

## Discussion Questions

### IF—Ephesians 1:1-14

(Share a memory about your father or a father figure in your life.)

Take a moment to write out a list of 5 things you consider blessings. Now, take a moment to write 5 things that feel least like a blessing. Share your list with your small group.

- How did you determine what is or is not a blessing in your life?
- What do you think allows a person to either have an abundance of or lack of blessings?
- When you look at your list do feel at all that you have earned your blessings or lack of them?

Though of course there are consequences to good or bad behavior, Ephesians 1 reveals that receiving our Heavenly Father's blessing isn't dependent on our behavior, it's only dependent on His decision to bless us, which was made long ago. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "*has blessed us in Christ [It's already done] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.*"

- Do you believe that God has *already* blessed you with every spiritual blessing through what Christ has done for you?
- Is it intuitive for you to believe that you were chosen in love for adoption through Jesus? Why or why not?

In the sermon "IF," Peter talked about Flatland and how our understanding of reality depends on our location and perspective. He also told of how Paul had a revelation that enabled him to see from a different perspective. Sometimes we see things that we can't explain, not because they are untrue but because they are *more* true than what we can comprehend.

- Have you ever experienced something you just couldn't explain but knew to be true?
- How do you determine reality? What seems most real in this world to you and why?

Take a moment and think of Jesus suffering, beaten, and dying on the cross.

- How does his suffering and sorrow look and feel from our perspective?
- What would this world say about Him and His suffering?
- How might it look from God's perspective?
- What might God say about it?

Return to your list of things that you feel are least like a blessing in your life.

- How do you see them and experience them?
- How might God see them?
- What do you think God might hope for you in the midst of them?
- Ask God to help the eyes of your heart to be enlightened (as Paul put it) in order that you might see you *have been* blessed with every spiritual blessing...

Sometimes the church sees God from a misleading perspective and as a result misjudges His character and misunderstands who He truly is. This image is a perfect example of that.

- Can you think of any lies you might have believed about who God is or lies you've believed about yourself because you didn't understand how truly unconditional His love is for you?
- (Try this at home) When you have some time, try to list any lies you think you might have believed about God and His character, then search for biblical truths that you might replace them with.