

## Called: Living as Children of the Light

## 1. Blessings

## Ephesians 1:1–14 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

<sup>3</sup> All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. <sup>4</sup> Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup> So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. <sup>7</sup> He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. <sup>8</sup> He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

<sup>9</sup> God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. <sup>10</sup> And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. <sup>11</sup> Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

<sup>12</sup> God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. <sup>13</sup> And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

## NOTES:

## 1. Called in Christ and through Christ.

*who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*

- United with Christ
- Loved us
- He chose us to be holy
- Decided in advance to adopt us
- Poured out his glorious grace
- Purchased our freedom... to be his own people
- Showered us with kindness, wisdom and understanding
- We received an inheritance
- Chose us in advance
- Identified us as his own—giving us his Holy Spirit

## 2. Called to praise and glorify God.

*He did this so we would praise and glorify him.*

- Revealed his mysterious will... his own good plan
- He will bring everything together under Christ
- Makes everything work out according to his plan

**Next Steps:** Pick up the Ephesians journal. Gather supplies to make the most of your journaling—colored pencils, a pen or pencil, highlighter pens, an additional journal to capture your reflections—and place them near your favorite chair. What time and place will you commit to reading and reflecting on God's word this fall? Read through Ephesians. Reflect. What themes stand out to you? Pray. What is your prayer for yourself? Our church family?

## NOTES:

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in Ephesians, create intentional time getting acquainted and re-acquainted with one another. Use the “small group table talk” resource or ask the following question: Where is your happy place?

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Use the below practice or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Listening to God through Lectio Divina**

*Alone:* In a posture of stillness and openness, come to God with the intention to listen to God’s voice through the reading of Ephesians 1:1-14. Be prepared to read the passage 3 times. As a different way of practicing Lectio Divina, read from two different translations of the passage.

*Begin with the NLT version of Ephesians (found in your Filament Journal)*

*For your second reading, choose the Message version:*

[www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%20%3A1-14&version=MSG](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%20%3A1-14&version=MSG)

*For your third and final reading, return to your Filament Journal*

### Prepare

Quiet yourself and find a physical or emotional posture that prepares you to listen—to really listen—for God. Do whatever it is you need to do to be still and ready yourself to receive God’s presence.

### Read and Listen

When you are ready, begin by slowly reading Ephesians 1:1-14. Read slowly, patiently, and expectantly. Let listening be your only goal. Pay attention to any words, images, or phrases that draw you in or catch your attention.

### Meditate

Next, choose one phrase (or image, idea, or word) that most captures your attention. Hold that word or phrase, meditating on it, and repeating it over and over again. What thoughts, feelings, or memories come to mind? How does it connect to your life? Give pause and attention to that word. As your mind wanders, don’t be too hard on yourself. Give it to God and begin again.

### Pray

Turn towards God in prayer and tell God about that word or phrase. Be honest while remaining open to what God is saying as you pray.

## CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

- **Together:** In pairs, share with one another how you responded to the Lectio Divina practice. Then, reflect together on the below prompts:
  - Which words, images, or phrases captured your curiosity in the passage?
  - What questions do you want to explore further?
- **Together** as a whole group: Share your questions about the passage. Encourage one another to engage their curiosity, confusion, and bigger questions. (Remember: it’s okay if the question doesn’t find an answer!)
- Before digging into the scripture and message more, pray together. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.

### CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Watch the Bible Project video (Ephesians Overview) and, if needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How did God meet you in the message this week?
- Reflecting on the main points of the message, what will you continue to wrestle with in the coming days?
- What are the main themes of the passage?
- After watching the Bible Project video, how would you describe the context of Paul’s Letter to the church at Ephesus?
- How does Paul describe the “mysterious will” of Christ in verse 9?
- Which other Bible passages come to mind that may help you understand Ephesians 1:1-14?
- What is the inheritance of God, according to Paul?

### ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with Ephesians 1:3-11.

*“As sure as the night gives way to the dawn, all creation is held within the heartbeat of God that pulsates new life into our planet. And God’s heart beats to the pulse of compassion. When we embody love and mercy, we live in union with God.” -Compassion in Practice, Frank Rogers Jr.*

### PRAYER

As we enter into a fall season marked by change, let’s commit to offering praise to “God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.” Leave room in prayer to be awe-struck at the depth and mystery of God’s “rich kindness.” When we remember who God is and who we are, we become people who reflect and embody the kindness of God in the world.