

## New Life Secured by the Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14\*

Are you heaven-bound? Do you possess the assurance of your everlasting life in Christ? This powerful passage brings clarity for the confused, hope for the hopeless, rejoicing for the joyless; all to the praise of God's glory.

John R.W. Stott writes: God's people are God's 'saints' (verse 1), God's heritage (verse 12), God's possession (verse 14). Only when that has been grasped, are we ready to ask two further questions. First, *how* did we become God's people? Secondly, *why* did he make us his people? Paul answers the first question by reference to God's will and the second by reference to his glory. And he states each truth three times.<sup>2</sup>

### The 'How' of vv. 3-14 (5b, 9a, 11b)

#### New Life secured by the Spirit (13-14)

- the Holy Spirit is God's \_\_\_\_\_ (13)
- the Holy Spirit is God's \_\_\_\_\_ (13a)
- the Holy Spirit is God's \_\_\_\_\_ (14a)

### The 'Why' of vv. 3-14 (6a, 12b, 14b)

## WHOLE HEARTED THANKFULNESS

The subtitle of *The Art of the Handwritten Note* by Margaret Shepherd is *A Guide to Reclaiming Civilized Communication!* As grateful as we are for the immediacy of email and text, there is just something about the impact of one's handwriting (even when, like mine, it's often hard to decipher). Perhaps it's because the time dedicated to writing a note gives one the opportunity to reflect on the person to whom they're grateful. It is a worthwhile endeavor—and, if you're like me, you will seldom retain an email, but you may treasure a personal card.

I give you thanks, O Lord,  
with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your  
steadfast love and your faithfulness,  
for you have exalted above all things  
your name and your word.  
On the day I called, you answered me;  
my strength of soul you increased.  
PSALM 138:1-3

[This week] we will be celebrating our Thanksgiving [holiday]. Finding more than a few passing minutes to reflect with grateful hearts on all that God has done for us may, like handwritten notes, be going the way of a lost art. Time dedicated to prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude can easily be swallowed up by all the hectic holiday planning and preparation.

The Psalms offer help in this regard. David's poems and songs provide us with a good example to follow: remembering God's faithfulness throughout the ages, proclaiming God's glory in all of Creation, thanking God for answering personal needs and prayers, and committing to being a servant of the Lord by honoring God with everlasting praise. In Psalm 30:12, the author writes, "...O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!"

This is also a good pattern to share with your children—and if it's been a while since you've read a psalm with them, Thanksgiving might be a great time to start.

—adapted from Alistair Begg's November newsletter

\* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God's Word.

<sup>2</sup> John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 47.