

# Finding Our Identity in Jesus Series

## Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

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By  
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### At A Glance:

- I. Introduction
- II. Praise and Worship God
- III. Blessed with Everything We Need
- IV. Conclusion

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*These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.*

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# Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing

## I. Introduction

### A. Illustration: Learning Construction

1. Those of you who know me know that my handyman skills and capabilities are very limited. You might even chuckle to learn that I once had a job doing some construction work. I got hired by a greenhouse to drive truck for them. It was supposed to be my job to haul plants (mostly flowers) from the production facility to various storefronts. These stores were primarily around the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. I rode with and was trained to be one of their truck drivers. However, I didn't end up doing that much driving—there wasn't as much of a need as they thought.
2. Instead, I performed a number of different tasks at the greenhouse. Eventually, I was moved to the maintenance department to help with a couple significant projects they had going on. One of the largest projects was helping build an addition onto the main building. We were starting literally from the ground up. We began by framing the building, and my last task with this project was helping to put the roof on.
3. While constructing the walls, the head maintenance guy showed me what to do and how to do it. We (another other guy working with me and I) were given the tools and resources needed to do the various construction jobs. I was given a nail gun and shown how to load and use it. Even though everything I needed was provided, I still had to learn and become competent in using what was provided. At first, I went slow. Several nails came out of the side of the board. When I had to use a regular hammer, plenty of nails were bent. I was significantly out of practice as the last time I used such tools was years ago.
4. However, after a few days of work, I got much faster using the nail gun. Walls were going up much quicker after I got into a rhythm. When using the regular hammer, I could put nails in without much concentration or thinking—using fewer swings as well. When we got to a new phase of construction, I had to learn the new process again and develop the new skills.

B. Can you think of a time when you started a new activity, job, skill, or area of study? Did you have everything mastered right away, or did it take time and practice to become proficient? I'm sure we are all familiar with the process of becoming good and developing a new skill or knowledgeable in a new field. Progress doesn't happen overnight. This growth and development process is natural to all areas of human life, including the spiritual life. We need to learn how to become proficient at living for God, even when we have all the right tools and resources.

C. If the Christian life is going to be lived with the proper mindset, we need to understand what is being communicated in Ephesians 1:3. Without this mindset, we might get discouraged and give up when the road gets bumpy and following Jesus becomes difficult. While every child of God stumbles and falls, failing to become the person God wants us to be or falling short of

doing what God wants us to do, we can be encouraged to keep going with the right mindset. Thankfully, God makes us competent to use His resources (2 Cor. 3:5).

## II. Praise and Worship God

- A. There is a significant spiritual problem that all healthy disciples need to overcome: living a life that is disconnected from the word of God due to a failure to understand and ground our life in our God-given identity (Jas. 1:22-25). Disciples can build their identity on what God says about them by accepting God's descriptions of them as real and important. What God says about us impacts how we view ourselves (1 Jn. 3:1-3). Once we accept who God says we are, we realize the impact our identity has on who we are and how we live. The influence of Jesus and the spiritual resources He makes available to us changes how we live so dramatically that we become a new person who follows a new course of life (2 Cor. 5:17-18). Now we are going learn how our new identity and course of life impacts us and how we live.
- B. One of the most detailed descriptions of our identity as children of God is found in the first chapter of the letter to the church in Ephesus. In this text, the apostle Paul provides an extended list of benefits that are available to those who are rightly connected to Jesus. The remainder of this series will be based on this list found in verses 3-14 of Ephesians chapter one.
- C. Paul begins his teaching on the identity of the children of God like this:  
<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Eph. 1:3)
- D. An appropriate and expected response to God by the children of God is to verbally praise and worship God ("Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", v. 3). God is being described as praiseworthy.<sup>1</sup> The reason for this response will be explained in the second part of the verse. The general tone and posture of a child of God toward God involves an attitude and desire to praise Him. We bless God with the words we speak about Him. We say positive things about who God is and what He's done for us. Our mouth speaks out of the attitudes and feelings that are inside us—and they are positive.
- E. Children of God have a certain kind of relationship with their Heavenly Father, which has a significant impact on how they relate to Him. A disciples' heart attitude toward God is one of gratitude, appreciation, thankfulness, and love. Disciples know that God is good and that He always does good. In fact, children of God are convinced that God does good to everyone to one degree or another, just as Jesus taught (Ps. 145:9, Mt. 5:45, Lk. 6:35, Jas. 1:17). This way of relating to God is not some distant truth, it is a close reality. Children of God are also convinced God is regularly and consistently good to them personally—we experience it. This ongoing experience of God's goodness fuels our praise and worship.
- F. However, there is a common and widespread problem that must be confronted. The reality is that many people do not feel like or respond to God in this way. If a person never expresses praise to God from the heart, there is a significant spiritual problem happening in them. Some go so far as to think to themselves that God hasn't done anything good for them. When we don't feel like God is worthy of praise, it is because we are either ignorant of how much good

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<sup>1</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed". It is also possible that the children of God are being instructed to praise God because He is praiseworthy in addition to making a factual statement about God.

God is doing for us, and/or because we don't value the right things—God isn't giving us what we want, which we assume is good.

- G. Children of God need to learn to turn their attention to the good that God is doing for them. We need a change in focus and perspective. If we have food to eat so that we are not starving, God has blessed us with good. If we have clothes to wear, God is being good to us. If the place we live isn't constantly in a significant drought, God is providing what is good. If we have a spouse, we have received a good gift from God. If we have kids, we are blessed. If we have moments when we aren't in constant pain, God is treating us with goodness. Anything and everything that is good in our life comes from God. Every person on earth has reason to praise God. Paul knows that He is blessed by God as he is sitting in jail after being falsely imprisoned (Eph. 6:20)! Paul feels blessed by God, even in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances.
- H. When negative feelings develop toward God, it is often because there is something we want and God is not providing it. It is easy to think that if God was blessing our life, we would have a larger bank account than we currently have. Perhaps a good that we expect from God is our ideal job/career. If we are lonely, we might get upset with God because He isn't providing us a spouse. In these cases, people become blind to the good God is doing for them, and instead of developing an attitude of praise toward God, frustration, anger, resentment, and bitterness grow. No genuine heartfelt praise is found on the lips. God refusing to provide us with whatever we identify as a good can lead to people developing negative feelings toward God and assuming He isn't doing good for them.
- I. This happens because we have misplaced priorities. God's values and priorities are often not the same as our values and priorities (Lk. 16:15). Jesus said one of the greatest blessings and good actions that God performs for us is giving us His Spirit (Lk. 11:13). If we can't recognize the blessing of goodness the Spirit is to us, we don't value the right things, and our misplaced priorities are illegitimately causing negative feelings toward God. God gives genuinely good gifts to those who ask Him. If we are going to praise God the way we should, we need to recognize the value of the good gifts God provides and not complain about not having what we think would be good for us. Don't justify God's goodness by your misaligned values.
- J. What is the quality and depth of your heart's attitude toward God? Is your praise and worship of God passionate and energetic? Do you simply go through the motions of worship? How active were you earlier when we were singing the worship songs to God? Were you focused and pouring out your heart to God through the songs? What is your normal pattern of worshipping and praising God? Are you as engaged in the praise of God as you are when watching the Packers or participating in your favorite hobby? Do you look forward to participating in our church's musical worship because it provides you the opportunity to express your praise and thankfulness to God? Praise is the natural attitude that bubbles up inside the children of God.
- K. We can increase our affection and love for God and, as a result, the passion of our worship and praise, by learning to identify all the blessings God has blessed us with. The more blessings we realize, the more thankful we will be, and the more energetic our praise of God will become. Learn to focus your mental energy toward identifying the good gifts God provides each day. At

the end of the day, think back over the day and identify a few of the blessings God provided you personally. Doing this regularly will increase your desire to praise God.

### III. Blessed with Everything We Need

- A. The motivation and reason for the response of praising God is spelled out in the second part of Ephesians 1:3:
 

who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,  
(Eph. 1:3)
- B. The reason children of God are motivated to praise God is because they know and understand how much God has already blessed them with (“who has blessed us”, v. 3). Disciples respond by praising (blessing) God because God has blessed them first. God provides and gives good gifts to us, so we turn and praise God for what He has done. To be blessed is to receive divine favor that usually includes a positive disposition and kind actions.<sup>2</sup> This is the worship cycle that takes place in the life of the child of God. The word blessing is being used with two different meanings. God blesses us one way, and we bless Him in return in another way.
- C. To be blessed by God essentially means that God promises to do good for a person or group by giving them favor that results in prosperity and flourishing (Rm. 8:28-29, Isa. 44:3, Gen. 12:2-3, Dt. 28:8). God has a positive and friendly attitude towards those He blesses. This general posture of blessing can be further defined more specifically depending on the type of blessing promised by God. Paul will further explain the spiritual blessings he is thinking of in his list that is found in Ephesians chapter one verses three through fourteen—we will be examining each of these blessings throughout the rest of this series.
- D. Every child of God is blessed by God. God’s blessings are spiritual in nature (“with every spiritual blessing”, v. 3). The blessings that come to us through Jesus come from the Holy Spirit and apply to our soul and the way we relate to God.<sup>3</sup> This point is made later in verse thirteen. While Paul is speaking primarily of spiritual blessings here, this doesn’t mean God never blesses His children with material benefits as well. Like a subscription that provides instant access to the full library of videos, music, or books, every child of God is given access to the entire library of spiritual benefits God has to offer—for free. Jesus gives us a free lifetime subscription to all the benefits of God. The blessings of God are bundled, and they are given to us in one large package.
- E. Since disciples have received every blessing God provides, we can steer clear of those who claim we are missing out on some experience or good benefit of God. We should never be made to feel as if we are missing out on some important benefit of God. If you are a child of God and have accepted the claims Jesus made about Himself, then you are currently in possession of every blessing God has provided. Nothing is missing. If anyone tries to convince you that you need something else from God, they are doing so for their own interests, and it is

<sup>2</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Ephesians 1:3 “has blessed”

<sup>3</sup> Richard Coekin, [Ephesians for You](#), ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2015), 12, George G. Findlay, [“The Epistle to the Ephesians,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 6, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 11, John R. W. Stott, [God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 35, Charles Hodge, [A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians](#) (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858), 28.

not true. There isn't some deeper blessing of God that you aren't experiencing. If someone tells you to send them money so that God will bless you, they are lying and trying to deceive you.

- F. Another descriptor that more fully defines the blessings of God is that the blessings come to us through Jesus ("in Christ", v. 3).<sup>4</sup> The good and the benefits that Jesus provides to those who belong to Him is the type of blessing Paul has in mind. Everything Jesus promised to the children of God is what God blesses us with. If Jesus didn't promise to provide it, we shouldn't expect or count on God giving it to us. We can't view the blessings of God through the lens of the American dream. The blessings of God and what many consider to be a successful life are two very different concepts.
- G. To help us further clarify the type of blessings that are provided by God, it will be helpful to look at another statement found in the Bible that is making the same claim. Peter makes the same point being made by Paul, that children of God are blessed with everything they need:
  - <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
  - <sup>3</sup> for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
  - (2 Pet. 1:2-3)
- H. From Peter, we learn that "every spiritual blessing" is further described as all that we need to experience life and godliness ("His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness", v. 3). Notice that God's power provides what we need. Our effort alone does not provide what we need. Our own power doesn't provide what we need. God is the One who gives us access to what we need.
- I. Life essentially is personal soul health, satisfaction, happiness, and fulfillment—a quality of life—according to Peter (1 Pet. 3:8-13). This also reflects how Jesus talked about the quality of life He makes available (Jn. 10:10). Life is a quality of life connected to what Jesus called eternal life. When individuals live in harmony with God, it impacts the quality of the life of their soul. If you want to be able to enjoy life and point your life in a healthy direction, you must live in submission to God and His wisdom. His power can produce an abundant and full quality of life that is present in all of life's changing circumstances.
- J. Not only does God's power provide us everything we need to live a satisfying and happy quality of life, but He also gives us everything we need live a life oriented around Him—godliness ("and godliness", v. 3). Children of God can develop appropriate views of God and the right practice of their devotion to God.<sup>5</sup> It is a life properly ordered around the priorities of God. Godliness is a God-focused life. Godliness entails being a moral person, but it also means being a person who seeks after and pursues God.
- K. The way we receive the blessings of God as we develop and experience both life and godliness is by deepening our knowledge of God ("in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord", v. 2 and "through the true knowledge of Him", v. 3). Our accurate knowledge of God the Father and Jesus the Son brings to us the benefits of God. Without knowledge, we don't gain life and

<sup>4</sup> There is a third description of the nature of the blessings "in the heavenly places" (v. 3). This one was intentionally skipped due to its complexity.

<sup>5</sup> Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on 1 Peter 1:3 "godliness"

godliness. If a child of God is not growing in their understanding, they will not be growing in the blessings of God, either. There can't be sound Christian living apart from sound doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

- L. Since what Paul and Peter are telling us is true, how will this impact us and how we conduct ourselves in the life context we are in? Here is a list of different ways the fact that God has provided everything we need to become the type of person He wants us to be influences us. If we properly understand what the blessings provided by God to His children are, it will help us develop accurate expectations for God and the Christian life. Having properly informed expectations protects us from unnecessary disappointment, frustration, and doubt. Children of God can avoid feeling let down by God when He does not provide them with their dream car because they know God has provided them more significant spiritual benefits in Jesus.
- M. We should be fully confident that if we do what God tells us to do, we will always get the results God promises. The Christian life rightly carried out will always work the way it's supposed to. We can count on God to be faithful. If we aren't getting the results promised, there is a problem with our execution, not in God's design. If the expected and promised outcomes aren't happening, it is likely there is something we've missed and don't understand. Perhaps we aren't being patient enough and are expecting immediate results. God's methods for successful living work.
- N. Be convinced that God has deeper experiences of His blessings than you are currently experiencing. What you know and experience of the Christian life is not all God has for you—there is more. Where you currently are with Jesus is not everything there is to experience with God. The more we grow, the better it gets. There is more life and godliness for you to experience as you continue to learn about God and grow in the Christian life.
- O. We lie to ourselves every time we claim, "I can't do it," when it comes to obeying God and His Word. The truth is, God can and will help us do it. He's provided everything we need to do it. Our behavior will lead to life or godliness; we have everything we need to do it. This excuse is not valid. It won't work with God. While we might currently be in a place of struggle, with some growth in maturity and knowledge, we will be able to do what God wants. As we remain attached to God's word, God's Spirit will grow and empower us.
- P. Don't give in to discouragement. It can be overcome. God's power and grace can help us achieve the plans God has for each of our lives. God will complete the work He started in us. Jesus will present every child of God to the Father pure, blameless, and without fault (Eph. 5:27, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:22, 1 Thess. 3:13, Jude 24).
- Q. As children of God, we have permission to ask for God's blessing—to be prosperous and flourish. In some circles of the church, attempting to be blessed by God is viewed as something negative. It has become not just neglected, but taken as a badge of honor as a response to the prosperity gospel—those who promote the idea that God is the means by which we can have worldly success (especially financial wealth). While pursuing the blessing of God can be abused, that doesn't mean it should be neglected. It is not wrong to ask God for the right things (Jas. 4:2).

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<sup>6</sup> William H. Baker, "[2 Peter](#)," in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 1173.

- R. If we want the blessings of God to be more abundant in our life, we need to strive to become the type of person that is pleasing to God so it becomes appropriate for God to bless us. To learn more about becoming the type of person that God delights to bless, read Deuteronomy 30:2-6, Psalm 24:1-6, Proverbs 24:15, and 1 Peter 3:9. These passages will give you an idea of the type of person who is abundantly blessed by God.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. Every child of God has been blessed with every spiritual blessing. We have everything we need to grow into the person God wants us to be. God's power working in us will be effective to produce life and godliness.
- B. Accepting and living in this truth will change how we live the Christian life and pursue God. Disciples live for and serve God confidently knowing that regular and consistent progress can and will be made, as long as we continue to do what God asks us to do. Never give up on God or the blessings He has intended for you.