

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

Read the Bankbook

Scripture text: Ephesians 1

We have examined a number of basic Bible doctrines in this chapter, **all on the theme of our riches in Christ.**

It would be profitable for us to review what these verses teach us.

- 1. True riches come from God.**
- 2. All of these riches come by God's grace and for God's glory.**
- 3. These riches are only the beginning! There is always more spiritual wealth to claim from the Lord as we walk with Him.**

READ THE BANKBOOK

Ephesians 1:15–23

On January 6, 1822, the wife of a poor German pastor had a son, never dreaming that he would one day achieve world renown and great wealth. When Heinrich Schliemann was seven years old, a picture of ancient Troy in flames captured his imagination. Contrary to what many people believed, Heinrich argued that Homer's great poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, were based on historic facts and he set out to prove it.

In 1873, he uncovered the ancient site of Troy, along with some fabulous treasure which he smuggled out of the country, much to the anger of the Turkish government. Schliemann became a famous, wealthy man **because he dared to believe an ancient record and act on his faith.**

We discovered that **we were “born rich” when we trusted Christ.** But this is not enough, for **we must grow in our understanding of our riches** if we are ever going **to use them to the glory of God.**

Too many Christians have never “read the bank book” to find out the vast spiritual wealth that God has put to their account through Jesus Christ. They are like the late newspaper publisher, William Randolph Hearst, who invested a fortune collecting art treasures from around the world. One day Mr. Hearst found a description of some valuable items that he felt he must own, so he sent his agent abroad to find them. After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasures. They were in Mr. Hearst’s warehouse. **Hearst had been searching frantically for treasures he already owned!**

Had he read the catalog of his treasures, he would have saved himself a great deal of money and trouble.

Paul desired the Ephesian Christians to understand what great wealth they had in Christ. Paul knew of their faith and love, and in this he rejoiced. **The Christian life has two dimensions:** faith toward God and love toward men, and you cannot separate the two. But Paul knew that faith and love were just the beginning. The Ephesians needed to know much more. **This is why he prayed for them, and for us.**

In the prison prayers of Paul, **we discover the blessings he wanted his converts to enjoy.** In none of these prayers does Paul request material things. **His emphasis is on spiritual perception and real Christian character.** He does not ask God to give them what they do not have, but **rather prays that God will reveal to them what they already have.**

Philippians 1:9-11 And it is my prayer **that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,** so that you may approve what is excellent, and **so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness** that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:9-12 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, **asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God**. May you **be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy**, giving thanks to the Father, **who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light**.

Ephesians 1:15-19 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, **that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,** and what is the **immeasurable greatness of his power toward us** who believe, according to the working of his great might

Ephesians 1:20-23 that he worked in Christ **when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named,** not only in this age but also in the one to come. And **he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

Ephesians 3:16-21 that according to the riches of his glory he **may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being**, so that Christ may **dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love**, may have **strength to comprehend with all the saints** what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to **know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge**, that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, **according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations**, forever and ever. Amen.

Before we study Paul's four requests in this "prayer for enlightenment," we **must notice two facts.**

First, enlightenment comes from the Holy Spirit. He is the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Isa. 11:2; John 14:25–26; 16:12–14). With his natural mind, man cannot understand the things of God. He needs the Spirit to enlighten him (1 Cor. 2:9–16). The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us from the Word, and then gives us the wisdom to understand and apply it. He also gives us the power—the enablement—to practice the truth (Eph. 3:14–21).

Isaiah 11:2 And the **Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him**, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name**, he will **teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you**.

John 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.

John 16:8-14 But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but **whatever he hears he will speak**, and **he will declare to you the things that are to come**. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Second, this enlightenment comes to the heart of the believer (Eph. 1:18).

Literally this verse reads, “The eyes of your heart being enlightened.” We think of the heart as the emotional part of man, but in the Bible, the **heart means the inner man**, and includes the emotions, the mind, and the will. The inner man, the heart, has spiritual faculties that parallel the physical senses. The inner man can see (Ps. 119:18; John 3:3), hear (Matt. 13:9; Heb. 5:11), taste (Ps. 34:8; 1 Peter 2:3), smell (Phil. 4:18; 2 Cor. 2:14), and touch (Acts 17:27).

The inner man can see (*Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. ; John 3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*),

hear (*Matthew 13:9 He who has ears, let him hear.*"; *Hebrews 5:11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*),

taste (*Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!;*
1 Peter 2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.),

smell (*Philippians 4:18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.;*
2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.),

and touch (**Acts 17:27** that they should seek God, in the hope that they **might feel their way** toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,).

This is what Jesus meant when He said of the people: “They seeing see not, and hearing they hear not” (Matt. 13:13). **The inability to see and understand spiritual things is not the fault of the intelligence but of the heart.** The eyes of the heart must be opened by the Spirit of God.

That They Might Know God (Eph. 1:17b)

This, of course, is **the highest knowledge possible**. The atheist claims there is no God for us to know, and the agnostic states that if there is a God we cannot know Him. But Paul has met God in the person of Jesus Christ, and he knows **that a man really cannot understand much of anything else without a knowledge of God**.

This willful ignorance of God led mankind into corruption and condemnation. In Romans 1:18ff, Paul describes the stages in man's devolution: from willful ignorance of God to idolatry (substituting a lie for the truth) to immorality and indecency.

Where does it begin? It begins with an unwillingness to know God as Creator, Sustainer, Governor, Savior, and Judge.

The believer must grow in his knowledge of God. To know God personally is salvation (John 17:3). To know Him increasingly is sanctification (Phil. 3:10). To know Him perfectly is glorification (1 Cor. 13:9–12). Since we are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28), the better we know God, **the better we know ourselves and each other.** It is not enough to know God only as Savior. We must get to know Him as Father, Friend, Guide, and the better we know Him, the more satisfying our spiritual lives will be.

A believer said to me one day after a Bible lesson,
“I’m sure glad I came! You gave me two good verses
to use on my wicked neighbor!”

Surely there are times when we use God’s Word as a
sword to defeat the enemy, but **that is not the
primary purpose behind the writing of the Bible.**

As the familiar hymn puts it: “Beyond the sacred page
/ I seek Thee, Lord. / My spirit pants for Thee / O
living Word.”

That We Might Know God's Calling (Eph. 1:18a)

The word called is an important word in the Christian's vocabulary. The word church is a combination of two Greek words that mean "called out." Paul never tired of testifying that God called him "by His grace" (Gal. 1:15); and he reminded Timothy that the believer has a "holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). We have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9), and have even been "called to glory" (1 Peter 5:10). God calls us by His grace and not because of any merit that we may possess.

Paul wants us to understand the hope that is ours because of this calling (Eph. 4:4). Some callings offer no hope, but **the calling we have in Christ assures us of a delightful future.** Keep in mind that the word hope in the Bible does not mean “hope so,” like a child hoping for a doll or a bike at Christmas. The word carries with it “**assurance for the future.**” The believer’s hope is, of course, the return of Jesus Christ for His church (1 Thes. 4:13–18; 1 John 3:1–3). When we were lost, we were “without hope” (Eph. 2:12); but in Jesus Christ, we have a “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3) **that encourages us day by day.**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you **may not grieve as others do who have no hope**. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

1 John 3:1-5 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, **we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.** And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.** Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

Dr. Kenneth Chafin, a well-known Baptist author, tells about the pastor and deacon who were visiting prospective members and drove up to a beautiful suburban home surrounded by a velvet lawn and gorgeous landscaping. Two expensive cars stood in the driveway, and through the picture window, the men saw their prospect, lounging in an easy chair and watching color TV. The deacon turned to his pastor and said, “What kind of good news do we have for him?”

How prone we are to confuse prices and values. Ephesus was a wealthy city. It boasted the temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world

Today, Ephesus is an archeologist's paradise, **but all of its wealth and splendor are gone.** But the Christians who once lived there are today in heaven, enjoying the glory of God!

The hope that belongs to our calling should be a dynamic force in our lives, encouraging us **to be pure** (1 John 2:28–3:3), **obedient** (Heb. 13:17), and **faithful** (Luke 12:42–48).

The fact that we shall one day see Christ and be like Him should motivate us to live like Christ today.

That We Might Know God's Riches (Eph. 1:18b)

This phrase does not refer to our inheritance in Christ (Eph. 1:11), but His inheritance in us. **This is an amazing truth—that God should look on us as a part of His great wealth!** Just as a man's wealth brings glory to his name, so **God will get glory from the church because of what He has invested in us.** When Jesus Christ returns, we shall be **“to the praise of the glory of His grace”** (Eph. 1:6).

God deals with us on the basis of our future, not our past. He said to cowardly Gideon, **“The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor”** (Judg. 6:12)

Jesus said to Andrew's brother, "**Thou art Simon ... thou shalt be called Cephas [a stone]**" (John 1:42).

Gideon did become a mighty man of valor, and Simon did become Peter, a rock. We Christians live in the future tense, **our lives controlled by what we shall be when Christ returns.** Because we are God's inheritance, we live to please and glorify Him.

This truth suggests to us that Christ will not enter into His promised glory until the church is there to share it with Him. He prayed for this before He died, and this prayer will be answered (John 17:24).

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, **may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.**

Christ will be glorified in us (2 Thessalonians 1:10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.)

and we will be glorified in Him (**Colossians 3:4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**). Knowing this should lead the believer into a life of dedication and devotion to the Lord.

That We Might Know God's Power (Eph. 1:19–23)

By making us His inheritance, God has shown His love. By promising us a wonderful future, **He has encouraged our hope**. Paul offered something to challenge our faith: **“the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe”** (Eph. 1:19). So tremendous is this truth that Paul enlisted many different words from the Greek vocabulary to get his point across: **dunamis**—“**power**” as in dynamo and dynamite; **energeia**—“**working**” as in energy; **kratos**—“**mighty**”; **ischus**—“**power.**”

Ephesians 1:19 can be translated, “What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength.” **He is talking about divine dynamic, eternal energy, available to us!**

After all, what good is it to have wealth if you are too weak to use it? Or if you are so afraid of robbers that you cannot really enjoy it? John D. Rockefeller was the world’s first billionaire. It is said that for many years, he lived on crackers and milk because of stomach troubles caused by worrying about his wealth. He rarely had a good night’s sleep, and guards stood constantly at his door. Wealthy—but miserable!

When he began to share his wealth with others in great philanthropic endeavors, his health improved considerably and he lived to be an old man.

We Christians need power for several reasons. To begin with, by nature we are too weak to appreciate and appropriate this wealth, and to use it as it should be used. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). To turn this vast spiritual wealth over to a mere human being, living by human wisdom and strength, would be like handing an atomic bomb to a two-year-old. **God’s power enables us to use God’s wealth.**

But there is a second reason why we need God's power. There are enemies who want to rob us of our wealth (Eph. 1:21; 6:11–12). We could never defeat these spiritual foes in our own power, but **we can through the Spirit's power**. Paul wants us to know the greatness of God's power so that we will not fail to use our wealth, and **so that the enemy will not deprive us of our wealth**.

The power is seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, people measured God's power by His creation (Isa. 40:12–27) or by His miracle at the Exodus of Israel from Egypt (Jer. 16:14).

But today, **we measure God's power by the miracle of Christ's resurrection.** Much more was involved than merely raising Him from the dead, for Christ also ascended to heaven and sat down in the place of authority at the right hand of God. He is not only Savior; He is also Sovereign (Acts 2:25–36). No authority or power, human or in the spirit world, is greater than that of Jesus Christ, **the exalted Son of God. He is “far above all,” and no future enemy can overcome Him, because He has been exalted “far above all” powers.**

But how does this apply to you and me today?

In Ephesians 1:22–23, Paul explains the practical application. **Because we are believers, we are in the church, which is Christ’s body—and He is the Head.** This means that **there is a living connection between you and Christ.** Physically speaking, the head controls the body and keeps the body functioning properly. Injure certain parts of the brain and you handicap or paralyze corresponding parts of the body. Christ is our spiritual Head. Through the Spirit, we are united to Him as the members of His body. **This means that we share His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation.** (Paul will amplify this later.) We too are seated, in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6), and all things are under our feet.

No wonder Paul wants us to know “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward”! Apart from this power, **we cannot draw on our great wealth in Christ.**

I recall going to the hospital with one of our church members to try to get her husband to sign a paper that would authorize her to draw on his private checking account so she could pay his bills. The man was so weak he could not sign the paper. She finally had to get witnesses to verify his “X” on the document. His weakness nearly deprived her of his wealth.

The power of the Holy Spirit, through the resurrected, ascended Christ, is available to all Christians—by faith. His power is to “us-ward who believe” (Eph. 1:19). It is grace that supplies the wealth, but it is faith that lays hold of the wealth. We are saved “by grace, through faith” (Eph. 2:8–9), and we live “by grace,” through faith (1 Cor. 15:10).

In the four Gospels, we see God’s power at work in the ministry of Jesus Christ, but in the Book of Acts, we see that same power at work in ordinary men and women, members of the body of Christ.

What a transformation took place in Peter's life between the end of the Gospels and the beginning of Acts. **What made the difference?**

The resurrection power of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

The greatest power shortage today is not in our generators or our gas tanks. **It is in our personal lives.**

Will Paul's prayer be answered in your life? **Will you, starting today, begin to know by experience God—God's calling—God's riches—and God's power?**