

# Read and Pray Through Ephesians

Faith Baptist Fellowship Bible Reading Initiative for February 1 – 28, 2012

We recommend you have a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray. We also recommend you pray for a moment before you read God's word and ask for his illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit as you read. Be prepared to think carefully about what the author is conveying in the passage, what God's word is saying, and how you might apply it.

Abbreviations:           **TAI** – *Think About It*                                           **PP** – *Prayer Point*

## Wednesday, February 1 – Ephesians 1:1-2

TAI: To understand better why Paul considered himself an apostle "by the will of God" read Acts 9:1-20. Who are the "saints"? What do you think "faithfulness" looks like in a believer? It might help to think of a believer whose life you admired for faithfulness. Are you experiencing God's grace and peace?

PP: Express thanks to God for calling you into his family as a saint! Ask him to help you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be faithful in your walk with Christ. Pray for those in your faith group. Pray that our church would be characterized by *biblically faithful ministry*, in God's grace and peace.

## Thursday, February 2 – Ephesians 1:3-10 Day one

TAI: The book now opens with a burst of worship, as Paul blesses the Lord for his lavish blessings to believers "in Christ." What do you suppose are the spiritual blessings of the believer "in the heavenly places"? What does it mean to you to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world? What did God choose us to become, by his grace and for his glory (v. 4)?

PP: Do you think Christians are aware that God chose them to be holy and blameless? Pray, asking God to make you keenly aware of this destiny in your life. Ask him to cleanse you, and then ask him to empower you to live a holy life by the power of the Spirit. Rejoice over every spiritual blessing that is yours in Christ! Bless the name of the Lord for preparing you for "heavenly places."

## Friday, February 3 – Ephesians 1:3-10 Day two

TAI: To what have you been predestined through God's love? What insight does it give us about God that this was "according to the purpose of his will" and "to the praise of his glorious grace"? Who is "the Beloved"? This passage shows us that God's plan, initiative, and grace in our salvation is the extraordinary moving force which moves us from spiritual orphans to adopted children. Amazing grace!

PP: Pray a prayer of thankfulness to God for adopting you as his child, and for providing for your salvation through the Beloved, Jesus Christ, all for his glory. Humbly acknowledge that your salvation is all of God's glorious grace! You might want to consider memorizing this incredible paragraph. What richness it adds to our grasp of the wonders and marvels of our salvation in Christ!

### **Weekend, February 4-5 – I Corinthians 12:12-31**

TAI: This weekend we focus on a second aspect of our 4<sup>th</sup> Commitment, serving one another. What spiritual gifts do you believe you have received from the Holy Spirit? What unique giftedness is your contribution to our church's health and wholeness and ministry? Do you find joy in serving others as a "member" of the body? How does your giftedness impact our outreach to lost people?

PP: Pray for Pastor Dana as he brings this message. Ask God to help us be stronger, healthier, and more outreach oriented through the use of our gifts. Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit! If you aren't sure about your spiritual gifts, pray for help to discern them. We hope to offer a Faith U. class on gifts this spring. Pray for Ted and Dawn Siemens, our missionaries to Austria who will share on Sunday morning.

### **Monday, February 6 – Ephesians 1:3-10 Day three**

TAI: The last sentence of this section is a doozy! Paul piles up phrase after phrase in celebration of our riches in Christ. How many spiritual blessings can you count here (vv. 7-10)? Is this a "cross-centered" passage? What does God "do" in this passage? What do we "do" in it?

PP: Pray this entire paragraph, vv. 3-10, slowly, phrase by phrase, saying "Hallelujah!" after each phrase. This will help us remember all the extraordinary blessings found in these words. God is great, and full of grace, and will save us for his glory. Pray for people around you who have lost sight of these blessings.

### **Tuesday, February 7 – Ephesians 1:11-14**

TAI: Back in v. 5 we learned that we are predestined by God in Christ to be adopted as God's children. Now we learn that with that adoption comes an inheritance! So, the blessings continue! Who receives this inheritance? Who guarantees that believers receive this inheritance? What is the only way we can be sure that people hear "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation"?

PP: One of our Bold Prayer Requests, set by the elders at Faith for 2012, is that each one of us share the gospel with at least one other person this year. Pray that Bold Request now! We also are praying for at least 30 people to believe and be baptized. Let us pray! Thank God for our inheritance in Christ.

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***Faith Group Discussion Question: All this profound truth about our salvation in Christ: does it encourage you to share your faith with others, or make it harder? Does it give you great joy to tell others what Jesus has done for you, or complicate things? Pray for your Sacred Seven.***

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### **Wednesday, February 8 – Ephesians 1:15-23 Day one**

TAI: What had Paul heard about the Ephesian believers? Based on this reputation, Paul then prays an incredible prayer for those believers (another llooonngg run-on sentence, though if you read it in the NIV, that won't be as apparent; in the ESV, like the original Greek, from v. 15 to v. 21 is one sentence!). In the space below, write down what Paul asks God for in this prayer:

PP: Thinking of our church, pray this prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed, only for Faith Baptist rather than the Ephesian church. Literally, pray each phrase, asking God to do it for your church! Ask him to make this your personal experience of grace as well. Take your time, rejoicing in every truth expressed.

**Thursday, February 9 – Ephesians 1:15-23 Day two**

TAI: Through the grace and power of the gospel, do you believe you have had your heart enlightened? Do you struggle with doubt about your hope, riches, and power in Christ? Why or why not? What do the resurrection and ascension of Christ have to do with this (vv. 20-21)? Do you think Jesus Christ is the head of our body at Faith Baptist? Why or why not? Cite some evidence. **This would be an excellent discussion question, Faith Group Leaders!**

PP: Pray for our church, that truly Christ would reign as its head. Pray for our elders and pastors at Faith, that we would seek to be “undershepherds” in the best sense, with Christ as the Good Shepherd. Pray that we would experience truth and revelation in our reading and study of the Bible, and that our ministry would be Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed. Pray, “Renew my hope in Christ, O God, and my confidence in your power!”

**Friday, February 10 – Ephesians 2:1-3**

TAI: Who is “dead” in their trespasses and sins? Does this include you? Who is the “prince of the power of the air”? Who are the “sons of disobedience”? Who are the “children of wrath”? Who all is included in this? Why do you think Paul uses so many phrases to describe sin and “lostness”? Why do you think some churches today back away from talking about sin, wrath, Satan, etc.?

PP: Spiritually, we are all either dead or alive. There’s no in-between. If through Christ you have been made alive, take a moment to rejoice and thank God right now! If you aren’t sure, right now, pray and ask God to save you from your sin and help you turn toward him in faith and trust, believing in Jesus. Believers, pray for some in your sphere of relationships who are spiritually dead; ask God to save them.

**Weekend, February 11-12 – I Corinthians 1:18 – 2:5 “Loving the Story” Sunday (Commitment 5)**

TAI: What was the message Paul and the apostles preached? Why is the cross “folly” to those who don’t believe? Why is the cross so powerful in saving lost people? Considering vv. 26-28, where did Jesus get his followers, according to the Gospels? As believers, what did Christ “become” for us? Pondering vv. 2:1-5, what is the difference between good preaching and bad, good evangelism and bad?

PP: Pray for our witness as a church, that our message would truly be Christ and the cross. Pray for this to be a year of fruitfulness for our church. Pray for lost people on your Sacred 7 list. Pray for Pastor Dana preaching the last message of this series, “Your Best Love Now.” Pray for our Evangelism Team.

**Monday, February 13 – Ephesians 2:4-7 God’s great work of grace in us!**

TAI: **“But God.”** A whole series of sermons (or daily studies!) could be preached on just these two words. After all those phrases about our sin in vv. 1-3, the intervention of God is introduced. What does God do, and why does he do it? “Made us alive with Christ” – can a dead sinner come alive on their own? Can a person save themselves? What is our destiny in Christ, our inheritance?

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**Excellent Faith Group Discussion Question: What do you suppose “the immeasurable riches of his grace” will be like, in the coming ages in the heavenly places?**

PP: Where would you be if God hadn’t intervened? Pray a prayer of thanksgiving. Praise God for his rich mercy and his great love. Thank God for making you alive in Christ. Express your joy in anticipating what the “immeasurable riches” will be like some day!

**Tuesday, February 14 – Ephesians 2:8-10 God’s Valentine’s Day gospel of love to us!**

TAI: What is “the gift of God”? If faith is a gift, can we get there on our own, apart from saving grace? Why can’t we boast of our salvation? The word translated “workmanship” is in the Greek *poiema*, from which we get the word poem. How are you God’s poem, his artistic expression? According to v. 10, what has God destined us to do? How do you “walk around” in your good works?

PP: Thank God for the precious gift of faith, enabling you to trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Ask him to keep you from pride – boasting – in your salvation. Pray for our Kingdom Opportunities Team at Faith, which puts before us a constant stream of “good works” for us to express our faith to others.