

God Picked You!

No, I can't stay too long," David said. "I have to get back to my mom."

"I thought you said your mom passed some time ago," said Raffiel.

"That was my biological mother," explained David. "My mom adopted me at the age of two. She has been a terrific mother!"

David was now a caregiver for his 90-year-old mother, Lillian. His neighbor and church member had come to David's house at 8 A.M. that morning and offered him a day of respite. He had eaten out, run errands, and ended up briefly at Raffiel's house.

"Was it hard being adopted and not being raised by your biological mother?" Raffiel asked.

"Not at all!" said David. "Mom was the best. She couldn't have children and always wanted to. So, she picked me. It's one thing to be raised by those who had you. It's another thing to be raised and loved by someone who intentionally chose you!"

"Yeah, I guess I didn't look at it that way," replied Raffiel.

"It's like what Christ did for us," continued David. "He chose us and adopted us into the family of God when we were sinners. Adoption is a beautiful, even a miraculous thing. There is no way we could be part of the family of God if we weren't adopted. So, praise God for adoption!"

- 1.** *What is special about children who are adopted?*
- 2.** *How do you know when someone truly loves you?*
- 3.** *Can we trust that God loves us? Explain your answer.*

Chosen for Heavenly Blessings

Ephesians 1:1-3, KJV

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Ephesians 1:1-3, NIV

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Paul identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The Greek word for "apostle" (vs.1)—*apostolos*—is from the root word *apostello*, meaning a delegate or ambassador. Paul represented the Lord wherever he went. Anyone who has come to Christ in faith also did so by His will.

The apostle then identified the recipients of this letter: "God's holy people" (vs. 1), the "saints" (KJV) living in Ephesus. The Greek word for "saints," *hagios*, refers to that which is pure and blameless, being consecrated and separated for our holy God. This is important, because the promises of blessing, the challenges to holy living, and the inheritance Paul described are just for believers.

Furthermore, considering all that God has for His holy people, we saints are to be found "faithful in Christ Jesus" (vs. 1). Believers have many opportunities to be faithful, such as assembling together, giving to the Gospel ministry, and serving the Lord and others.

God's holy and faithful people need not wait until we go to heaven for the blessings that come with faithfulness. His gracious hand is upon His people now, and with it

comes the peace of God in our lives. Not only is God's grace and peace on His people, but we are given every spiritual blessing we need to live victoriously for Him.

4. *Who wrote this epistle, and how does he describe himself?*

5. *To whom is this epistle addressed?*

6. *What blessings come with faithfulness to the Lord?*

Chosen for Holy Living

Ephesians 1:4-10, KJV

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might

Ephesians 1:4-10, NIV

⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect

gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Even before Creation, it was God’s plan that those who are His should live holy and without blame before Him. The terms “holy” and “blameless” (vs. 4) are really two sides of the same coin. On one side, when we live holy lives, we do what brings Him the glory due His name. On the other side of the coin, to live without blame is to shun and avoid doing what would bring dishonor to our Lord.

Positionally, we are holy and blameless in Christ. And practically, this is how God’s people can truly live when we get a solid grip on what those who trust in Christ have been predestined to be. Because of God’s love and grace, we are made acceptable in God’s divine love, and it is this love that motivates us to live rightly for Him.

Further, we have been redeemed and forgiven of our sins according to the vast “riches of God’s grace” (vs. 7). God gives the upright in heart “wisdom and understanding” (vs. 8) with which to understand the mystery of His will for us now and His ultimate plan and purposes for us in Christ.

A biblical “mystery” (vs. 9) is something that was once hidden and beyond understanding until God revealed it in His Word. Our hope is in Christ and the glorious plan He has for those who love Him, now and in eternity.

7. *What are God’s people chosen and predestined to be?*

8. *How are people redeemed?*

9. *Along with the forgiveness of sins and adoption into God’s family, what other blessings come with redemption?*

Chosen as Heirs of Promise

Ephesians 1:11-14, KJV

11 In whom also we have

Ephesians 1:11-14, NIV

¹¹In him we were also

obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Because God works out everything to conform to His perfect will, we can trust that our future inheritance in Him is secure. To become heirs of God, people must first hear "the message of truth" (vs. 13), the Gospel, and then believe it. When this happens you become sealed by the Holy Spirit. As the royal seal from the King of kings, the Holy Spirit's mark on our lives is the certain deposit and promise that our inheritance is safe. As banks have deposit insurance to help protect their clients' accounts, our deposit in Christ is assured by the sealing of the Holy Spirit. That seal guarantees our inheritance as His children until the day of our redemption as His "possession" (vs. 14).

10. *How does one become included in Christ?*

11. *How are we sealed in Christ?*

12. *What does that glorious seal do for us?*

The Joy of Belonging

Most of us know what it's like to be set aside, left out, or excluded. Maybe you've experienced this through a loss of a job, or rejection from a family member, or a failure to achieve something important. Somehow we didn't measure up to the standard set by someone else.

One of the real blessings in Christ is that God chooses us. In fact, God has been thinking about us before the foundation of the world. Perhaps God even thought, *Can't wait till he or she shows up!* We all want to feel special to someone in life; God's infinite nature makes it possible for each of us to be truly "the special one" to God with a concrete sense of belonging.

Belonging to Christ is a rich sort of belonging. It is forever, not short-lived. God never gives up on us.

It is intentional, not accidental. God wanted to adopt us. It is the fulfillment of the "mystery of his will."

It is wise, not ill-advised. Belonging to God isn't going to get you in trouble because it isn't what you thought it was (borderline illegal, appearing to be altruistic but really about greed). Belonging to God is the wisest course of action anyone can take because it leads to fullness of life.

It is understandable, not perplexing. God's decision to include us and invite us to belong is simple. God says, "Put your trust in Christ. There's no bait and switch."

And it is empowering, not draining: "Everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17, NRSV).

13. *What do you think are the benefits of immersing ourselves in how we belong to God?*

14. *What are some ways in our everyday life we can celebrate belonging to God?*

15. *What activity or thought helps you (or would help you) sense the reality that you belong to God when you don't feel as if you belong elsewhere?*

Now I Belong to Jesus

Author and theologian J. I. Packer (1926–2020) said in his book *Knowing God*, “Adoption is the highest privilege that the Gospel offers, higher even than justification.... In adoption, God takes us into His family and fellowship—He establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection, and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater.”

► *How does it make you feel to know that you have been adopted by God the Father and are part of His family? Write a short description of those feelings here and remember to look at this when you get that “Nobody loves me, everybody hates me” feeling.*

KEY VERSE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.
—Ephesians 1:3, KJV

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
—Ephesians 1:3, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

Week of November 7 through November 13

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

Mon. Acts 19:21-31—The Gospel Threatens Vested Interests.

Tue. Acts 19:32—20:1—Encouraging Disciples and Saying Farewell.

Wed. Acts 20:17-21, 26-35—The Gospel Bestows an Inheritance.

Thu. Psalm 16—The Lord Is My Portion.

Fri. Joshua 1:1-9—Be Strong and Courageous.

Sat. Isaiah 25—Rejoice in God’s Salvation.

Sun. Ephesians 1:15-23—A Glorious Inheritance.