

Ephesians 1

Dear Friend,

My name is Paul, I'm an Apostle of Jesus Christ, which means that I have the special job of being sent by God to churches across the world to share the message of grace and peace of God the Father and His Son, Jesus.

Now that I've introduced myself, I want to start by giving thanks to God, who sent His Son, the Lord Jesus to us. He is so good to us - He just cannot stop blessing us. Before He had made anything, the Earth, the sun, the stars, anything at all, He already had a plan to make me and you. Not only that, but He chose us and set us apart to be completely perfect, just like Jesus. In fact, just like Jesus, He chose to adopt us so we could be His sons and daughters. He did this because He loves us so much and wants us to share in all that He has. Of course all of this is only made possible through Jesus. It's mind boggling and utterly impossible to understand, but somehow through Jesus dying on the cross, we get to be adopted into God's family, meaning that we are forgiven for any and all of the wrong things we've done and we get to enjoy all of God's riches and goodness! It is so incredible that I often struggle to get my head around, much less be able to explain it to someone else, but over the course of the next few letters I will do my best!

When God chose us to be His sons and daughters, it was as if he put an invisible stamp on us to say that we are part of His family, something to mark us out as being one of His. This mark is called the Holy Spirit and He lives inside of us, guaranteeing that God is with us always until the very end. He helps us to do the very thing that we were made to do - praise God and bring Him glory every day of our lives! We can talk more about what this looks like at another time but remember that the Holy Spirit is with you as a promise of all that you have in Jesus!

One thing that excites me, beyond all others, is when I hear about people putting their faith in Jesus and loving God's people. When I hear this, I jump for joy and thank God endlessly - I just cannot help myself! I pray for you too, that God would give you wisdom and that He would help your heart to be opened and for you to live in the hope that Jesus gives us.

I pray as well that you would know that He has blessings beyond your wildest dreams and that the Holy Spirit comes with great power too! The single greatest show of strength and power that God did was to raise His son, Jesus, from the grave, all the way back up to Heaven. That is a power beyond any natural thing on Earth and more powerful than any king or ruler that I've ever seen. Now He gives each one of us that same power, through His Holy Spirit! Because this power is given to each of us, who choose to follow Jesus, it means that when we come together as a group, the Church, it's as if we become the Christ's body, being like Him in every way so that we can continue to spread His goodness and glory throughout the Earth, not just now, but in the future too. Incredible, eh?!



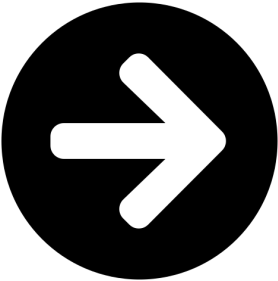
I know I've covered a lot of stuff in this short letter and it has probably given you a lot to think about, chat about and pray about. We'll talk more about some of the things I've mentioned above in later letters.

I will write again soon!
Paul

Now watch the video @
www.littleoakschildrensministry.co.uk/LettersFromPaul/Ephesians1

Think about it

Use the space below to scribble down your thoughts (questions, 'aha' moments and applications) on the letter.

Talk about it

1. Why do you think Paul is writing his letter?
2. What does being "adopted by God" look like?
3. The final paragraph talks about the importance of the church. What do you think of church? Do you agree that is as important as Paul says? Why? Why not?

Take it to God

- Thank God for sending Jesus so that we can be free!
- The letter mentions God's love for us. Ask God what He loves most about you.
- Ask God for help with any bits of the letter that you didn't understand or struggle to believe.

Write back to Paul with your thoughts and feelings on what you have read, written down and talked about. Do you have any questions for him? Do you agree with what he wrote? What is it that stands out most?