

### **Eph 3.1-13 Discussion Questions**

*Feel free to choose what questions will be most helpful to your group to grow in their understanding of the Scripture, learn how to better read the Bible for themselves, and faithfully apply it to their lives.*

Read Eph 3:1-13

1. In Chapter 2 Paul had been talking about the gospel (vv. 1-10) and how through it God united both Jews and Gentiles through Christ in the church (vv. 11-22). These truths provide the grounds of what he is about say in 3:1.

a. Read vv. 1-3. What happens between v. 1 and vv. 2-3?

b. What does it seem like Paul was going to say and then stopped? (Hint: see v. 14 and compare it with v. 1).

2. Paul then spends the rest of this portion of Scripture discussing the nature of his "stewardship of God's grace."

a. Read vv. 3-5. What does Paul reveal about the nature of the stewardship that God has given him? In other words, what is the task that God has entrusted to him?

b. How does Paul define this "mystery"?

c. V. 5 and 9 both explain that for a long time this mystery was hidden but has not been revealed to God's apostles and prophets, so that they could make it known to everyone.

1) Does it seem odd to you that God would keep something hidden to reveal it later?

2) What does this teach us about the way that God works?

3) Where else in Scripture do you see God operating this way?

4) Where have you seen God work like this in your life?

3. In v. 8 Paul explains what his mission is in more detail: (1) He is supposed to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; and (2) to help everyone (Jew and Gentile) understand that it is God's plan for both to be saved and united in Christ without one having to become like the other.

a. What does Paul say is the goal and result of God uniting Jew and Gentile in Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel? (V. 10)

b. Who are the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places? (See 1:21 and 6:12).

c. What is "wisdom" and why would God be so intent on these spiritual beings recognizing his wisdom?

d. Does it surprise you that revealing God's wisdom to these spiritual beings is what Paul emphasizes here? Why or why not?

e. What does this teach us about the mission of God and the nature of the church?

4. As we have seen, v. 10 should challenge the way we think about church and what it means to be part of it. What we find is that it is not about us; it is about God.

a. What do you think most people assume the mission of God is? Put another way, what do you think most people assume the purpose of the church is?

b. Why do we tend to make church about us? What are some ways that you have seen this happen in your life and in churches?

c. The purpose of the church as well as our purpose as human beings has often been summarized as "to glorify God. What does it mean to "glorify God"?

d. For many people, the fact that it is all about God's glory can seem offensive. We can feel like God is being narcissistic. Why do you think that is?

e. Why is it not narcissistic for God to be ultimately concerned with his glory?

f. If the church is about the glory of God and not getting our needs met, how does that affect the following:

1) The way we choose a church?

2) Our expectations of the church?

3) How we identify a healthy or biblical church?

4) How we invest in the life of the church through our giving of the money, time, and the abilities God has entrusted to us?