

Read: Ephesians 1:3-10

Love you forever

Ephesians 1:4

For he chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A popular children's book shows a mother who sweetly rocked her baby every night and promised to "love you forever." She continued to do this as the child grew through the terrible twos, rebellious teenage years, and into adulthood. The real heart-wrenching part of the story is when the mother was too feeble to hold her grown-up son. So, he held her and sang her the same sweet song, promising to "love her forever."

So it goes—a parent's love is passed down to babies who someday have babies of their own, and the whole story of human love continues through the generations. Right? While the story is touching, it illustrates a point. In most cases, love only lasts so long. Eventually death comes calling, and love as we knew it is no more.

Consider what Paul wants you to hear in Ephesians 1—the promise that you have a God who not only *can* love you forever, but in Christ he actually *does*. Living as sinners in a sinful world, it can be easy to feel disconnected, isolated, and unloved when it comes to our fellow humans. Because of our sin, we were disconnected from our holy God, blind to his goodness, and hostile to his ways. But because of his great love for us, "he chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." No more wondering what God thinks of you—"in Christ" he's made himself clear—he loves you forever.

The plan that God hatched in eternity, he put into effect in time by sending his Son into the world to save it. Your need for forgiveness led Jesus to allow himself to be covered by your sin. Your need for life so consumed Jesus that he was swallowed up by your death. But the chains of death couldn't hold him in the tomb! Three days later, Jesus rose again to make you this promise that not even death can undo; a promise that your sin is forgiven and heaven is won. He so coordinated all the events of time and history to make sure that the good news of this promise was proclaimed into your ear at this very moment!

Do you really think a God who loves you *that* much could ever fail to provide everything that you need? Of course not, because in Christ, he loves you forever!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- If somebody loves you, what are some of the ways they show you they love you?
- How does God show you he loves you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How can you know that God loves you?
- How long will God love you?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What is the most loving thing anyone in your life has ever done for you?
- What is the most loving thing God has done for you?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for loving me forever in Christ! Amen.