

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Praying For Vision

by Dan Trygg

“Because of this, I too, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;¹⁷ in order that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the intensive-knowledge of Him,¹⁸ ...the eyes of your heart having-been-enlightened, unto you to 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 unto us, the ones believing. These are in accordance with the in-working of the mighty-strength of His robust-power²⁰ which He in-worked in the Christ, raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,²¹ above-and-beyond every ruler and authority and power and lordship, and every name being named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.²² And He subordinated all things under His feet, and gave Him, ...head on behalf of all things..., to the church,²³ which is His body, the fullness of the One filling-up (bringing-to-completion) all things in every way.”

Ephesians 1:15-23

The emphasis of Paul’s message, in the first half of chapter one of Ephesians, has been on what God *has done* for us, ...what He *has* “blessed us” with. He *has* “blessed us with *every spiritual blessing* in Christ”. In order to help us begin to understand that statement, he gave us a list of amazing things God has *already done* for us, ...*just as* He made decisions about our future as ones “in Christ” before He ever created the world. He determined that we would be holy and without blemish, ...that we would be adopted as full heirs, ...and that we would be to the praise of His glory. Long before we ever heard of His love, or His grace, He sent Jesus to purchase our redemption from bondage, and our release from the debt of sin. *He abundantly poured out His grace on our behalf, in past history, ...and, even right now, He is working in our lives to accomplish His will and to make our lives point to Jesus.*

In Him, we have received an inheritance, ...part of which is ours *now* to discover and walk in, and part of which *awaits the fulfillment* that will become evident when Jesus returns. In any case, He has shown us His firm commitment by marking us and sealing us with His Holy Spirit, until that day of full appropriation comes. **Even though the fulfillment is yet to come, there is much of this that is available to us *right now*.** God *has blessed us* with every spiritual blessing in Christ, ...or as the apostle Peter wrote, “All things of His divine power that pertain to life and sound-devotion to God *have been given to us...*” (2 Pet. 1:3). Or, as Paul wrote to the Colossians, “in Him you *have been filled-full*” (Col. 2:10). Clearly, both of these apostles were trying to communicate that **God *has made available* to us much more than we may currently realize or perceive. There is a need to *discover, experience, and learn to implement* what God has provided for us.**

This is exactly where the third sentence of Ephesians begins (Yes, in the original Greek, verses 1 and 2 are one sentence, and verses 3-14 are one sentence. The next sentence continues from verse 15 through to the end of the chapter.) **Notice how vs. 15 starts: “Because of this...”** Because God *has indeed given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Since this is true, ...what?* “Having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you have, I have not ceased giving thanks for you, mentioning you in my prayers, *in order that* God might give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the intense-revelatory-knowledge of Him, ...having the eyes of your heart enlightened *unto or toward* y’all to know or perceive...” Paul was first thanking God for them. They are part of the family of God, now, ...saved and sealed by God’s grace through faith. Secondly, however, **he was interceding for them that God would help them to come to *perceive or understand* the things He has made available to them. Clearly, this was important. It was vital for them to discover these things.** It was important enough for Paul to be praying for them repeatedly, in this regard. **Apparently, it is possible to be ignorant of what God has provided for us, and live as spiritual paupers, even though God has given to us “every spiritual blessing”.**

Notice what Paul prayed for. He asked that God would give them “a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the intense-revelatory-knowledge of Him...”, and that their eyes of their hearts may be “having been enlightened”. **Something has to happen to them and for them so that they might come to know what needs to be perceived.** The “spirit” here may refer to the Holy Spirit, or an attitude of their heart as they approach this matter. Since they already have the Holy Spirit, there is no need to pray to “get” the Spirit, but rather to seek for His ministry as Teacher and Revealer of the things of Jesus (Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15). **“Wisdom” refers to practical know-how or skill. A “spirit of wisdom” would then be a heart attitude and approach that would be effective in knowing how to go deeper with God, i.e., to be more teachable, receptive and responsive to Him.** It could be that the Holy Spirit will guide us in this. **The word, “revelation”, means “uncovering”.** In other words, **there are truths or realities that are not just out in the open, easily discovered and utilized.** They are “mysteries”, ...truths that are hidden from view. **In order to come to know these**

truths, the “covering” must be removed. *God must peel back the curtain, so to speak, so that we can see what is hidden to others who are not privy to this information or experience.* The fact that their “eyes” need to be “having been enlightened” indicates that *God must somehow “turn the light on” so that they can see or perceive what otherwise would remain shadowed or obscure.*

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul speaks of how we have received the Holy Spirit in order that we might know the things freely given to us by God (vs. 12). These insights come especially to those who are *spiritually-focused* (vs. 15). The person who is only focused on his or her own natural perceptions (“soulish”, “natural-minded”) does not recognize these things (vs. 14). In fact, spiritual things seem to be foolish to them. But Christians who are “flesh-oriented” can also be somewhat dull or unaware of these spiritual truths (3:1-3: cf. Heb. 5:11-13). Even though they may be born from above, and have the Spirit, they are continuing to focus on their fleshly appetites and pleasures, instead of learning to be taught and led by the Spirit. They are not willing to put these aside in order to prioritize developing their intimacy with God. Sadly, **God has already granted to us to have the ability to perceive as Christ did, if we will develop that capacity.** “*We have the mind (perception) of Christ* (vs. 16). This is one of those “spiritual blessings” that God has given to us in Christ. It is an ability that is part of our inheritance, a capacity to be discovered, developed and drawn upon as we walk in partnership with the Holy Spirit. **But, to begin that journey of growing in our spiritual perception, we need to be willing to go beyond what we already know. We need to acknowledge that there is more, and choose to pursue being taught and led by the Holy Spirit.**

The “soulish” or “natural minded” person is content to live by their accumulated worldly wisdom, ...the information, life experiences and “street smarts” that they have learned along the way. They are self-confident and “self-contained”. If it doesn’t make sense to them, then they do not trust it. **They live by what is tangible, ...what they can see and understand.** If they have a faith in God, it is mostly an intellectual belief. They live by principles that they understand. They may be moral, and even follow some respectable practices of religion, but **they do not believe that God would really communicate with them, or intervene in their lives. They are “practical atheists”.** They may profess a faith in God, but their everyday life really has no room for Him. To speak of a personal interaction with God, or being “led by the Spirit” is foreign to their experience. They are not looking for such a relationship with God, and the things that the Spirit might prompt in their lives are disregarded, because they seem “foolish” or “irrational”.

The “carnal” or “fleshly” Christian is not primarily seeking to go deeper with God. They are captivated and drawn by things of this world, ...especially things that appeal to their *emotions*, or their *fleshly appetites*. In Ephesians 4:17-19, Paul describes people who are trying to fill their emptiness with sensual pleasures. Of course, this does not work for Christians any more than it does for non-Christians. It is a futile approach to life. **Those who try to live this way will go from one emotional or sensual stimulation to another, and never find lasting fulfillment.** Such stimulation can be found in many places, some normal and natural, some extreme and artificial, some through media and interactions with others. External soothing, stimulation, or agitation can be addictive, and the mind of this “fleshly-Christian” is much more on the things of this world, than on their relationship with God. **Sadly, this orientation causes believers to become dull or insensitive to the things of the Spirit. Their pursuit of experience in their emotions, or their bodies, directs their attention away from the inner voice and leading of the Holy Spirit.**

By contrast, a spiritual person is one who chooses to devote their thoughts and attention to the things of the Spirit. The mind-set, or aspiration of their lives is to discover the things of the spiritual life. They desire to know the things God has given to them, and to discover what He desires to do in and through their lives. **They are willing to put forth time and effort to seek Him, and want to be led by the Holy Spirit to do His will.** They put God first, by choosing to make priority decisions to secure time in their lives for prayer, the study of God’s word, and for profitable time with other serious-minded followers of Christ. **They develop discernment through stepping forth in obedience to both the clear teachings of the scripture, as well as what they perceive may be promptings of the Holy Spirit** (Heb. 5:14; Rom. 12:2). A spiritually-oriented person *seeks after* the things of the Spirit, and *expects* the Spirit to be seeking to teach them. He or she *prays for*, *pursues*, and *performs* what seems to be God’s leading in their lives. They see themselves as *pursuers*, *partners*, and *participants* in God’s kingdom purpose in this age. **As disciples (active followers, apprentices-in-training), they discipline themselves toward godliness, and train their senses to be spiritually discerning.**

As we see from Paul’s example, here in Ephesians 1, **the first step toward knowing God more intimately, and coming to recognize what He has for us, is to seek Him in prayer.** This should be obvious, but it is amazing how many of us bypass this crucial step. **God Himself has said, “Those who honor Me, I will honor; but those who disregard Me will be of little account to Me”** (1 Sam. 2:30). **We will show Him honor, respect and value by coming to Him as the Lover of our souls, and the Master-Architect of all that He has allocated toward our benefit.** Again, these are things that He has *already* determined on our behalf, because He loves us and has called us into partnership with Him. **In humble love and worship, we should begin asking Him to show us more of His gracious provision and purpose, and to teach us to learn to effectively walk in all that He has in mind for us to accomplish with Him. Blessed be God!!**