

Your Complete Story : Part 1

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EPHESIANS 1:1-7

Week's Core Competency:

Identity in Christ- I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

It was 1960 in South Korea. As the oldest child in the Daejeon orphanage, it was 8 year-old Stephanie's job to wash all the diapers. She walked two miles to the river, where she cleaned the diapers in the icy water. Heading back to the orphanage, she tried to ignore the string of kids following her and shouting, as they always did, "Toogee! Toogee!" "Toogee" means foreign devil. Deep inside, she

actually believed that "Toogee" was her true identity. "I thought I was the lowest you could get," says Stephanie.

Two years earlier, a Swedish nurse had rescued Stephanie. She found her malnourished, lying on a mound of garbage, hopeless and waiting to die. In Stephanie's short life she had been abandoned, abused, and ostracized because she was the unacceptable child of a Korean woman and an American GI.

Yesterday, the Swedish nurse asked Stephanie to help get the children ready because a foreign couple was coming to the orphanage. Stephanie had spent hours scrubbing the babies, trying to make them as pretty as she could, even putting little ribbons in the girls' hair. "One of these babies is going to America," she said to herself, "And they're going to have a future."

Back at the orphanage, the chimes echoed announcing the arrival of a visitor. As the door squeaked open, Stephanie was fascinated by the huge man and woman in the doorway. The man picked up a tiny baby and tucked it under his arm. Then she saw something she had never seen: tears trickling down a man's face. As she tried to figure out why he was crying, Stephanie found herself edging closer to him. She stopped, frozen, when he looked at her with wet eyes.

He crouched in front of her, and quietly spoke with words she couldn't understand. Her hair was teeming with lice. She was covered with sores and jagged scars. She had intestinal worms. Her left eye drifted lazily in its socket. Gently, the man's large hand touched her face. My heart did a somersault." Stephanie remembers. "Inside, I wanted to say, 'Don't take that hand away. Please love me.'" Instead, she yanked off his hand and spat on him. The young missionary couple strongly sensed God leading them to adopt her. The next day, they returned to the orphanage and that little girl became their daughter.

She had a new identity. They brought her home with them and lovingly welcomed her into their family. Everything that belonged to her parents was now hers and they delighted to shower her with kindness, generosity, and love.

This Week

This story illustrates how God lovingly chose us, in Christ, while we, like Stephanie, were covered with the sores and scars of sin. As you study this week, consider the richness of what it means to be lovingly and graciously adopted into God's family, through faith in Jesus Christ, and how it fundamentally changes your identity.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

Read Ephesians 1:1-7

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will: To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

4 For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless

in His sight. In love

5 He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will,

6 to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

7 We have redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. Look for and circle the phrases "in Christ," "in Him," "through Jesus Christ," "in the Messiah". Why do you think that Paul repeatedly uses this similar phrasing?
2. In Christ we have many spiritual blessings. List as many spiritual blessings as you can. (You can go outside this passage to make your list.) Once you have made a list, choose 2-3 blessings from your list that seem particularly meaningful to you and tell why.
3. Verse 4 says we were chosen, in Christ, to be blameless and holy. a) What did Paul mean by this?

b) What practical steps can you take so that your earthly life more accurately reflects this spiritual reality?

4. What are the implications of being adopted into God's family? (See also Galatians 4:5-7 & Ephesians 5:8-10)

5. In verses 3, 6, (also in 12, & 14), Paul speaks of praise due to God. a) How might you offer God praise for graciously blessing you, choosing you, and adopting you in Christ?

b) What could you change about the way you live so that your life might cause others to notice and praise God as a result?

6. What do you think Paul meant when he refers to "the mystery of his will" in verse 9? (See Ephesians 3:2-6)

7. Since your true identity, as believers, is inextricably bound to God, our father, how will you make time to get to know your adoptive father better?

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live in community with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ