

# Deepening our Intimacy with God - 1

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## Big Idea Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



## Sermon Text

Ephesians 1:3-6



## Big Idea

God is the primary actor in our lives. His purpose for us is conformity to his image, and he works in and for us, to this end, no matter where we are at, if we are willing to accept him.

### The Triune of God in Action (vs 3)

In this singular verse, we see the initiative of the Triune God, working for your sake and my sake. Without any merit on our side, we clearly see God as the primary initiator of the blessings.

Why are these verses (vs 3-14) showing the work of the Triune God for us, even before we were born. It is to make us realize a simple truth - We matter to God! You, matter to God!

### Election: the proof of His love (vs 4a)

With our limited understanding, election means that the existence of God's people (the body of Christ) is solely based on God's plan and action. At the same time, it is clear from scripture that somehow human responsibility is a part of this. Election doesn't nullify human responsibility, neither is it set against it.

Two implications of election:

- Our faith rests completely on the work of God, and there is no room for boasting
- The point of election is unto holiness i.e. we are set apart for God, unto God

### Sonship by Adoption (vs 4b-6)

In our world, anyone adopted has their position by grace and not by right, yet they are on the same footing as those born into the family. The only one born of God is Christ Jesus, and God offers us the same standing as Christ, who is His firstborn

### Application: Prayer

Prayer should be the act by which we empty ourselves of all false belongings for the sake of becoming more intimate with the Triune God. It is where we progressively lay down our agendas, our need for control, the outcomes we so desperately want, and increasingly take up our cross, and follow Christ joyfully

So in this new year, please make prayer a staple of your life. As you make plans in other areas of your life, whether in the new year or at any other time, please apply the same zeal per prayer. Take seriously your relationship with God



## Homework

- Meditatively read through Matt 6 and see what Jesus says about prayer (and other spiritual practices like fasting, and what we treasure), and compare that to how and why we pray
- How can you make prayer a consistent feature of your life?
- If you are struggling with how to practically engage God more in prayer, perhaps do the following
  - Set out a concrete time in the morning and/or evening
  - Pick a comfortable place to be in
  - Unburden your heart before him - speak to him as you would a friend. Use the model Jesus taught on how (not what) to pray
  - Maybe have a journal and write in it. You can write your distracting thoughts and your prayers in there
  - Keep at it, and when you skip/miss it, don't beat yourself up but take it seriously as well