

To the Praise of God's Glory Ephesians 1:3-14

Topic: How should we live this Christian life? The answer is *to the praise of His glory*. Of critical importance to the Christian life is ceasing to live for self and fully living for God. This can be a difficult balancing act. We are always us. We always see things from our perspective. Yet, we are called to live in light of *His choice*, to embrace *His adopting us*, and to bring about the praise of *His glory*.

The plan of God is disclosed through our relationship with the Messiah. This plan reveals that believers are caught up in a drama involving the entirety of creation, things seen and unseen, things most reckon “spiritual” and things most reckon “secular.” God predestined us to adoption.

-What does the word “predestination” make you feel? Is God a micromanager?

-Do you sense a competition between human free will and divine will? How is this reconciled?

Often, we take pride in our choosing God and in our believing in Jesus.

-How are we saved according to 1:7? Where is room for boasting?

It is His choice, His will, His grace, His blood, but we do play a part—belief.

-After we believe, with what are we sealed according to 1:13?

-How deep is your connection to the Spirit? Describe how you interact with Him, if at all.

Brought into the plan of God, believers are adopted. Paul says this explicitly in verse 5, and this adoption points to the fact that all of the family language in the letter is dependent upon the model of the Father-Son relationship. That believers are “in Christ” captures how the Christian life is not lived alone; rather, we are now caught up into the life of God.

-Do you truly view yourself as a member of God's family? Is it easier to view yourself as a slave of God or as a friend of God as opposed to what we really are?

-How can we better embrace our identity as heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ?

The Holy Spirit is the key to our Christlikeness and to living to the praise of His glory.

-How can we increase our knowledge of the Spirit?

-How can we increase our dependance on the Spirit?

-How can we increase our fruitfulness in the Spirit?

Association: How big a part of your faith story does the Spirit have? Were you raised to rely on the Spirit? How often do you pray to the Spirit?

Guidance: Decide that your identity is “in Christ”—you are an adopted child of God, an heir of God, and a co-heir with Christ precisely because the Spirit lives in you (see also Romans 8:14-17) and not to be merely a friend of God or a slave of God. Decide that your purpose is to live for God's glory. He chose us, adopted us, redeemed us, predestined us, and sealed us. Let us proclaim His glory and magnify His glory in all we do.

Pray with and for one another to better embrace our identity and purpose in light of His grace.