



A Well-Defined FAITH

[fāth] (noun)

Biblical words used in church...
Discover what they really mean.



Sunday
August 30, 2026

Ephesians 3:21

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - Application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

“Glorify” To make God look Good

Introduction

"Make God look good" sounds, on first hearing, like a public relations job – as though God's reputation were a fragile thing that depends on our performance, our polish, the image we manage to project on His behalf. That reading gets the direction backwards before the sentence even finishes.

The Greek verb, *doxazō*, comes from a noun – *doxa* – that started out meaning something closer to opinion. In classical Greek, your *doxa* was how you were regarded, your public estimation, a thing that rose and fell with rhetoric and appearance. But when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the translators reached for that word to carry something entirely different: *kabod*, weight. Not reputation. Substance. The word used for a loaded scale, a person of consequence, a cloud so dense with presence it filled the temple until the priests couldn't stand. *Doxa* inherited a job it was never built for – describing something too heavy to be merely thought well of.

That inheritance changes what "glorify" can mean. Opinion is manufactured. It can be spun, marketed, improved with better messaging. Weight cannot. You don't make a boulder heavier by describing it more persuasively. You can only reveal the weight that was already there, or obscure it. To glorify God, in this sense, is not to add luster He lacks. It's to stop getting in the way of a weight that was never in question.

That's what makes Ephesians 3:21 such an unusual sentence to land where it does. Paul has just finished asking God for something almost too large to hold – that the church would be rooted in love, would know a love that outstrips knowing, would be filled with the fullness of God Himself. He doesn't follow that prayer with a plan. He follows it with an outburst: to Him be glory. Not because the asking earned it. Because the asking exposed how much weight was already there, and Paul can do nothing else with that but say so.

Before we go further: when you hear "glorify God," do you picture increasing His reputation through your performance, or displaying a weight that was already there before you arrived? Which one is actually shaping how you live on an ordinary Tuesday?

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- Where have you treated glorifying God like a performance review – something you could do well/poorly depending on how good you looked?
- If glory is weight made visible, not opinion improved, what changes about how you'd try to glorify God this week?
- Is there an area of your life where you've been managing your image instead of letting something true be seen?
- Paul erupts into this doxology right after admitting his prayer went beyond what can be asked or thought. What does that suggest about where glorifying God starts?
- Can you glorify God in a moment that looks like failure? What would that look like?

In May 1919, Arthur Eddington photographed a total solar eclipse off West Africa, timing starlight near the darkened sun to test a prediction from Einstein's theory that most physicists still doubted. The eclipse didn't make the theory true. Gravity had bent starlight that way long before anyone could see it. What that afternoon produced was visibility – something already real becoming undeniable.

- That's closer to doxazō than anything resembling reputation management. Glorifying God doesn't make Him weightier. It's the eclipse – what was already true, becoming visible to someone who couldn't see it a minute before.

Highlight | Ephesians 3:21

Verse 21 is the exhale after Paul prays that the Ephesians would be rooted in love, grasp a love beyond knowing, and be filled with the fullness of God – a request so far outside normal asking that he can't just say amen and move on. Verse 20 names it: God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. The Greek behind "far more abundantly" – *huperekperissou* – stacks two intensifying prefixes onto a single word, a construction Paul all but invents because ordinary comparatives couldn't carry it. Having run out of ways to ask, he stops asking and starts declaring.

To him be glory – in the church and in Christ Jesus. The location is doubled on purpose. Glory isn't displayed only in Christ, at a safe theological distance. It's displayed in the church – an assembly of ordinary, half-formed people – standing right alongside Him as the place God's weight becomes visible. Paul doesn't split those into a spiritual location and a practical one. He puts them in the same breath.

Then the time stamp: throughout all generations, forever and ever – literally, to all the generations of the age of the ages, a stacked phrase unmatched elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul isn't just saying "forever." He's piling up every unit of time available to him, because this doxology needed a timeframe too big for a single word.

- If glory is displayed "in the church," not only "in Christ Jesus," what does that suggest about where an outsider should be able to see God's weight?
- Paul runs out of normal words twice in two verses – once for abundance, once for duration. What does that cost tell you about what this prayer meant to him?

Explain | Consider the Context

Ephesians divides in half. Chapters 1-3 are doctrinal – who God is, what He's done. Chapters 4-6 are practical – how to walk, speak, live inside a marriage or household. Verse 21 sits at the hinge, the last thing Paul says before pivoting from identity to conduct. What he says there isn't a summary of doctrine or a preview of ethics. It's praise that outran his sentence structure.

That placement matters. Paul doesn't glorify God after proving he understands Him – he does it mid-admission that his prayer had already exceeded what he could ask or think. The doxology isn't a reward for comprehension. It's what happens when comprehension runs out and something true remains standing anyway.

"Kabod's" Old Testament backdrop sharpens this. The glory-cloud that filled the tabernacle in Exodus 40 didn't arrive because Israel had impressed God with tidy craftsmanship. It arrived because a weighty presence became visible in a place built to hold it. Ephesians 3:21 asks for the same kind of event, on a different scale.

- Paul writes this mid-sentence, from prison, before giving a single instruction. What does it mean that glorifying God comes before command rather than after it?
- What's the difference between praising God because you finally understand something, and praising Him because you've hit the edge of what you can understand?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

Most people's working definition of glorifying God is representing Him well – keep the testimony clean, make sure your life reflects favorably on Him. That instinct isn't crazy. It's just aimed at opinion when the word is aimed at weight.

The difference shows up under pressure. Reputation management gets anxious the moment things look bad. But if glory is weight, not opinion, a hard season doesn't threaten it any more than clouds threaten a mountain's mass. Peter's own death is called, in John's Gospel, the means by which he would glorify God – not despite looking like defeat, but through it. Weight doesn't need a flattering angle.

This reframes what actually obstructs glorifying God day to day. Rarely dramatic sin – more often the low hum of curation: editing the parts of your life that would show God's provision because they'd also show your need, softening the parts that would show His patience because they'd also show your slowness. Managing the image costs nothing dramatic. It just quietly keeps the weight from showing.

- Where have you curated your story in a way that keeps God's provision or patience from being visible?
- Is there a hard season you've kept hidden because it wouldn't "reflect well" – when it might be the clearest place His weight could be seen?
- What would it look like this week to stop managing how something looks and let it be seen as it is?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

Ephesians 3:21 doesn't give you a technique for glorifying God. It gives you a location – in the church, in Christ Jesus – and a posture: get out of the way of something that's already heavy enough to be seen on its own.

That's a lighter task than reputation management, even though it doesn't feel like it at first. You aren't responsible for producing weight that isn't there. You're responsible for not making people wait for it. Practically, that might mean naming a specific way God provided instead of letting the story stay vague. It might mean letting a group see an unresolved part of your life now, instead of holding it back until it resolves into something worth telling. Both are the same move – closing the gap between when something becomes true and when it becomes visible.

Paul writes this doxology from a prison cell, having just admitted his prayer had already outrun what words could hold. That's worth sitting with. The most expansive statement of God's glory in the letter comes from the least impressive circumstances Paul could be writing from. If glory required good timing, this verse couldn't exist where it does.

- What's one place in your life right now where something true is sitting unseen, not because it isn't real yet, but because you're waiting for a better moment to show it?
- Who is someone you could let see an unfinished part of your story this week, specifically so that what God has actually done wouldn't stay hidden behind what looks presentable?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

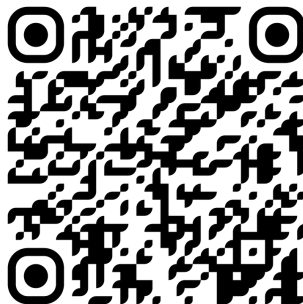
Additional Commentary

- On doxazō (δοξάζω) – "glorify": The verb form, meaning to ascribe or make visible the weight already present. John's Gospel uses it for Jesus's crucifixion as much as his resurrection (John 12:23, 13:31–32) – the same verb covering both a body broken on a cross and a body raised. If doxazō meant "make impressive," those couldn't share a word. It doesn't, so they can.
- On kabod (כבוד) – the Hebrew backdrop: Rooted in a verb meaning "to be heavy." Used of a loaded scale, a person of consequence, and – most significantly – the cloud of God's presence that filled the tabernacle in Exodus 40. Glory in its Hebrew root is never primarily about shine. It's about mass.
- On doxazō (δοξάζω) – "glorify": The verb form, meaning to ascribe or make visible the weight already present. John's Gospel applies this verb to Peter's coming execution (John 21:19) – glorifying God not through triumph but through a death that would display something true about faithfulness. Weight doesn't require a flattering circumstance to be seen.
- On huperekperissou (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) – "far more abundantly" (v.20): A rare compound intensifier, appearing elsewhere only in 1 Thessalonians. Paul stacks two separate intensifying prefixes onto a single word, functionally inventing new vocabulary because standard comparatives couldn't hold what he was trying to say.
- On "in the church and in Christ Jesus" (v.21): Two locations named in the same breath, not two categories. Glory is not displayed only in the abstract person of Christ; it is displayed in the concrete, ordinary gathering of believers standing alongside Him.
- On the stacked genitive "to all generations of the age of the ages" (v.21): The most emphatic temporal phrase in the New Testament, unparalleled elsewhere in this exact form. Paul doesn't settle for "forever" – he layers every available unit of time on top of the last, unable to find a single phrase large enough for what he's declaring.

Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our **leadership resources**.

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

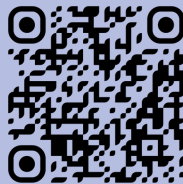
Watch/Listen

Bible Project - Ephesians



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into [Ephesians](#).

Bible Project - Glory of God



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Overview

Enduring Word - Ephesians 3



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings over [Ephesians 3](#).

Got Questions - Glorify God



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, podcasts and more on what it means to [Glorify God](#).

Expand

Bible Reference - Ephesians 3



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of [Ephesians 3:21](#).

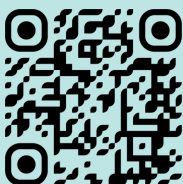
Bible Hub - Ephesians 3:21



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on [Ephesians 3:21](#).

Deepen

Logos Factbook - Glorify



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about [Glorifying](#).

Blue Letter Bible - Ephesians 3



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on [Ephesians 3:21](#).

