

**To the Praise of His Glory, Part 1**  
Ephesians 1:1-6

I. The blessing of the Father in \_\_\_\_\_ us (3-6)

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (4)

All Christians believe in divine sovereignty, but some are not aware that they do, and mistakenly imagine and insist that they reject it. What causes this odd state of affairs? The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the Church—the intruding of rationalistic speculations, the passion for systematic consistency, a reluctance to recognize the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men, and a consequent subjecting of Scripture to the supposed demands of human logic. People see the Bible teaches man’s responsibility for his actions; they do not see (man, indeed, cannot see) how this is consistent with the sovereign Lordship of God over those actions. They are not content to let the two truths live side by side, as they do in the Scriptures, but jump to the conclusion that, in order to uphold the biblical truth of human responsibility, they are bound to reject the equally biblical and equally true doctrine of divine sovereignty, and to explain away the great number of texts that teach it. The desire to over-simplify the Bible by cutting out the mysteries is natural to our perverse minds, and it is not surprising that even godly men should fall victim to it. Hence this persistent and troublesome dispute. The irony of the situation, however, is that when we ask how the two sides pray, it becomes apparent that those who profess to deny God’s sovereignty really believe in it just as strongly as those who affirm it. - J. I. Packer

B. \_\_\_\_\_ (5)

II. The blessing of the Son in \_\_\_\_\_ us (7-12)

III. The blessing of the Spirit in \_\_\_\_\_ us (13-14)

We need to see first and foremost that God is God—that he is perfect and complete in himself, that he is overflowingly happy in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, and that he does not need us to complete his fulness and is not deficient without us. Rather *we* are deficient without *him*; the all-sufficient glory of God, freely given in fellowship through his sacrificed Son, is the stream of living water that we have thirsted for all our lives.

Unless we begin with God in this way, when the gospel comes to us, we will inevitably put ourselves at the center of it. We will feel that *our* value rather than *God’s* value is the driving force in the gospel. We will trace the gospel back to God’s need for *us* instead of tracing it back to the sovereign grace that rescues sinners who need *God*.

But the gospel is the good news that God is the all-satisfying end of all our longings, and that even though he does not need us, and is in fact estranged from us because of our God-belittling sins, he has, in the great love with which he loved us, made a way for sinners to drink at the river of his delights through Jesus Christ. And we will not be enthralled by this good news unless we feel that he was not obliged to do this. He was not coerced or constrained by our value. *He* is the center of the gospel. The exaltation of *his* glory is the driving force of the gospel. The gospel is a gospel of *grace*! And grace is the pleasure of God to magnify the worth of God by giving sinners the right and power to delight in God without obscuring the glory of God.

- John Piper