



The Gift of a Self-Emptying God

GROWTH GUIDE NOVEMBER 3, 2024

All Saints Sunday

Scripture: *Ephesians 3:1-12*

AUTHOR

The apostle Paul, formerly known as Saul, a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians, who had a conversion experience on the road to Damascus, is the author. He spread the good news of Jesus Christ on three missionary journeys, and was instrumental in bringing the gospel to non-Jews.

CONTEXT

Paul wrote this letter in A.D. 60 from Rome where he was in prison, to strengthen and encourage the believers in Ephesus in their Christian faith by teaching them about the nature and purpose of the church, and the body of Christ. One of the most prominent churches that Paul established was at Ephesus, in A.D. 53. Paul returned a year later, on his 3rd missionary journey and stayed there for 3 years preaching and teaching, so he knew the Ephesians well. (Acts 19:1-20)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Ephesians 3:1-12. What word or phrase stands out to you and how is it speaking to you?
2. What does the idea of a self-emptying God mean to you?
3. In Ephesians 3:2 (NIV) what special responsibility does Paul say God gave him?
4. Read Ephesians 3:6. What would both Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Good News receive?

5. What did the Old Testament say the Gentiles would receive? Read Isaiah 49:6.
6. The Old Testament did not reveal that all Gentiles and Jewish believers would become equal in the body of Christ. This equality was accomplished when Jesus destroyed the wall of hostility and created one new people. Read Ephesians 2:14-15. How did Jesus break down the wall of hostility?
7. How do you define grace?
8. How does grace inform the way you live your life and treat others?
9. Paul writes that he was the least deserving of all God's people yet what did God graciously give him the privilege to do? Read Ephesians 3:8.
10. What role do you feel God has called you to play in his plan?
11. What gift or other resource do you have to help spread the Good News of Jesus?
12. Thanks to Jesus, by faith we can enter directly into God's presence through prayer. How do you talk to God and do you feel confident to approach him in prayer? What does your prayer life look like?

ENCOURAGEMENT

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