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34

■ OBSERVATION

Why is the Holy Spirit called “the promised Holy Spirit” (v. 13, NIV; Eze 36:24-28; Jer 31:31-34)?

DEEPER REFLECTION

When Israel persisted in breaking God's covenant through idolatry, they suffered the ultimate covenant curse of exile to Babylon (Dt 28:63-64). But it was against this dark spiritual background that God gave Israel the new covenant promise: “I will put **My law** within you” so that Israel will “know the LORD” (Jer 31:33-34), and “I will put **My Spirit** within you” to enable Israel to faithfully keep God's covenant (Eze 36:26-27). The new covenant promise of the Holy Spirit is for both the Jews and the Gentiles who received “the blessing of Abraham” “in Christ” (Gal 3:14; cf. Ge 12:3). God's promise of the Spirit reflects **God's covenant faithfulness**. God's very own righteousness demands His severest judgment on His people for breaking His covenant. However, God will not forsake His unfaithful people forever under His covenant curse. God seeks to restore His unfaithful people to Himself by giving them His best gift to enable them for covenant faithfulness – the promised Holy Spirit. And God has kept His promise. This promise in turn requires **our covenant faithfulness**. Living by God's Word and by God's Spirit go hand in hand together (Isa 59:21; Pr 1:23; Jn 6:63; Eph 6:17). God's requirement in His Word comes with His empowerment by His Spirit.

■ APPLICATION

How would I live by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God in my discipleship journey?

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM
Pray that our church will grow holistically and mightily as a Word and power church.





WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2016

Holy Spirit: God's Possession

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean to be “sealed” with the Holy Spirit in Christ (v. 13)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Divine redemptive blessing is Trinitarian (Eph 1:3): from the Father (Eph 4-6), in the Son (Eph 7-12), by the Spirit (vv. 13-14). We are “sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (v. 13). “In Christ” occurs here for the 11th time in the extended doxology, underlining the centrality of Christ. Although the Holy Spirit is mentioned by name only here, “His activity is assumed throughout”⁷⁷. A seal “is a mark of ownership and of authenticity. Cattle, and even slaves, were branded with a seal by their masters, in order to indicate to whom they belonged. But such seals were external, while God’s seal is in the heart. He puts His Spirit within His people in order to mark them as His own.”⁷⁸ God’s Spirit is God’s presence (Ps 51:11; 139:7). Being possessed by God and His presence in us – the presence of His very person – are inseparable. God set the seal of His Spirit on us “to protect” us from His wrath coming on the wicked (Eph 5:6).⁷⁹ We can rest secure in God and God in us, when we suffer opposition from the world. Those who oppose us oppose God Himself, because we belong to Him as His beloved children: “whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye” (Zec 2:8, NIV).

■ APPLICATION

In what practical ways can I live as God’s possession when I face opposition from wicked people?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

O Lord my God, in times of fiery trials when it seems that You have forsaken me, remind me that You have sealed me with the Holy Spirit in Christ to be Your special and precious possession. This divine seal itself assures me that, God, You will not forsake me, but Your presence and protection will always be there, no matter how I feel. Amen.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that God will continually fill our church with the Holy Spirit even as the Lord Jesus assures us that God will surely give when we ask of Him (Lk 11:13).



⁷⁷ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 34

⁷⁸ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 49

⁷⁹ Frank Thielman, 81



THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2016

Holy Spirit: God's Pledge

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

■ OBSERVATION

What does it mean that God has given us the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing our inheritance (v. 14)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

The Holy Spirit's presence in us is also God's "pledge" – "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (v. 14, NIV). The Greek word for "pledge" is "a commercial term for down payment or first instalment"⁸⁰ – "an amount of money"⁸¹ "handed over by a buyer to a seller until the purchase price was paid in full"⁸². Here, "the guarantee is not something separate from what it guarantees, but actually the first portion of it"⁸³. The "inheritance" guaranteed is "both of God's portion in His people (Eph 1:11, 18) and of the everlasting portion which He has reserved for them"⁸⁴ (cf. 1Pe 1:4). What do these truths mean to you personally? **Focus:** These truths are meaningful, significant, valuable and glorious to us only when we set our minds and hearts on and give our lives to things that are heavenly, eternal and unseen, "where Christ is" (Col 3:1-2; 2 Co 4:17-18). **Foretaste:** In giving the Holy Spirit to us, "God is not just promising us our final inheritance but actually giving us a foretaste of it, which, however, 'is only a small fraction of the future endowment.'"⁸⁵ Our experience of the foretaste is determined by our focus, as well as whether we walk by faith or by sight (2 Co 5:7).

■ APPLICATION

How does God having sealed me with the Holy Spirit in Christ as a pledge (guaranteeing my inheritance in the future) shape my perspectives and values in life?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that God will empower His church with the Holy Spirit to be His faithful witnesses (Ac 1:8).



⁸⁰ Peter O'Brien, 121

⁸¹ Frank Thielman, 81

⁸² F. F. Bruce, 266

⁸³ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 49

⁸⁴ F. F. Bruce, 266

⁸⁵ John Stott, *Ephesians*, 49



FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2016

Holy Spirit: Our Perseverance

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:22-25

■ OBSERVATION

What is the significance of “until the redemption of those who are God’s possession” in verses 13 to 14?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

The Holy Spirit is “a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession” (v. 14, NIV). While at present “we have our redemption” in Christ “through His blood” (Eph 1:7), our redemption is not final and full. Our final and full redemption is “the final deliverance”⁸⁶ in the future “when God takes full and complete possession of those who are already His”⁸⁷. But for now, we must wait for “the day of redemption”, for which we are “sealed” by the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). Part of this eschatological redemption is “the redemption of our bodies” (Ro 8:23), when God “will wipe away every tear from our eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning or crying, or pain” (Rev 21:4). But for now, we as God’s children, “having the firstfruits of the Spirit”⁸⁸, “groan” with the decaying creation (Ro 8:22-23), suffering trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword (Ro 8:35). Suffering with Christ in all these (Ro 8:17), we “exult in hope of the glory of God” (Ro 5:2), and “with perseverance we wait eagerly” in hope for that day (Ro 8:25), as we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).

■ APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to live life with a vision that looks forward to “the day of redemption”?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Faithfulness with perseverance until that Day

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:



PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that the Spirit of glory will rest upon Christians who endure sufferings (1 Pe 4:14), through which the reality of God will be evident to the world.



⁸⁶ Peter T. O'Brien, 122

⁸⁷ Peter T. O'Brien, 122

⁸⁸ Theologically similar to the idea of being “sealed” with the Holy Spirit as a “pledge” of our eternal inheritance.



SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2016

Maturing Discipleship: Theology, Spirituality, Doxology

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

■ OBSERVATION

If verses 3 to 14 is a portrait of a mature disciple of Jesus, how does this disciple look like?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Every single word strung together in the one long complex sentence of verses 3 to 14 reveals some vital characteristics of a mature disciple of Jesus. **Theology:** Verses 3 to 14 is pregnant with theology. Paul is not throwing out theological jargons like election, predestination, adoption and redemption in academic teaching. It is “task theology”⁸⁹ in disciplinmaking. He is not writing from a comfortable ivory tower, but in suffering “tribulation” as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus” (vv. 3, 13). What Paul has written is more than just theological content, but out of theological contemplation and theological character. **Spirituality:** J. I. Packer wrote his book “Knowing God” as devotional theology. Once D. A. Carson asked him how his book was doing. After giving Carson the figure, Packer quietly asked, “Do you know why it is still circulating?” Then Packer answered his own question: “Because it is a book on spirituality.”⁹⁰ Spirituality is knowing God. Verses 3 to 14 reveals a person who knows his God deeply. **Doxology:** Verses 3 to 14 is a portrait of deep spirituality built on solid theology bursting into majestic doxology (vv. 3, 6, 12, 14). Maturing discipleship must be increasingly filled with “the praise of His glory”!

■ APPLICATION

In what ways do I see in my own life the portrait of a maturing disciple of Jesus in verses 3 to 14?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

DAYS OF PASSION
FAST.PRAY.BLESS

PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that our church will be so filled with the praise of God's glory that the world can see it and be drawn to God through the gospel.

DAYS OF PASSION
FAST.PRAY.BLESS

⁸⁹ Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Fourth Edition* (Zondervan, 2014), 60

⁹⁰ D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Zondervan, 2005), 63



SUNDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2016

■ SCRIPTURE

.....

■ OBSERVATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ APPLICATION

.....
.....
.....
.....

■ PRAYER

.....
.....
.....
.....

THE PAST WEEK

REVIEW

What was my high point and my low point for the week?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What gave me life and what drained me?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

How was the Spirit of God at work?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REFLECT

What is one key thing that God said to me this week
in light of what has happened?

RESPOND

What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?

COMMIT IN PRAYER

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

February 2016 – Week 4

**SEALED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

With the Holy Spirit in us, nothing will separate us from God.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:13-14

ACTIVITY BITE

Get some of your favourite objects and mix them with those belonging to your parents or siblings. How can you tell which of these belong to you?

CHAT TIME

Q1: How do you match each item with the right owner? Through the markings on the items or simply by how they look?

Q2: Have any of your belongings been lost or stolen before? How do you feel about it?

Q3: Can anyone steal from God what belongs to Him? Why not?

LEARNING POINT

Sometimes you may write your name on your items to show that they belong to you. Or you may paste a sticker or tie a nametag on them.

This is like a seal to tell everyone that you own them. However, things can still be lost or stolen. God has the Holy Spirit living in us as a seal to declare that we belong to God. One big difference between your sticker (or nametag) and the Holy Spirit is that we don't get lost or stolen when we are under God's name. This is why we can be assured that God's love will keep us safe, and it is for eternity.

ACTION POINT

Tell someone that you belong to God and nothing can take you away from Him. Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God, telling Him how joyful you are that you belong to Him.

PRAYER POWER

(Ask your children to pray after you.)

God, I am so thankful that I belong to You. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for keeping me secure in Jesus for eternity. I will always praise You. Amen.



MONDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2016

Primary Attention to Real Needs

■ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:15-18

■ OBSERVATION

What do faith in “the Lord Jesus” and love for “all God’s people” imply in verse 15?

.....

.....

.....

DEEPER REFLECTION

Out of praise to God (Eph 1:3-14) Paul prays for the Church “to grasp the fullness”⁹¹ of “every Spiritual blessing in Christ” (vv. 15-23). **What the Ephesians have:** faith and love “which exists among you” (v. 15). Our “faith and love are tokens of the grace of God”⁹² given to us in Christ, which we are to live out practically. Our faith is in “the Lord Jesus”. Faith means living under Christ’s lordship. Our love must be for “all” God’s people, including those we find difficulty to love. **What the Ephesians need:** Oftentimes in our prayers we focus much on felt needs – needs of earthly and physical nature, rather than real needs – discipleship needs, growth needs. Paul’s prayers for God’s people always focus on real needs (e.g. Php 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12). There are vital spiritual realities God wants us to have that can be embraced only through Spiritual wisdom, revelation and enlightenment, as Paul prays for the Ephesians (vv. 17-19). Our heavenly Father who cares for birds, flowers and grass, knows and cares for our felt needs (Mt 6:25-32). However, central in this is seeking God’s kingdom above all else and living righteously (Mt 6:33). To mature in Christ, we must give primary attention to our real needs.

■ APPLICATION

How should I major on real needs over felt needs in my personal discipleship?

.....

.....

.....

■ PRAYER

*Faithful and loving
God of hope, You have
revealed that faith,
hope and love will last
forever.⁹³ Help me to grow
increasingly to have faith
characterised by action,
for faith without works
is dead;⁹⁴ to have love
that labours in serving
people; to have endurance
inspired by hope in the
Lord Jesus Christ.⁹⁵ Amen.*

PRAYER POINTERS

Give thanks:

Pray for leaders:

Pray for significant people:

Pray for those in need:

Pray for self:

DAYS OF PASSION
FAST.PRAY.BLESS

PRAY@10:00 PM

Pray that God will give us wisdom to point to pre-believers
their real needs through meeting their felt needs,
by serving them with God’s love.

DAYS OF PASSION
FAST.PRAY.BLESS

⁹¹ John Stott, Ephesians, 52

⁹² F. F. Bruce, 268

⁹³ 1 Corinthians 13:13

⁹⁴ James 2:26

⁹⁵ 1 Thessalonians 1:3

COVENANT EFC

© 2016 COVENANT EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

Tel: (65) 6892 6811 • Email: mail@cefc.org.sg • Website: www.cefc.org.sg