

January 13/14, 2001

**The Truth About Our Life in Christ**  
*A Study in the Book of Ephesians*  
**Blessed to the Praise of His Glory**  
**Ephesians 1:3-14**

## Opening Discussion

1. What is the basis by which people define their identity in our culture? List various options and discuss how people use these to define who they are.
2. How do you define your identity? I'm not asking how should you, but I'm asking how *do* you?
3. What is the risk in defining our identity the way the culture does?

## Bible Study

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 together.
2. In verse 3 Paul is praising God (blessed) because of the wealth of blessings we as believers have in Christ. Go through verses 3-14 and count the number of times Paul uses the phrases "in Christ" or "in Him."

Why is that? What is so important about "in Christ" that Paul repeats it so often?

3. The doctrine of election cannot be fully understood. Our finite minds cannot comprehend the plan of an infinite God. There is no question the Bible teaches God chose us (v4) but also that we choose to believe (v13). These two ideas form a paradox that cannot be resolved. When we try to resolve the paradox we end up denying one or the other doctrine that is so clearly taught in the Bible.

Read John 3:16; 5:21; 6:36-40, 44, 65; 12:32; and 15:16. Notice both God's choosing and man's will to choose. The Bible clearly teaches both.

Read Romans 11:33-36. This is Paul's conclusion after a lengthy discussion on election.

The point of the doctrine of election in the Bible is not so we can figure it out. We can't. It is a truth to be applied. What would be the proper application of this doctrine? What is worth celebrating?

4. Imagine a culture where slaves are regularly sold in the town square on an auction block. Occasionally one is purchased and set free. That slave is redeemed for a purchase price. The term “redeem” was not a “religious” term. It was a graphic term most often connected to the slave market.

What do we learn about redemption from verses 7-8?

How should this truth affect the way we live each day? Why?

5. Notice the shift in personal pronouns from “we” (the Jews) to “you” (everyone else) in verses 9-14. The “mystery of His will” is that Jews and Gentiles would come together as God’s possession according to God’s plan.

How does this affect our strategy for ending racism in the church? In our culture? In other words, what is the one thing that brings people of all races together?

Do you agree, then, that anything which creates a barrier to that “one thing” only makes racism worse? Why?

6. How does verse 10 inform our view of history? Is history a collection of random events or is there a master plan at work?

7. Identify the words or phrases Paul uses in verses 9-14 that identify us as belonging to God.

How do these verses affect your view of yourself and your relationship with God? Why?

8. According to verses 6, 12, and 14, why has God so blessed us? What does this mean? For this purpose to be accomplished, how must we live in light of the truth of this passage?

## **Application**

1. Write out an “identity” statement based on Ephesians 1:3-14. What is true about you as a believer in Jesus because you are “in Christ?”

Read that identity statement slowly and carefully at least one time each day in the upcoming week.

2. Check in to see how everyone is doing with 1) reading through Ephesians once each week 2) memorizing as much of Ephesians as possible.
3. Spend some time in prayer thanking God and celebrating what is true about you “in Christ.”