



SESSION 1

ADOPTED BY THE FATHER

Theme: God wants us to respond to the gift of salvation with thanksgiving and holy living.

I. Ephesians' Setting and _____

A. Paul's _____ with Ephesus (Acts 18:18–21; 19; 20:17–38)

Ephesus was an important and _____ city in the Roman province of Asia.

As a result of Paul's ministry, many Ephesians _____ in _____ and abandoned their _____ practices.

Paul wrote Ephesians during his _____.

B. Ephesus' obsession with _____ (Acts 19)

The Ephesians believed the goddess Diana gave and protected _____. In their minds, they lived "_____."

C. Paul's emphasis on life "_____ " (Eph. 1:3)

Paul directed believers to consider their _____ and identity "in Christ."

II. Paul's Personal _____ (Eph. 1:1, 2)

Being a "_____ " in Christ supersedes all our physical or cultural differences.

III. The Father's _____ (Eph. 1:3–5)

A. Spiritual _____ (1:3)

The Ephesian believers rejoiced in God's _____ while their pagan counterparts feared Diana's _____, _____ nature.

B. _____ (1:4)

The doctrine of election should encourage us to _____, for God works through personal evangelism to _____ unbelievers to Himself.

C. _____ (1:5, 6)

God determined adopt us so we can enjoy His _____ and the privilege of being called His _____.

_____ God's grace, then, isn't just a good idea or a nice _____, rather it is the _____ reason God saved us.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read Acts 19:17–20.

Why were the new believers in Ephesus compelled to burn their highly valuable magic (sorcery) books?

What did they have as new believers that was better than their sorcery books?

THURSDAY

Read Ephesians 1:3.

What did Christ do to make spiritual blessings possible for us?

For which spiritual blessings are you most thankful?

TUESDAY

Read Acts 19:24–28.

How did the gospel affect the pagan worship of Diana in Ephesus?

How could the gospel affect your culture?

FRIDAY

Read Ephesians 1:4.

God saved you so you might live holy and blameless. What does living a holy life look like for you?

When is it hardest for you to live holy?

WEDNESDAY

Read Ephesians 1:1, 2.

How did Paul identify himself?

How does being a believer affect how you identify yourself?

SATURDAY

Read Ephesians 1:5, 6.

Why did Paul describe salvation as an adoption of children by God?

Have you been adopted into God's family? If not, you can ask Him to save you now. If you are already a child of God, praise Him for saving you.

Tough Questions Answered



Does God choose some people for eternal punishment?



Salvation comes only through the work of God. He chooses to save people (Eph. 1:4). But does that mean He is to blame for the condemnation of the lost? Does God want people to die condemned?

The Bible clearly teaches that God wants all people to come to Him. The prophet Ezekiel wrote that God has no pleasure in seeing anyone die. He invites the lost to turn to Him and live (Ezek. 18:32). In the New Testament, James taught that God will draw near to those who draw near to Him in faith (James 4:8). And Jesus invited all people to come to Him (Matt. 11:28–30). God offers salvation to all people.

We must remember that people need salvation because they naturally choose to sin against God. To be human is to stand as a sinner condemned before God. Paul quoted from the Old Testament to teach that no one seeks after God on his or her own (Rom. 3:10–18). Jesus even said He did not come to condemn the world because

the world is condemned already (John 3:17–19). Rather Jesus came to offer eternal life by dying on the cross and rising again. The condemned have the opportunity to trust in Jesus for salvation. But none would if God didn't draw them to faith in Jesus (John 6:44). God had to intervene for some to be saved. Without God's election of some, we would all choose to reject Him and die in our sins.

Does election mean a person who hears the gospel has a true salvation decision to make? Absolutely. From his or her perspective, God's offer is real. After the person trusts in Jesus for salvation, he or she can rejoice in God's choosing him or her by grace.

Does the doctrine of election mean we don't need to witness? Absolutely not. God commands us to take the gospel to the world (Matt. 28:19, 20). He designed to draw individuals to Himself through our gospel presentations. God encouraged Paul to witness to the Corinthians, telling him He had many people in the city who would respond to the gospel (Acts 18:10). God still has many in the world.

God is a God of love, grace, and mercy. He doesn't want anyone to perish.



If you are adopted or know someone who is, then perhaps you understand why some adopted children might begin to wonder about their birth parents and why their parents chose adoption. Even if you were not adopted, you could imagine wanting details about the circumstances surrounding your adoption.

Some adopted people don't feel this way. Richard, for example, never had a desire to find his "real" parents. "My adoptive parents are my real parents," he said, when asked about the possibility of searching for his biological mother or father. "As a kid, it actually made me feel special because I knew without a doubt that my adoptive parents wanted me."

Regardless of your family situation on earth, you can know without a doubt that God wants to adopt you. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:5, God planned even before the creation of the world to adopt believers into His "forever family."



Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—Ephesians 1:3

Paul praised God the Father for sacrificing His Son, His greatest treasure. Through Christ, God can offer us eternal life and spiritual blessings. The pagan worshipers of Diana knew no such blessings. They made great sacrifices to the ruthless Diana in hopes of winning her fickle affection and thereby improving and extending their lives. Their attempts were obviously in vain. Diana existed only in their imaginations.

1. How can you be more mindful of your spiritual blessings in a material focused world?
2. How have you experienced spiritual blessings recently?
3. Join Paul in praising God for spiritual blessings.

Measuring Growth



While under house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote his letter to the church in Ephesus, a city known for the pagan worship of the goddess Diana. Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to realize the rich life they had "in Christ" in contrast to the pagans' empty life "in Diana." He wrote to remind the believers that God chose them to adopt them as His own. By His love and grace, God the Father planned salvation even before He created the earth. Those in Christ have rich spiritual blessings from the Father and are called to respond to His grace by living holy lives in the world.

Look for the following indicators that you understand and appreciate God's gift of salvation.

1. I can explain the basic concepts of salvation.
2. I have accepted God's gift of salvation by trusting Christ as my Savior.
3. I show evidence of salvation through my efforts to live a holy life.

Additional Memory Verses—Romans 8:28–30.