



FALL 2024 // WEEK 1

Life Group Questions

Ephesians – Salvation is a Life // September 7-8, 2024

Praising the God Who Saves // Ephesians 1:1-14

## Introduction

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This week marks the start of a new session of Life Groups, *and* the start of a new sermon series on the book of Ephesians. **We suggest you go to the Bible Project website and watch an overview video for the book of Ephesians.** (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/ephesians/>). This will give you a bit of history about the Ephesians church and help you understand how the whole letter fits together.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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### For Life Groups that are meeting for the first time:

- 1) Go around the circle and ask everyone to answer these “H” questions.

**Hello** - Tell us a little bit about yourself.

**History** - What brought you to LBC/Life Group?

**Hobby** - What do you enjoy doing?

**Happy** - What is a place, activity or person that is your happy place?

### For Life Groups that are reconnecting:

If you have a couple of new members in your group, you might want to have everyone answer the questions above before continuing with the questions below.

- 1) What is happening in your life/family right now?
- 2) How did God work in your life this summer?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
  - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
  - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
  - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
- 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.

## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

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- 1) Paul starts his letter by calling his readers saints. (*Ephesians 1:1*) **Do you consider yourself a saint? Why or why not?**

*Nine times in this brief letter, Paul addresses his readers as saints (Eph. 1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18). The word saint is simply one of the many terms used in the New Testament to describe “one who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior.” The word saint means “one who has been set apart.” It is related to the word sanctified, which means “set apart.” When the sinner trusts Christ as his Savior, he is taken out of “the world” and placed “in Christ.” The believer is in the world physically, but not of the world spiritually (John 17:14-16). Like a scuba diver, he exists in an alien environment because he possesses special equipment—in this case, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. - Bible Exposition Commentary – NT*

**How does this change your view of yourself?**

- 2) In *Ephesians 1:3* Paul discusses the idea of blessing. **When you think of blessing, what do you normally think of?**

**What is the framework Paul is using to describe the idea of blessing?**

**How might this change the way you approach the blessings in your life?**

- 3) In *Ephesians 1:4-5* Paul talks about God choosing and predestining the Ephesians (or us). Quite a bit of theological debate surrounds the words “predestined” and “chose”. **Do you think Paul’s intention here is to spark theological debate? If so, explain your answer? If not, then why does Paul bring up the idea of God’s choosing and predestining?**

It can be challenging to try to understand how God’s sovereignty (choosing/predestining) and our free will work together. Both have foundations in the scriptures, and it is not possible to make them fit together perfectly like a puzzle. God does not explain this to us, He leaves it as a mystery. **Why does God leave mystery in His story/His relationship with us?**

- 4) In *Ephesians 1:13-14* Paul uses two images to describe our relationship to Christ in the Holy Spirit: We are “sealed” in Christ by the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is a “pledge” (or down payment) of our inheritance. **What do you think Paul is trying to convey by each of these images?**

Take a moment to list all of what the Father has given us or done for us “through/in Christ”.

If you really believed you were chosen and predestined to adoption and possess all of the things that are yours “in Christ”, according to this passage, how would it change the way you live your daily life?

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

**Scripture Focus:** Each morning read through *Ephesians 1:1-14*. On each day, take a moment to write down one of the blessings “in Christ” that sticks out to you and journal response to this blessing.

**Prayer Focus:** As you set out to pray, think about this statement from L. L. Letgers. *“If you can run over in your mind and find one single blessing with which God might bless us today, with which He has not already blessed us, then what He told Paul is not true at all, because He said, ‘God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...’ It is all done. The great pity of it is that we are saying, ‘O God bless us—bless us in this, bless us in that! And it is all done—He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. It is our place to believe and receive.’* **How does this change the way you pray?**

### Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?