

ENTITLED



Entitled Sermon Series

Message 1 of 4

Ephesians 1:3-10

“Why Understanding How God Views You Matters”

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Introduction

Well hey there, I'm Josh and I'm so excited to Journey with you into God's Word for a few weeks and talk about what God's word has to say about foster care. Before we do that though, would you just join me in prayer and ask for God's help with that?

Opening Prayer

Pray with me: Father, we thank you so much for your good and your perfect Word, and I pray that as we talk about these different passages of Scripture here that it would be a foundation for us. As you say we would be like the man who built his house upon the rock and when the storms came the house stood firm. Would we be those types of people where we could really stand firm on your Word that it would be a foundation for our lives, and as you say in the Book of James, it wouldn't just be something that we hear, but that we would be doers of your Word. Father, help us to do that. Jesus, we thank you so much for everything you've done for us, by dying on the cross for our sins. Would we take that seriously and Holy Spirit as we take a look at these passages of Your Word, I pray that You would guide us. Soften our heart to whatever it is that you have for us, Lord. It's in Jesus' precious and life-changing name we pray, amen.

Opening Illustration

Hey, I've got a question for you as we begin here: What comes to mind as you think about the word, “entitled?” Maybe it's the kid in the grocery store with the tablet in front of her face the entire time, or maybe it's the teenager who thinks that the keys to Mom and Dad's car are his, when they think otherwise. Maybe it's the young adult at work who thinks that they deserve just as much pay as the 40-year-old veteran who's been there for decades and who can do a better job than them. What comes to mind? Oftentimes it could be a very negative thing, but what if I told you this: what if God looks at you as an entitled person and that's not negative? What if he looks at you with inherent value and says, “This is my son, this is my daughter, and I care about you?”

Ephesians 1:3

We're going to take a look at the book of Ephesians as we start our journey through God's word and I want you to follow along with me, so go to Ephesians in your Bible, or on the Bible app, or wherever you're finding uh God's Word, go to Ephesians chapter 1. We're going to start towards the beginning in **chapter 1 in verse 3**. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3. We're going to follow along here as Paul's writing to the church in Ephesus and he starts right off the bat and he wants to get something very clear right off the bat here to the Church of the Ephesians. Here he says this: he says, **“blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places.”** You know as we take a look at the book of Ephesians here there's something that it has for us: it tells us how God views us. And again, I think that God views us as entitled and that's not a terrible thing. Oftentimes it can kind of have this terrible connotation, right? But I think oftentimes we look at this in Ephesians chapter 1 and we can say, “Wow, God views us a certain way!” Four ways that he views us here in Ephesians chapter 1.

Point #1 – Ephesians 1:3: God views you as someone He wants to bless

The first one is right here in verse 3. It says, **“Blessed be the God of our father Lord Jesus Christ”--look at this--“who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places.”** God looks at you and he says, “That's someone I want to bless.” That's the first way that he looks at us and before we get any further, I want to just knock something out. You might be saying, “Um, He, He looks at me as someone that He wants to bless? Is this some kind of health and wealth gospel? Is this something where, ‘okay I give you money and uh, I'll get a blessing?’ I, I've heard this before this is just not true! I, I've been told to look out for these things!” Hey, listen that's not at all what I want to communicate to you. What I want to communicate to you is that Jesus loves you so much and he wants to bless you. Now, not in a health and wealth gospel, not in the way that you're like, oh just say this prayer and He's going to get you a brand new 2025 Jeep Gladiator in your driveway! That's what I would think of when I think of those things, maybe you're not a Jeep fan but, fill in the blank right, of like whatever you want, that's what you get, and that's again not at all what scripture is trying to teach us. What God's Word is trying to teach us here is how God views us which is first and foremost that **He wants to bless us.**

Point #1 Support

Further on in Ephesians, if you read in Chapter 2, it says **“For by Grace you have been saved through faith and this isn't your own doing, it's the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast.”** God looks at you and He says, “Here's a free gift, it's a blessing.” All your job is whether you want to accept it or deny it. In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus says, **“Or which of one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone. Or if he asks for a fish will give him a serpent. If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him?”** He looks at you as His son as His daughter, and he says “That's someone I want to bless. That's someone I want to give a good gift to”.

When I was a kid, I always loved receiving gifts. Birthdays, Christmases, it didn't matter, I just loved it. And there's something that happened as I became older. I've got a little two-year-old

and a six-year-old child and they are just so precious to me, and through aging and becoming a father, I think that something that happened to me was I went from liking to receive gifts a lot, to liking to give gifts even more. You know, it is so encouraging to give your child a gift. Whether it be on their birthday or a Christmas or another special occasion, you give them a gift and it's exciting right? You want to see them open that that gift and I think that's how God views us. He says, "That's my son, that's my daughter, and I want to give them this gift. I want to give them this thing that I so preciously made for them."

In fact, all the way back in the book of Genesis it says, **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created him."** So I want you to think about this just for a moment: God Made you in His image you're his son, you're his daughter. Romans 8 tells us this: He who did not spare His own son but gave him up for us all, how will He not also give him graciously all things?" The Book of James puts it like this: **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights with whom there is no variation or Shadow due to change."** God wants to bless you, again not in a health and wealth, not in a, "hey He's going to put a brand new car in your driveway" but simply you're His child, He loves you, He wants to give you good things-- and sometimes we view ourselves as these awful terrible people, and there's some truth to that, Scripture does tell us right that we are sinful people, we all have fallen short of the glory of God and the consequence, as Romans 6:23 will tell us, of that sin is death, but God looks at you, and He says, "I still care about you, I still love you!"

Point #2 – Ephesians 1:4: God views you as someone who is worth teaching

Go back to Ephesians, chapter one with me. In verse 4, Paul will continue on writing to the church in Ephesus, and he'll say, **"Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."** So, I want you to think about this just for a moment. **Ephesians 1:4** is telling us that God chose us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him. Okay, so what does that process look like? What does that look like for God to lead us along that process? **Second Peter 3:9**, this verse just reminds me of second Peter 3:9, so I want to read it to you, it says, **"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."** It reminds me of this verse because 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that God wants a relationship with everyone and He's patient so that He can have that relationship with as many as would choose to have that relationship. So, what's that got to do with Ephesians 1:4? Well, **Ephesians 1:4 says that God chose us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.** God is patient towards us so that we would choose to have that relationship with him and not only that, but that he would transform us, as Romans 12:1 and 2 will tell us that we will be transformed by the renewal of our mind. So, take a look and think about this process with me just for a moment: if you want to be transformed formed what does that look like?

A few months ago, I went on kind of this health journey, and I lost about 60 lbs. I was trying to get in shape for a trip that I was doing, it was a backpacking trip through the Grand Canyon, and it was just amazing. I love backpacking, I love camping but that was quite the transformation to

get me ready to go and do that. I didn't want to get stuck at the bottom of the Grand Canyon (I've heard it's not fun uh so I didn't want to try it out), but I was like "Man, I really got to get in shape if I want to do this- if I want to do this backpacking trip and have it be enjoyable for me," and it was a long process in order to get in shape and to lose the weight in order to do that backpacking trip. And that's just a really small glimpse at something, but I want you to think about this just for a moment: God takes us on that transformation through our entire lives. It's not a physical one, but a spiritual transformation for us. He looks at you -- I think this is what Ephesians chapter 1 is telling us -- He looks at you as not only someone that he wants to bless but also someone who's worth teaching.

Point #2 Support

If you've ever taught someone, it's a process. It's a long process and it's painstaking. My wife is a middle school teacher -- of all things in the entire world, she chose to teach seventh and eighth graders how to read and write! That doesn't necessarily sound enjoyable to me! I'm glad that she wants to do that because we definitely need people to go and do that, so props to all you teachers out there! She has an incredible amount of patience for these kids that she's teaching how to read and how to write. Not only that, she teaches English learners! So, these are students that English is not their first language. She's teaching them a new language and how to read and write in that language... and their middle schoolers!! So, man talk about patience, that's a lot of patience that she has, and again I think it's just a quick glimpse of the type of patience that God has for each and every one of us.

Have you ever taught a child how to do something? Sometimes it's just painstaking! Like how to tie their shoes, right?! Okay, we got to do the loops and the bunny ears and all these different things, right? It's like, so frustrating, it's like, "We just went over this yesterday, how do you not remember this," right? And it can be so frustrating from the adults' perspective, and I want you to think about the patience that God has... that He looks at you and He says you're a person worth teaching... you're a person worth doing that for.

The Bible tells us in **Romans 2:4** that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. God has an incredible amount of kindness towards you! **Psalm 32:8** says, **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go. I will counsel you with My eye upon you."** In **John chapter 1, verse 4** Jesus says, **"but the helper, the Holy Spirit whom the father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."** Again, God looks at you and He says, "I care about you so much that I'm going to have the patience that's required to teach you what you need to learn."

Again, Jesus will say in **John 16**, **"When the spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on his own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak. He will declare to you the things that are to come,"** and not only does God take the patience to walk alongside us and teach us, He also gave us his word. **2 Timothy 3:16** says, **"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching and for reproof and correction and training in righteousness,"** and a lot of times we just stop there but take a look with me at the next verse, at verse 17, it says, **"The man of God may be equipped for every good work."** He's given you

His Word. Why? Because He looks at you and He says, “you're worth it... you're worth blessing, you're worth teaching.”

Point #3 -- Ephesians 1:5-6: God views you as someone who He wants in His family

Follow along here with me as we go back to Ephesians chapter 1, I have just a couple more things I want to point out to you from this chunk of God's Word. It says that, **“He predestined us for adoption, to Himself, as Sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious Grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.”** I want you to think about this just for a moment: God looks at you and even in your sin, even in your wrongdoing, in your bad decisions, God looks at you and He says, “You're someone I want to bless, you're someone who's worth teaching,” and look at verse 5 with me in Ephesians 1, it says, “He predestined us for adoption to Himself as Sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will.” He looks at you and he says, “I want you in my family.” That's the third thing I want to point out to you in Ephesians chapter 1. He looks at you and He says, “You're My son, you're My daughter. You have a seat at my table. Now, whether you want to take that seat or not--that's up to you-- but you have a seat at My table, and I would love for you to sit down and eat with me.” That's a huge deal!

Point #3 Support

As a family, my wife and I try to do this as much as we possibly can: have family dinners. Now, that's not always possible with busy schedules and different things happening, but we try to do that, because we think that that's important. We think that that it's a good quality time that we can have as a family together, and God wants to have that quality time with each and every one of us!

John chapter 1 will say, “But to him, all who did receive Him, all who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.” He looks at you, and He says, “You have a right, you are *entitled* to be my child, to be my son, to be my daughter. Galatians chapter 4 will say, “That when at the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as Sons.” God looks at you and He says, “Hey, you're worth it. You are my son; you are my daughter.”

Galatians chapter 4 will go on to say, **“And because you are Sons, God has sent His Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, ‘ABBA father’ so you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir through God.”** That's important! God looks at you and He says, “I want you a part of my family!” **1 John chapter 3** will say this, **“See what kind of love the father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.”** God wants you a part of his family!

One more verse I want to point out as we're talking about being a part of God's family: **Revelation 3:20**. There's a famous painting about this and maybe it'll come to mind when I read it to you. **Revelation 3:20** says, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into Him and eat with him and he with Me.”** Eating with someone is a great way to get to know them. This is why couples will do this as they're dating,

and even after they're married, they will say, "Hey, let's go on a date," and what do you do on a date? You go and eat something, right? Why? Because it's a way that we get to be in a relationship with other people, and God says, "I want you at my table... I want to eat with you!" God says, "I want you a part of my family!" He wants to bless us, He wants to teach us, He wants us a part of His family, and one more thing I want to point out from Ephesians 1...

Point #4 – Ephesians 1:7-10: God views you as someone who is worth dying for

Take a look at it with me here in verse 7, it says, **"In him we have Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which with He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulfillment of time to unite all things in Him. Things in heaven and things on earth."** I want you to think about this just for a moment: what is Ephesians 1, at the end here, in verses 7-10 telling us?

At the end of this chunk of Scripture, it's telling us that God had a plan to redeem us and that plan was to send His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect sinless life, but then to die a horrific death on the cross, on our behalf, so that we can be forgiven, so that a way of salvation would be made possible for us! And again, it's a free gift that Jesus gives each and every one of us, and it's up to us to say, "Man I will accept that, or I will deny it." God's desire is that we would all accept that free gift.

Ephesians chapter 1, this is the way that God views you, He wants to bless you, He wants to teach you, He wants you part of His family, and He looks at you and He says, "You're worth dying for." You, as a son or a daughter of Jesus Christ, are worth dying for. You're worth dying for. He said, "I'll go to the cross because of the things that you've done. Because you're worth it. You're worth having a relationship with. You're worth sitting at my table.

Point #4 Support

Again, I think sometimes we kind of get this bad connotation when it comes to our relationship with God, that we look at our sins, and that's the way that we define ourselves, and certainly we need to look at that and repent, right? And to come to Jesus, and that's an important journey in our faith walk, but here's what I want to point out though: don't let that define you, because God doesn't let it define you! He says, "Hey, listen, you're My son; you're My daughter!" Let that define who you are! When we define ourselves as sinners and that's where we stop, oftentimes, what do we do? We go back to our sin... because we're defining ourselves that way, instead of defining ourselves as yes, we have sinned, we've repented, we've come to Jesus... and we're not perfect, but we're loved by Him... we're His son; we're his daughter.

Hebrews 12 tells us to do this: **"Look to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the Throne of God."** For the joy set before him, Jesus went to the cross, and now we look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, as Hebrews 12:2 says, we look to Him, we look to Him and we say, "Jesus, thank You for doing that." And it changes the way that we

live, right? We repent of our sins, we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and savior, and now it changes us! Why? Because God cares about us! That's what truly changes us! When we really internalize what the Bible is saying in **Psalm 139**, when it says, **"For I formed you in my inward parts, for You knitted me together in my mother's womb, I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, my soul knows it very well."** God made you and He knows all the ins and outs about you. He knows you better than you know yourself, and He wants a relationship with you.

1 Peter chapter 2 says, **"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."** That's what God has for you! He wants you to die to sin and live to righteousness! It goes on to say, **"By his wounds you have been healed."** I want you to think about how you define yourself just for a moment, because how you define yourself matters. Do you define yourself as a sinner and that's it? Or do you define yourself as someone who is forgiven by God, and so now you are dead to your sin and you are alive to righteousness! Why? Because you're healed by Jesus Christ's wounds!

1 Peter chapter 3 will go on to say, **"For Christ also suffered once for sins the righteousness for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."** He looks at you and he says, "I want to bless you, I want to teach you, I want you a part of my family, and you're worth dying for.

Application

So, what do we do with that information (because the Book of James tells us that we shouldn't just be hearers of God's Word, but we should also be doers)? Well, three things that I think that we can take out of knowing how God views us, and if we could take it and apply it, it'll change our actions.

Application Point #1: Accept God's mercy and grace

The first thing is simply this, we need to accept God's mercy and his grace in our life. **John 3:16** says, **"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."** The next verse says this though, in John 3:16 that verse it's a well-known verse, we think about it all the time, we recite it all the time, but do you know the next verse? **John 3:17** says, **"God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn it, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."** Again that changes how God views us, right? Like God didn't send Jesus to call out all of our sins and make us feel terrible and that's it, right? He sent Jesus to do this: to save the world so that we could be made right with God, so that we could have salvation in him, so that we could do what Romans 10:13 tells us to do, that, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And we know that Jesus is the only way, John 14:6 tells us that Jesus says, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me."** So, our job then, knowing how God views us, is to accept God's grace and his Mercy in our lives.

Application Point #2: View others the same way God views them

And then we are also to do this: we are also to view others in that same vein. We are also to view others the way that God views them. If we know how God views us, we are to view others in that same way as well. So many times, we can look at other people and we can go, "Man, what a terrible person over there, right?" We can be really hypocritical in this, or we could really just look at someone with just not a righteous perspective, but kind of a "holier than thou," right? Like, *"I'm better than them and I never I never did that, I had my other sins I don't want to talk about, but I never did that sin, right? And that's terrible. I couldn't believe that they would do that,"* and man instead of just viewing them as someone who needs Jesus just as much as we need Jesus.

Jesus answered the question of what the most important commandment was in Matthew chapter 22, He says, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment."** He also ties the second one in with it, in the next verse He says, **"The second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself."** In other words you can't love God and hate other people. It's a packaged deal: love God; love others! Packaged deal; it goes hand-in-hand. This is why Ephesians chapter 4 will tell us to, **"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another as God and Christ forgave you."** And Jesus will say this in John chapter 15: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." We need to view other people in the same way.

Application Point #3: Live our lives on mission

Here's the last thing that I think it means for our lives, that we need to live on mission. God didn't call us to live the most-comfy life, the life that we want to see, with the nicest car, the nicest house, or the easiest job, or the best paying job, or to just get anything we want on Amazon delivered to our house, right? God didn't call us to live this really, really comfortable life. He called us to live a life on mission!

In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul will write to the church in Ephesus and he'll say, **"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus"--look at this--"for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."** Matthew Chapter 5 says, **"In the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."** This is really important: that we know that we're living on mission! In fact, Jesus, He'll give the Great Commission to His disciples and He'll say, "Go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold I am with you always to the end of the age." We are to go out view other people the same way and to teach them to love Jesus!

Conclusion

So, you might be asking yourself today, "Wait, wasn't this sermon supposed to be about foster care? Wasn't this supposed to be about what the Bible has to say about foster care?" Well, if we don't understand how God views us, all we're going to do is be motivated by guilt, right: *"well this is a thing that I probably should do."* Guilt is a really bad motivator, and I don't want to

motivate you with guilt. I want to tell you how God views you, which is what Ephesians chapter 1 is doing for us, telling us about how God views us and then how that changes our lives, and I want to just end by painting this picture for you: if Ephesians chapter 1 tells us that God loves us, He wants us a part of his family, that we're worth teaching, that we're worth dying for, we're worth being put at God's table, that He wants us a part of His family, if that's how God views us, and we're to view others that same way, what better way to do that than inviting children, that don't have a home, into your home?

One way that I look at foster care is that if a child has to go through that traumatic experience—which there's a lot of trauma involved in foster care, these kids have been put through a lot-- and if they have to be put through that terrible, terrible traumatic event in their lives, to be put in the foster care system, man, our job as Christians I think, is to bring them in to show them the love of Christ, to care for them, and to show them what it looks like to follow Jesus. That if a kid has to go through that traumatic event, how better could God redeem that child than through a Christian opening up their home and caring and loving for that child, and showing him how to follow Jesus and inviting them to do the same?

A lot of kids in the foster care system, they haven't had anyone in their lives show them the love of Christ and to show them how what how to follow Jesus and what that looks like... What if you were that person? We're going to explore that as we continue on here in this sermon series, but I want to just want to plant that idea in your head: what if it were you? What if God's calling you to do that?

As you look at other kids maybe you look at them as “*entitled*,” and that's a bad thing, but what if God looks at them and says, “That's a child made in my image, and they need me as their Lord and Savior. They need a relationship with me and I'm calling you to do that, to go out to teach them, to show them how they can have that relationship with Me. What if God is calling you to do that? Before you listen to the next sermon in this sermon series, all I want you to do is pray about that. Spend some time in prayer, spend some time reading over Ephesians chapter 1 or one of the several other Bible verses that we took a look at here today and just ask God if that's what You want me to be doing.

Closing Prayer

Let me pray for you, Father we thank You, that You are a good God, and Jesus thank You so much for loving us so much that You went to the cross on our behalf. We can't imagine the amount of pain and agony that you went through so that we could have a relationship with You. Thank You, thank you, thank you, Jesus, for doing that. Holy Spirit would you guide us, would you help us to know how we are to live our lives on mission for You, that as the Book of James says, again, we wouldn't just be hearers of God's Word, but doers. Help us to be doers. Help us to build up Your Kingdom the best way that we possibly can Jesus. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.