



REMEMBER: Your Resources

Ephesians 1:1-15

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FIRST THOUGHTS

How often do we not take advantage of the resources that we have in Christ?

I heard a story not too long ago about an elderly couple who died of starvation. When the authorities entered the home, they found a large sum of money hidden under the mattress in the couples bedroom. This couple had the resources to live but chose not to use those resources and instead died of starvation.

How sad it is that many of us as believers suffer and do not live the abundant life that Jesus taught about in [John 10:10](#) “*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*” Instead, we choose not to take advantage of the resources we have in Christ and live as paupers.

In [Eph 1:3-14](#), Paul set forth the amazing and unlimited blessings that we have as believers in Christ. The fact we were chosen, we have an inheritance, and we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

As Paul continues his letter, He writes them about his unceasing prayer for them. In his prayer that we are looking at today, In [Eph 1:17-23](#), Paul makes four request for them. 1) that they would know and an experience God (v 17); 2) that they would know the hope of God (v 18a); 3) that they would know of His glorious inheritance (v 18b); and 4) that they would know of His great power (vs 20-23).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

[Ephesians 1:15-17](#)

¹⁵ *For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.*

Why is it vital that Christians grow in their knowledge of God? How can we grow in that knowledge?

When we assume, we know all we need to know, we stagnate. God has revealed Himself in Scripture. We gain deeper knowledge of Him by prayerfully studying, trusting, and obeying His Word.

It had been five to six years since Paul had last seen the Ephesian Christians (a time period including his trip to Jerusalem, arrest, two-year stint in Caesarea, and at least a year so far on trial in Rome). He had left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus. Having heard from the church, Paul is thrilled with their spiritual state, both in its vertical (faith in Jesus) and horizontal (love for the saints) aspects.

Paul asks God to give the Ephesians a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to understand what great spiritual resources theirs in Christ were. Authentic wisdom

that begins when we understand that God is to be the object of our devotion, our adoration, and our reverence. Revelation, the insight and the discernment the Spirit brings to the mysteries of divine truth.

HOPE OF GOD

Ephesians 1:18–19

¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*

What else did Paul pray God would do for the Ephesians? For what purpose?

Paul continues by letting the Ephesians know that he is praying that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. In most modern cultures, the heart is thought of as the seat of emotions and feelings. But most ancients—Hebrews, Greeks, and many others—considered the heart to be the center of knowledge, understanding, thinking, and wisdom. What Paul was really praying for was that the minds of the Ephesian believers be enlightened and that they would have spiritual insight into the things of God.

Paul then mentions three specific areas of spiritual enlightenment that can apply to all believers:

“The hope to which he has called you.” This refers to the final hope in our eternal inheritance but also to the hope expressed in our present salvation and the Christian life that ensues. We have to come to know that our spiritual future is grounded in the promises of God. With the knowledge of this hope, we can find strength and courage to live in the present.

“The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.” It is tempting to focus on our present need and poverty. Instead, Paul challenges us to focus on what God has promised. These riches may refer to our present spiritual riches in Christ in being freed from sin and made ready for fellowship with God. They may also refer to our heavenly possession of the riches and glories of God. It's likely both aspects are meant.

“His incomparably great power for us who believe.” Believers must realize that in the midst of our powerlessness in this world God's incredible might is available and operating on our behalf.

POWER OF GOD

Ephesians 1:20–23

²⁰ *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

In verse 19, Paul used four different Greek terms for power, **First** is *dunamis* (power), from which we get *dynamite* and *dynamo*. **Second** is *energeia* (working), the energizing force of the Spirit that empowers believers to live for the Lord. **Third** is *kratos* (strength), which may also be translated "dominion" ([1 Tim. 6:16](#)) or "power" ([Heb. 2:14](#)). **Fourth** is *ischus* (might), which carries the idea of endowed power or ability. In all those ways the Holy Spirit empowers God's children.

God exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead. This demonstrated God's power over death. But not only did God raise Christ from the dead but, He set him at His right hand in heaven.

In addition to resurrecting Christ and seating Him on the throne in heaven, God showed His power by subjecting every enemy to Jesus' authority. Paul emphasized that Christ had authority over every title given. Literally, this says in Greek, "*every name that is named.*" In other words, if you can name an authority, Jesus has ascended far above that authority.

Jesus was not only from a tomb, but from this planet to the heavenly places where he is seated on high as the exalted Lord of heaven and earth. Jesus is not just the head of the church but is the ruler and authority of all things and everyone. Everything has been given to Him. There is going to come a time when He will be joined with the church, and we will have known the fullness of all things.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

- How is Paul's prayer urgently needed in today's church?
- Believers live stagnant lives when we maintain a dim view of what we have in Christ. We must pray for spiritual enlightenment so we can experience the joy of spiritual growth.
- Believers need to pray for one another's physical and spiritual needs. Paul provided us with a great model to pray for the spiritual growth of ourselves, our loved ones, and our church families.

Personal Challenge: Are you stagnating or moving forward in your faith? What will you do to know God better? This week focus on praying for spiritual growth for yourself, your family, and those in your Bible study group.

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