

Ephesians – Part 3

After tracing various blessings and the eternal plan that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have given, the Apostle Paul prayed for the believer's spiritual life.

There are two prayers in Ephesians.

The first prayer is “that you might know,” 1:15–23. Then later he prays “that you might be,” 3:13–21. The first is for enlightenment. The second is for enablement. Paul prays first that we might know what Christ has done for us. Then he prays that we might live up to these wonderful blessings and put them to work in our daily lives. We are going to look at this first prayer now and later we will study the second prayer for enablement.

Ephesians 1:15–16 NIV84 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

After Paul heard of their faith and love for all saints, he was moved to give thanks and pray for them.

Ephesians 1:17 NIV84 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Prayer for spiritual wisdom and understanding (1:15–23)

Notice Paul's request that God may give you the Spirit of wisdom and understanding (vv. 17–18a).

Spiritual truths must be spiritually discerned.

This understanding can only come from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom (Isaiah 11:2) and revelation (1 Corinthians 2:10). After Jesus was baptized in water, the Spirit descended and rested upon Him. That act brought the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2). From that moment on, the Holy Spirit rested upon Christ and He went forth and ministered in the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and fear of the Lord. When Paul was praying for believers, he wanted that same Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge God to rest upon them. This knowledge and wisdom is more than studying the Bible and gaining an understanding of what is taught. This wisdom and revelation is a work of the Spirit in the believer to give “*insight into mysteries and secret in the deep and intimate knowledge of Him.*” (AMP) The goal that God has in mind for every believer is “that you may know Him better.” He did not want believers to experience lack in the knowledge of Christ and the riches of the glory of His inheritance that comes by the work of the Spirit in their lives.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 NKJV But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

This spiritual wisdom comes from a personal experience of knowing God and how to relate to Him. It is knowing the truth and how to use it, knowing what to do and how to do it, and knowing how to live a more fruitful life for the glory of God. This kind of wisdom comes through the active present ministry and work of the Holy Spirit. The active work of the Spirit enables believers to discern the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:3 In Whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The Spirit of wisdom and revelation is the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer that enable them to know Him better. Revelation refers to gaining of knowledge, while wisdom has to do with the proper use of what is known. Paul is praying that believers would receive the Holy Spirit so that they might gain a deep, spiritual, and experiential knowledge of God. This knowledge that is based on both experience and observation can only gained by the ministry of the Holy Spirit within the believer.

1 Corinthians 2:9–10 NIV84 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

The depth of knowing what God has prepared for those who love Him is revealed by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:11-12 NIV84 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts

of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The Holy Spirit has been given to believers to reveal or make known all things, even the deep things of God. Spiritual understanding only comes by the Holy Spirit. I may learn of God's power, salvation, grace and mercy, but I understand it when the Spirit makes Christ alive in my heart.

The eyes of his heart enlightened (v. 18a)

Ephesians 1:18 NIV84 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

The NKJV says, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..." This understanding happens in the innermost being so that the light of God can be seen and grasped. An open heart is the responsibility of both the believer and the Holy Spirit.

The believer must open their heart and focus its affection, intelligence, and will upon knowing God.

The believer must seek or desire the Holy Spirit to enlighten and flood their innermost being with the things of God.

2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV84 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

God makes His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. This is much more than knowing about His glory, it is having His light and glory shine and radiate in our hearts.

That you might know the hope of His calling (v. 18b)

Ephesians 1:18 NIV84 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

What is the hope to which He has called you?

The believer who does not know his **high calling** (Philippians 3:14), **holy calling** (2 Timothy 1:9), and **heavenly calling** (Hebrews 3:1) will never be able to walk worthy of that calling (Ephesians 4:1).

- **The high calling** - Philippians 3:14 KJV I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
- **The holy calling** - 2 Timothy 1:9 KJV Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose

and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

- **The heavenly calling** - Hebrews 3:1 KJV Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.

In Ephesians 4:1 Paul urges believers to live a life worthy of the calling we have received.

God has called us to stand before Him in the name and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are called to stand before the Father just as Jesus Christ stands before Him. The ultimate reward of our inheritance in Christ will be realized in that glorious day when we shall be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection. We will be righteous and perfect and will be enabled to live and stand in God's presence.

Matthew 13:43 NIV84 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Colossians 3:4 NIV84 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1 John 3:2 NIV84 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

That you might know the riches of His inheritance (v. 18c)

Ephesians 1:18 NIV84 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

We not only have an inheritance in Christ, but we are an inheritance to Christ.

The word "riches" is frequently seen in Ephesians.

It suggests that nothing is lacking or needs to be added. These riches have been lavished upon us in Christ.

The riches of His glorious inheritance is "in the saints."

God has invested and lavished upon us everything that Christ has provided. You need to know how much you mean to Christ. God has invested heavily in you. You are His glorious inheritance. He is working with great grace to present you to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless, (Ephesians 5:26-27).

That you might know His power (vv. 19–23).

Ephesians 1:19–23 NIV84 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and

every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Can you imagine the difference it would make in every believer if they knew by experience the power that God exerted when He raised Christ from the dead? That power is available for our daily lives!

How was the incomparably great power of God manifested? (v. 20)

When God raised Christ from the dead, God was showing His power. By His great power, Christ won the victory over sin, death, the world, and Satan.

God's people do not fight for victory but from a position of Christ's victory!

We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, where there is power, peace, and victory. The power to raise Christ demonstrated that God has the power to conquer every trial and temptation of life, regardless of what it may be. He disarmed powers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15). Then God exercised His great power by exalting Christ to the highest place.

Philippians 2:9–10 NIV84 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

The ultimate manifestation of God's power is seen in His ability to place all things under Christ's feet and appoint Him to be head over everything for the church.