

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.

- a. For this reason, I do not cease giving thanks for you - What is it that Paul is so thankful for about this group of Believers in Ephesus?
 - i. There's a faith in Jesus that exists in this group that Paul is thankful for.
 1. **Faith** - pistis (pe'-stes) - Fidelity, the state of remaining loyal to someone and keeping the promises you made to that person.
 2. We see that this group has the evidences or actions of a strong faith and Paul commends them for that.
 - ii. As well as a love for the other Believers in the Body.
 - iii. But I believe Paul had concerns for this group.
 1. Why?
 - a. Notice what Paul says next: **16b...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.**
 - b. Paul desires that God might give this group *“a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (Jesus Christ).”*
 - c. Paul is thankful that this group has remained loyal to Christ and that they are showing brotherly love to each other. But, I believe Paul's wants this group to continuing growing to see Christ as “bigger”.
 - d. There were some influences in Ephesus that must have had some level of concern for Paul.
 - i. There was spiritual darkness there - Temple of Diana.
 - ii. Doctrinal issues there - Paul had Timothy stay there as a pastor and more than once wrote to him about doctrine.

1. 2 Timothy 4:3 (NASB) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

iii. We learn of Paul's great concern in Acts when he met with the Elders from Ephesus and told them these words:

1. Acts 20:28-30 (NASB) 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

2. **Revelation 2:1-4 (NASB)** 1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. 4 ‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

e. Paul wants this group to know that he appreciates the faith that they do have in Christ and the love they have for each other, but Paul doesn’t want them to be satisfied with where they are in their faith. He wants them to continue to grow in their faith. This is why he says verse 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.**

- i. **Wisdom** - Sophia (so-fe'-ä) - all the treasures of wisdom that are hidden in Christ.
- ii. **Revelation** - apokalypsis - (ä-po-kä'-lÜ-kses) - a spirit received from God disclosing what and how great are the benefits of salvation,
- iii. **Knowledge** - epignosis (e-pe'-gno-ses) - precise and correct knowledge (TRUE KNOWLEDGE)

2. In other words Paul’s consistent prayer for the Ephesians was that they would grow in a precise and correct understanding of who Jesus Christ is.

a. **Philippians 3:8,10,12 (NASB)** 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of **knowing** Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...10 that I may **know** Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

- iv. As we grow in our depth of fellowship and knowledge of Him we see that something begins to change inside of us. Our hearts begin to change and that heart change begins to produce a response to Him through our walk that is pleasing to Him.
- v. This is what Paul was consistently praying for those Believers God had put in his care. That they would deeply grow in their knowledge of the person of Jesus

Christ. Growing in “precise and correct” knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ is what changes us. This is sanctification!

Ephesians 1:18-23

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 (the He is sharing with me!) 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 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.

- I. In the remaining verses Paul is summarizing what he hopes and prays for the Ephesians:
 - a. He prays “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened”
 - b. I pray that the eyes - ophthalmos (of-thäl-mo's) the eyes of the mind, the faculty of knowing
 - c. **Enlighten** - photizo (fo-te'-zo) - to enlighten, spiritually,
 - d. Paul is continuing his thought from verse 17 here where he is wanting them to grow in their knowledge of Christ, in order to do this the eyes of their heart was going to need to be enlightened.
 - e. What Paul desires for this group of people would be spiritually enlightened to is to knowing Jesus Christ the way he has come to know Him. Knowing Christ in this way will allow them (“So that”) to know:
 - i. **you will know what is the hope of His calling**” - I wonder how many of us naturally insert “your” in place of “His” in this passage. It completely changes the focus of the passage from Him to Me. I have a tremendous hope because of what *Christ* has been called to first.
 - ii. **what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,** - The fullness and abundance (riches) of the majesty (glory) of the inheritance that is coming to those that are in Him is beyond what you are I can fathom.
 1. **Ephesians 3:8 (NASB)** To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ
 - iii. **“Surpassing greatness of His power toward (for, for the benefit of, to the advantage of) us who believe”**
 - a. Surpassing (excelling or exceeding)
 - b. Greatness (mega)
 - c. Power - is used of the divine power considered as acting upon the minds of men,
 - d. Toward - for, for the benefit of, to the advantage of
 - e. There is a power that God only gives to the person who is associated with Christ (“us who believe”)

- i. **2 Corinthians 4:7 (NASB)** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
 - ii. **1 John 4:4 (NASB)** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
 - f. It is this power that, if we allow Him, He will use it to change our minds and hearts:
 - i. **Romans 12:2 (NASB)** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - g. How great and effective is this power:
 - i. **Ephesians 1:19b-23 (NLT)** 19b...This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else--not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.
 - h. What Paul wanted for this group was something that had happened to him. He wanted them to come to know Christ so deeply and genuinely that they wouldn't look like people who simply went through the motions. That they would be people that had their hearts captured by Christ.
 - i. How do I know that Paul had had this happen to him? The evidence is all throughout his letters but none more prevalent than Ephesians chapter 1.
 - j. This is a tremendously hard concept to explain (which is why the "eyes of our hearts" have to be "enlightened") because our minds just simply can't comprehend it. There is such an excellence, greatness, glory, preeminence, sheer majesty that is so unfathomable in Jesus Christ, that just having it illuminated to your mind and heart a "mustard seed" amount it changes a person from the inside out.
- 2. **It is our depth and knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ that will be the measurement of how successfully we lived this life prior to seeing Him on the other side:**
 - a. **Ephesians 3:16-19 (NASB)** 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts

through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.