

Ephesians 1:15 - 2:10

After Paul's introductory statements regarding the marvelous blessings believers have in Christ, he writes his first of two prayers. In it he asks for wisdom and insight for his readers to know God better and understand what He has given them.

In chapter two, Paul contrasts the Gentiles former way of living with the great transformation that God brought about in their lives through Christ. Again, all of it is freely given ("a gift of God") flowing out of His love and grace.

As you read these verses, consider the changes that God has brought about in your own life since you have become a believer. Consider too the privilege and challenges of the high calling you have received.

Ephesians 1:15-17 NAS

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.

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Day 1

Paul's thankfulness

1. For what did Paul praise the Ephesians? 1:15

- Why are these commendable traits? John 13:14,34,35

FYI: "The word for 'love' here is agape - a thoughtful, volitional, purposeful love that wills to love even the unlovely - the very love of God himself."
- R. Kent Hughes (50)

2. How did Paul respond to what he had heard about the Ephesians? 1:16 (See also Colossians 1:3,4) What picture does this give you of Paul's heart?

3. In the following prayers underline those things for which Paul was thankful.

- Romans 1:8-9 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. NASU
- Philippians 1:3-5 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, NIV
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. NIV
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. NIV

4. How did Paul feel about the people to whom he ministered? Philippians 4:1

5. With what requests did Paul *begin* his prayer? 1:17 (Cf. Colossians 1:9)

- Why do we need *revelation* (illumination) from God? 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

Digging Deeper

What did James say about wisdom? James 1:5

What exhortation did Peter give? 2 Peter 3:18.

IT'S GREEK TO ME: Wisdom NT:4678 "*sophia* ; In respect to divine things, wisdom, knowledge, insights, deep understanding, represented everywhere as a divine gift, and including the idea of practical application."

- The Complete Word Study Dictionary (1301)

Revelation NT:602 *apokalupsis*; disclosure "an uncovering"...the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul, Eph 1:17 - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

Knowledge Strong's NT:1922 *epignosis*; full discernment, acknowledgement:

"Knowledge without wisdom can be a menace; wisdom is that insight into the nature of things, that sense of what is fitting, which enables one to coordinate and use one's knowledge aright. Men who know many things are all around us; men of spiritual wisdom are so rare..."
- F. F. Bruce

6. What do wisdom and knowledge guard against? Colossians 2:4,8 (See also Ephesians 4:14)

- What do wisdom and knowledge produce? Colossians 1:10

7. How did Paul feel about the importance of knowing Christ? Philippians 3:7,8

Applying the Word: Can you think of a time when hearing about the faith and love of others brought you joy? Explain. What do you learn from Paul about praying for others?

Ephesians 1:18-23 NAS

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
 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.

Day 2

Paul's prayer

8. For what else did Paul pray? 1:18a (Share in your group what you think Paul means by an “enlightened heart.”)

IT'S GREEK TO ME: Heart “*kardia* NT:2588, ‘the heart’ (Eng., ‘cardiac,’ etc.), the chief organ of physical life... By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements.”
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

Enlightened “NT:5461 *photizo*; to shed rays, i.e. to shine or (transitively) to brighten up (literally or figuratively): KJV - enlighten, illuminate, (bring to, give) light, make to see.” - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

“The heart was regarded as the seat of human emotions, the source of our thoughts, judgments and feelings. Sin has blinded it to the things of God, and only the divine light shed by the Holy Spirit can lighten its darkness and enable it to see clearly.”
 - Africa Bible Commentary (1428)

9. List the three things that Paul wanted the Ephesians to understand. 1:18-19. List the effects that you think knowing them might have on a person's attitude or actions.

	“know...”	Attitude/Action
1:18b Cf. 1:4,5	“the hope of His calling”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives a sense of purpose and direction
1:18c		
1:19a		

10. Underline how God's riches are described in the following. (Mark the word "riches" in 1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16.)

- Ephesians 1:7-8 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us... NAS
- Ephesians 1:18 ...What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, NAS
- Ephesians 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. NAS
- Ephesians 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, NAS
- Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, NASU

11. Who has an inheritance in 1:18? Who has an inheritance in Ephesians 1:11,14?

Food for Thought: "Paul prays here that his readers will appreciate the value which God places on them, his plan to accomplish his eternal purpose through them...in order that their lives may be in keeping with the high calling and that they may accept in grateful humility the grace and glory thus lavished on them." - F. F. Bruce

"Think of it: he owns all the heavens and numberless worlds, but we are His treasures. The redeemed are worth more than the universe. We ought to be delirious with this truth!" - R. Kent Hughes (53)

12. List the words that Paul used to describe the power is that is available to us. 1:19 (Mark the word *power* in 1:19,21. Cross-reference 3:20.) What does the piling on of synonyms add to the picture of God's power?

IT'S GREEK TO ME: **surpassing/incomparably/exceeding'** Strong's NT:5235 *hyperballo*; to throw beyond the usual mark, i.e. (figuratively) to surpass

"Verse 19b reads literally: 'the power is like the energy of the might of His strength.'" The first word is *dunamis* (from which 'dynamite' is derived) or 'power' and it denotes the ability to accomplish what is begun. The second word is *energeia* (from which 'energy' is derived) or 'working' and it means brute strength or muscle. The third word is *kratos* or 'strength' and refers to the ability to face obstacles and overcome them. The final word is *ischus* or 'mighty' and refers to the actual use of power." - Ephesians, Mastering the Basics (23)

"When the New Testament writers wish to show the fullness of God's love, they point to the death of Christ (Romans 5:8). But if the death of Christ is the chief demonstration of the love of God, the chief demonstration of His power is the resurrection of Christ. And it is especially important that believers should know the power of God, because the power by which He raised Jesus from the dead is 'the power that worketh in us' (Eph 3:20), the power by which we are enabled to repudiate the dominion of sin and walk with Christ 'in newness of life' (Romans 6:4-14). (Compare... Philippians 3:10)" - F. F. Bruce

Paul has layered these synonyms to express as best he can the highest power possible...What we must see is that the power that raised Jesus from the dead can bear directly on our lives now and at His appearing. This stupendous power changes us...and gives us practical victory over sin in our lives. We will see it visibly someday in the resurrection of our bodies...Yet, this same power is operating in and for those of us who believe right now! Paul would ask, 'Do you see it?'" - R. Kent Hughes (54)

13. What did God’s power accomplish concerning Christ?

- 1:20b
- 1:20c

14. What position/authority does this give Christ?

- 1:21
- 1:22a (See also Hebrews 2:8)
- 1:22b (See also Colossians 2:10,15)

Digging Deeper
 What will all creation acknowledge someday?
 Philippians 2:9-11

FYI: “‘Right hand’ is a metaphor for the position of highest honor and bliss and glory and authority and power.”
 - R. Kent Hughes (59)

“Far above all principality and power and might and dominion: From other passages in Ephesians (Eph. 3:10 and 6:12) we know that this refers to angelic beings, both loyal and lethal. We don’t completely understand the ranks of the angelic realm, but we do know that Jesus is raised above them.” - David Guzik

“‘It is clear that human language cannot adequately describe the resurrection power of God... What problem or difficulty is there then that cannot be solved with its almighty aid? ...If Christ and His resurrection power are ‘for us’, on our side, who or what can be against us? (Romans 8:31)” - Stuart Allen (41,42)

15. Because of Christ’s victory and position, what assurance do we have? Romans 8:34-39

Digging Deeper
 What do the following say about Christ’s authority /supremacy?

John 1:3-4

Colossians 1:16-18

16. Who is the “body?” What picture does that give you of the connection of the church with Christ? 1:22,23 (Compare Colossians 1:18,24)

Applying the Word: Take time to stop and pray Paul’s prayer in 1:17-19 for yourself or for someone in your life. (You might like to write it out in a personalized form.)

Ephesians 2:1-6 NAS

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Day 3

Past condition by nature

17. What is our condition apart from Christ? 2:1 (Cf. Colossians 1:21, 2:13)

FYI: The idea behind the word **trespasses** is that we have crossed a line, challenging God's boundaries. The idea behind the word **sins** is that we have missed a mark, the perfect standards of God." - David Guzik

18. When a person does not know the Lord, what controls their life? (Mark "according to")

- 2:2a
- 2:2b
- 2:3 (See also Titus 3:3)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**walked/used to live**" – Strong's #4043 *peripateo*; to tread all around, i.e. walk at large ... figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow... KJV - go, be occupied with, walk

"signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"**disobedience**" – Strong's #543 NT:543 *apeitheia*; disbelief (obstinate and rebellious):

"lit., 'the condition of being unpersuadable' (a, negative, *peitho*, 'to persuade'), denotes 'obstinacy, obstinate rejection of the will of God'" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

19. Whom does Paul include in this group? 2:3 (Note the "you" in 2:2 and the "we" in 2:3. Compare Romans 3:9)

20. In 2:3, what phrases did Paul use to describe the Ephesians' former state?

FYI: "**the lusts of the flesh...**are primarily perversions of the legitimate desires of human nature." - David Guzik

"The Biblical doctrine of depravity means that every part of the human person is tainted by sin. It does not mean that all humans are equally depraved, for most do not go near the depth they could go. As John Gerstner says, there is always room for 'deprovement.' Nor does it mean that humans are not capable of any good (cf. Luke 11:13), or that there is no dignity in man, for there certainly is - he is the imperfect bearer of the divine image. (Genesis 1:27). Rather, the meaning is that no part of the human being (mind, emotions, heart, will) is unaffected by the Fall. All of us are depraved...Apart from Christ we are totally lost." - R. Kent Hughes (67)

21. Underline our condition apart from Christ.

- Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."NASU
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.NIV
- Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, NASU
- Romans 1:21-22 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, NASU
- Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, NASU
- Ephesians 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. NASU
- Ephesians 4:18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; NASU

22. What desires of the flesh did Paul struggle with? (Philippians 3:4-6)

Food for Thought: "The 'desire of the flesh' may take many different forms, and Paul elsewhere lists the things in which he formerly took such patriotic and religious pride as sample of his 'confidence in the flesh' (Philippians 3:4-6). For the 'flesh,' the unregenerate nature of man, can manifest itself in respectable forms as well as in the disreputable pursuits of first-century paganism."
- F. F. Bruce

23. "By nature," what state do we find ourselves in without Christ? 2:3b (See John 3:36)

24. Why did God bring about a great reversal? 2:4 (Mark the word "but" in 2:4,13,19.)

- When did God do this? 2:5a

FYI: "With **but** and **because**, Paul explains God's reason behind reconciling man to Himself, and these reasons are found totally in God... we must simply receive His great love while recognizing that we are unworthy of it. This is the *grace secret* of the Christian life."
- David Guzik

"The wrath of God provides the background against which His mercy and love stand out in all their radiance. The wealth of His mercy and the greatness of His love are emphasized, because it is entirely thanks to that mercy and love that believers are no longer exposed to His holy wrath against sin."
- F. F. Bruce

"Christ is the Savior and Deliverer Who can give real freedom. 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.' (John 8:36) And this complete freedom can be experienced by all who put their whole trust in Him." - Allen (45)

25. In the following, underline the words that describe our state when God saved us. (Note the three “while we were” phrases.)

Romans 5:6-10 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. NASU

Present condition by grace

26. What three great reversals did God produce?

- 2:5b (Cf. Colossians 3:1)

- 2:6a

- 2:6b

Digging Deeper

What did Paul say about God’s grace and mercy in his life?

1 Corinthians 15:8-10

1 Timothy 1:16

Applying the Word: What are some areas where you most keenly feel the battle between your flesh and the Spirit? Where do you find yourself walking according to the course of this world? What do you think Paul is saying in this letter about the power available to us to change our course?

Ephesians 2:7-10 NAS

7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Day 4

God’s grace and kindness

27. List the qualities of God that are given in 2:4b, 5b, 7b.

28. Instead of being an “*object of wrath*” NIV (2:3), what is God’s future plan for you? 2:7 (Try putting this verse into your own words.)

Food for Thought:**“Riches of His grace”**

“God will never stop dealing with us on the basis of grace, and will forever continue to unfold its riches to us through eternity...All the demands that can ever be made on the grace of God will never impoverish Him, or even diminish His store of mercy! There will remain an incalculably precious mine of mercy as full as when He first began to bless the sons of men.” (Spurgeon)
- David Guzik

“If redemption sprang from the riches of God’s grace (1:7), what can be involved in these exceeding riches that are to be manifested in the coming ages? Our minds are overwhelmed by the greatness of it all and what a marvelous future we have in store...As each age succeeds age, the crowning display of God’s grace will be shown in His kindness towards us, revealed in increasing measure in all its fullness and wonder.” - Stuart Allen (46)

29. What else is described as *surpassing* in 1:19 and 3:19?

30. What other descriptions does scripture give of what awaits us?

- 1 Corinthians 2:9
- Romans 8:18

31. What is the only thing that makes salvation possible? 2:8 (See also 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5)

FYI: “For by grace you have been saved: Paul cannot speak of this glorious work God does without reminding us that it is a gift of **grace**, given to the undeserving. We are not even saved by our faith (though faith itself is not a work), but **by grace through** faith.”
- David Guzik

“Not that our faith merits the salvation in any way; it is simply the faculty by which we accept the salvation that God’s free grace has procured for us... ‘by grace alone, through faith alone, to God alone be glory’.” - F. F. Bruce

32. What is not a part of our salvation? 2:9 (See Galatians 2:21; 5:4)

- Why can’t grace and works be combined for salvation? Romans 11:6
- Why can’t our works save us? (Compare Ecclesiastes 7:20 and James 2:10)

33. If we think we can be saved by works, what are we tempted to do? 2:9b (Cf. Romans 3:27)

34. What part does works have in our walk with the Lord? 2:10 (Mark the word “works/workmanship” in 2:9,10.)

FYI: For we are His workmanship: “If we are not saved by good works, we are assuredly saved for good works...We are His ‘workmanship’..., his work of art, his masterpieces...Those who ‘walk’ in those good works which God has preordained for His people give ample evidence of the power of a new life which operates with them. No one more wholeheartedly than Paul repudiated good works as a ground of salvation; no one more wholeheartedly insisted on good works as the fruit of salvation. The later chapters of this epistle specify in considerable detail the kind of good works which attest God’s workmanship.”
- F. F. Bruce

“God saves us not merely to save us from the wrath we rightly deserve, but also to make something beautiful of us. We are **His workmanship**, which translates the ancient Greek word *poiema*. The idea is that we are His beautiful poem. The Jerusalem Bible translates workmanship as ‘work of art.’”
- David Guzik

35. List the 4 reasons/benefits of good works given in Colossians 1:10.

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36. How well are you equipped for the works God has planned for you? Philippians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 3:5

Applying the Word: List some of the “works” that you think God has positioned and equipped you for at this point in your life. How much do you rely on His power to carry them out? What fears and past failures keep you from believing in His sufficiency?