


The **God** of Ephesians

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- “What comes into our minds when we think about God is **the most important thing about us.**” –Tozer
Really? Not our up-bringing? **Not** our intelligence or education? **Not** our wealth or even our health?
Do you know **anyone** who **actually** lives as if their view of God is the **most** important thing?
If so, please tell us about them.

Tell us about someone you know who lives as if their up-bringing, intelligence, education, wealth or health is the most important thing about them? What is it like to be around them? Do you enjoy them?

- Pastor Dan noted three major themes about God in the Book of Ephesians (see [Sermon Summary](#)):
 - I. God is sovereign and all-powerful.**
 - II. God is mysterious and unknowable—unless and until he reveals himself.**
 - III. God forgives, redeems, and blesses his church.**

Which of those themes was most **unfamiliar** to you? **Why** do you think that is?

How do you think your attitudes and actions might change if that truth became more significant to you?

Which of those themes comes to mind most frequently when you think about God? Why that one?

To what degree do you think that familiarity with that theme may be resulting in reduced awe toward God (as they say, “*Familiarity breeds contempt!*”)?

How can you develop a more profound understanding of, and appreciation of, that familiar theme?

- Tell about a time when you gave a gift—it may have been monumental or it may have been modest—but no gratitude was forthcoming, and that really stung!

Who remembers a time when **you** were ungrateful for a gift? Would you tell us about that experience?

How often do you thank God for the **spiritual** blessings he's given you?

Are you satisfied with the frequency and intensity of your gratitude toward God? Do you think he is?

(If not, take some time now to read Psalm 103 aloud, stopping to give thanks for the things mentioned.)

Sermon Summary

Every parent knows the joy of giving gifts to our children. It's nice when they appreciate the gift, but love and appreciation for the **giver** is the ultimate goal of gift-giving. For the past several weeks Pastor Doug has been showing us the gifts God has given us through Christ—but the ultimate purpose of God's generosity is the **relational enjoyment** that results. We need to appreciate the Giver more than the gifts. A focus on God becomes even more critical now that we are at a hinge point in Ephesians. Chapters 1-3 were all about theological truths. Chapters 4-6 are all about the practical applications of those truths in our lives. If we lose sight of the Giver what chance do we have in responding obediently to him when he starts giving us commands?! We'll be like spoiled children—ignoring both the giver and his wishes. As A. W. Tozer famously said: *"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."* It's more important than even the gifts he's given us—for the Giver is always greater than the gifts he gives.

Today I want to do nothing other than fill our minds with what the Bible says about our God, the God of Ephesians. From first page to last, the Bible gives us one consistent but mind-blowing view of God. Ephesians invites us to be "filled up to all the fullness of God" (3:19)—have you ever thought about being "filled up with God"? So...who is this trinitarian God with whom we can be filled? I scoured the entire book of Ephesians for statements about God and observed **three major themes**:

I. God is sovereign and all-powerful. God is seated in the heavenly places (1:20). Kings sit. Servants stand in the presence of kings, but kings sit on thrones. God's throne is in the heavenly places—above every earthly king's throne. So God is sovereign. Nobody and no thing compels or obligates him to do anything that he doesn't want to. He does exactly what he wants to do, and nobody stops him. God recognizes no other authority in the universe. God is seated in the heavens. Every knee will bow to God. This is a hugely comforting truth, because the sovereign God happens to be our God. Nothing can happen to you unless our God ordains it. There is no "fate" or "karma" in God's universe. Our sovereign God does as he pleases; he's seated in the heavens. God is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think because he's all-powerful (3:20). Everything is effortless to our God. When you combine sovereignty with ability, you get a God who actually does make everything go the way he wants; he works all things after the eternal counsel of his will (1:11 & 3:11). Because our God is sovereign and all-powerful, nothing can happen in your life that he hasn't allowed. Therefore we should be filled with confidence and hope. A God this powerful can take any hardship, any trial, and use it to make something good. He promises to do that for his born-again children. Are you trusting him with the difficulties and disappointments of your life?

II. God is mysterious and unknowable—unless and until he reveals himself. Our God is inscrutable—and you can't unscrew the inscrutable! Ephesians 4:17-18 informs us that the unsaved have futile minds, darkened understanding, and even are ignorant of their ignorance! Their hearts are hard. Our God cannot be put under a microscope, he cannot be "found out" unless and until he reveals himself. Our minds are just too dark. And, our ignorance is **moral, not intellectual**. Is God a mystery to you? Does he confuse you? He will—unless and until he reveals himself to you. God is revealed in the pages of Scripture. Do you believe that? Do you read the Scriptures? Do you read them with a prior commitment to believe and obey whatever it teaches? Have you signed over the title to your life? If you have, God turns the light on. If you haven't, then God actively hides himself from your understanding. If you want to know God, then he's going to have to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself (1:2 & 17). When God becomes your Father, he reveals himself to you. You can't "smart yourself" into the kingdom of God. God will remain mysterious, distant and unknown unless and until we humble ourselves. Only God's true children truly know him. Do you want to know God? If so, then...

continued

III. God forgives, redeems, and blesses his church. The church is not a club, a “voluntary association”. The church is the gathering of individuals who have been savingly called out from this dark world into God’s marvelous light. We are the ones who are blessed with forgiveness, redemption, and blessed with the knowledge of the one true God (1:6-7 & 2:5-8). God makes us spiritually alive and shows us the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness. God freely—ie, he sovereignly—bestows his grace. Nobody coerces him into doing it. He gives us grace because he **wants** to. And throughout eternity the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us will be on display. He blesses the church with his lavish grace—in a way and to a degree that those who reject him do not experience. The otherwise unknowable God reveals himself to us, and we are blessed. That same God who saves us, secures us. He seals us with the Holy Spirit of promise. God himself—in the person of his Holy Spirit—is the pledge of our inheritance. He is the down-payment that the rest of our salvation will be delivered (1:13-18; 2:18; 3:16 & 5:18-26). And since God himself is the down-payment, if he were to renege (which, of course, he cannot do)—we get to keep his down-payment, which is God himself! We get God —guaranteed! This is why our salvation is “to the praise of his glory”. Limitless power guarantees our access to God. Nothing in heaven, on earth, or in hell can separate us from the love of God. We have unassailable access to God.

But there’s more! We don’t just escape hell; God purifies us (5:25-26)! Sometimes we wonder how God might feel about us if he knew the full extent of the wickedness in our hearts. I assure you—we don’t know the half of our sin. But God knows it all, and he’s committed to removing it all. Not just the guilt of our sin, but the actual presence of sin in our lives. He is going to present us to himself in the white dress of a bride, without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless. That’s the rest of our salvation. God is never surprised or shocked by our sin. You can bring your sins and temptations to a God like that. Your addictions and anger too. You can admit your sexual confusion and temptations. Bring your bitterness and discontentment to your God. He’s **for** you. In fact, God is building us into a dwelling place for himself (2:19-22)! God chooses to “settle down in our hearts”; Christ makes our hearts his home. Don’t you long for home? This world is not our home. God is our home—and we are his! It sounds too good to be true—but it is eternally marvelously true. The Bible calls it the “good news”.

The God of Ephesians is sovereign and all-powerful. He’s mysterious and unknowable until he revealed himself to us. He forgives, redeems and blesses us, his church. We can’t understand all this. We don’t deserve any of it. But we **can** praise him for it.



Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Behold your God through this sweeping survey of God's plan to glorify himself, by glorifying his Son...

Probably no text in the Bible reveals the passion of God for his own glory more clearly and bluntly as Isaiah 48:9-11 where God says.

For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

I have found that for many people these words come like six hammer blows to a man-centered way of looking at the world:

*For my name's sake!
For the sake of my praise!
For my own sake!
For my own sake!
How should my name be profaned!
My glory I will not give to another!*

What this text hammers home to us is the centrality of God in his own affections. The most passionate heart for the glorification of God is God's heart. God's ultimate goal is to uphold and display the glory of his name.

God chose his people for his glory

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace. Ephesians 1:4-6, cf. vv. 12, 14

God created us for his glory

Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, every one who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory. Isaiah 43:6-7

God called Israel for his glory

You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Isaiah 49:3

I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory. Jeremiah 13:11

God rescued Israel from Egypt for his glory

Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works ... but rebelled by the Sea, at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. Psalm 106:7-8

God raised Pharaoh up to show his power and glorify his name

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." Romans 9:17

God defeated Pharaoh at the Red Sea to show his glory

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord ... And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. Exodus 14:4, 18; cf. v. 17

God spared Israel in the wilderness for the glory of his name

I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Ezekiel 20:14

God gave Israel victory in Canaan for the glory of his name

Who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? 2 Samuel 7:23

God did not cast away his people for the glory of his name

Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord ... For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake. 1 Samuel 12:20, 22

God saved Jerusalem from attack for the glory of his name

For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David. 2 Kings 19:34; cf. 20:6

God restored Israel from exile for the glory of his name

Thus says the Lord God, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name.... And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name.... And the nations will know that I am the Lord. Ezekiel 36:22-23; cf. v. 32

Jesus sought the glory of his Father in all he did

The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. John 7:18

Jesus told us to do good works so that God gets glory

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. Matthew 5:16; cf. 1 Peter 2:12

Jesus warned that not seeking God's glory makes faith impossible

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? John 5:44

Jesus said that he answers prayer that God would be glorified

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John 14:13

Jesus endured his final hours of suffering for God's glory

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" John 12:27-28
Father, the hour has come; glorify your son that the Son may glorify you. John 17:1; cf. 13:31-32

God gave his Son to vindicate the glory of his righteousness

God put [Christ] forward as a propitiation by his blood ... to show God's righteousness ... It was to show his righteousness at the present time. Romans 3:25-26

God forgives our sins for his own sake

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 43:25
For your own name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Psalm 25:11

Jesus receives us into his fellowship for the glory of God

Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:7

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son of God

He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. John 16:14

God instructs us to do everything for his glory

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God 1 Corinthians 10:31; cf. 6:20

God tells us to serve in a way that will glorify him

Whoever serves, [let him do it] as one who serves by the strength which God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:11

Jesus will fill us with fruits of righteousness for God's glory

It is my prayer that ... [you be] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9, 11

All are under judgment for dishonoring God's glory

They became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 1:22, 23; 3:23

Herod is struck dead because he did not give glory to God

Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory. Acts 12:23

Jesus is coming again for the glory of God

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed. 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Jesus' ultimate aim for us is that we see and enjoy his glory

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. John 17:24

Even in wrath God's aim is to make known the wealth of his glory

Desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, [God] has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory. Romans 9:22-23

God's plan is to fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14

Everything that happens will redound to God's glory

From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. Romans 11:36

In the New Jerusalem the glory of God replaces the sun

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. Revelation 21:23