

Ephesians 1:16-18 by Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Messages on this page

- [EPHESIANS 1:16-17: A PRAYER FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING](#)
- [EPHESIANS 1:18: A PRAYER FOR A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING, PART 2](#)

Messages below have been moved.

- EPHESIANS 1:18-20: THAT WE MIGHT KNOW HIS POWER
- EPHESIANS 1:18-20: THAT WE MIGHT KNOW HIS POWER, PART 2

Ephesians 1:16-17 A PRAYER FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING by Dr. Wayne Barber

Related Resource: See In Depth Commentary on Eph 1:16 and Eph 1:17

16 do not [cease](#) (1SPA) [giving thanks](#) (PAPMSN) [for](#) you, while [making](#) (PMPMSN) [mention](#) of you in [my prayers](#); 17 [that](#) the [God](#) of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#) the [Father](#) of [glory](#), may [give](#) (3SAAS) to you a [spirit](#) of [wisdom](#) and of [revelation](#) in the [knowledge](#) of Him.

Today we're going to be looking at Ephesians 1:16, 17. We're going to be talking about a prayer for deeper understanding. Paul is going to pray for these Ephesian believers. He's going to pray that they might have a deeper understanding, not just of the Word of God, but of the God of the Word.

If you were to come to me and say, "Wayne, if you had one chapter in the Bible that a new believer should be studying and should understand, what chapter would it be?" I would have to say the first chapter of Ephesians because in that chapter everything that God has done for us is very carefully outlined. It shows us His grace. It shows us His love.

Verses 3-14 (Ep 1:3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14) tell the wonderful story. I won't read all the verses. I'll just pull out what we've been studying now for several months. He blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. He's already done that. They're not material blessings. "Well, now why wouldn't He put material blessings in there?" Because they don't last. He gave us what is eternal and what is internal and what we really need in Christ. He chose us before the foundation of the world in Christ Jesus. He predestined us to adoption as sons in Christ Jesus. That's a work of grace. We lost our right of relationship. By grace He has come back to redeem us. That's the next thing. He redeemed us through the blood of Jesus Christ. He forgave us of our sin. In fact, the Scripture says He lavished forgiveness upon us. So often in life we forget this. We cannot live a life of lawlessness. His Spirit lives within us. However, when we do sin, we never sin beyond His ability, His desire and His capacity to forgive us. He has lavished forgiveness upon us. He made known to us the mystery of His will, how everything is summed up under the headship of Christ. The world thinks it's falling apart. Oh no! It's coming together, and it's all up under the headship of Jesus Christ. He let us in on that mystery. The world can't understand it, but we can. He sealed us with the Holy Spirit so that we might be kept until the day of redemption, absolutely, totally, eternally secure in our salvation. He gave us the Spirit as an earnest of our coming inheritance. Every victory we have as a result of the Spirit of God living in us is nothing more than the earnest of the full payment that's coming later on. I don't know about you but that tells me something good is on its way.

Well, what else could He have done to show us how much He loved us and how much He wanted to show grace to us. The new believer should spend hours and hours and hours asking God the Holy Spirit to help him understand these truths in a deeper way. Paul's focus is totally on God, not on what man has done, but what God has done. That's the uniqueness of our salvation. It's not of our works lest any man should boast. But it's by grace that we are saved through faith. Well, in verse 15 and 16 Paul is encouraged when he hears about these Ephesians.

Now why would he be encouraged? He says in verse 15-16a,

"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, do not cease giving thanks"

Remember, Paul spent over three years of his life with these precious Ephesian believers. He planted the seeds of real faith and of love for one another that are now blossoming in their lives. He's in prison. He hears about them, and it encourages his heart. He thanks the Lord for those believers that are willing to live faithfully for the Lord Jesus. He says, "... while [making mention \(5734\)](#) of you in my [prayers](#)." Now he's going to pray for them, and in his prayer he brings out things that I think we need to really take time to look at, things we need to understand.

A PRAYER FOR A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

His prayer, if you put it in a simple way, is a prayer for a deeper understanding for these Ephesian believers. They know all about what God has done, but now they need to know God in a deeper, more intimate way. What Paul is praying here is that these Ephesian believers will get to know God in their walk. Knowing God and fearing God is very crucial to the Christian life. So many of us can whip out our spiritual knowledge. Oh man, we've studied this book, we've studied that book, we've got facts in our heads, but we haven't got a clue about the God of the Word. What he's praying for here is that they might have a deeper understanding of God Himself and some of His attributes that will come later on in his prayer.

The main focus for us now is Ep 1:17:

"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."

That's what he's praying for these Ephesian believers. Let's look at it, take it apart, and see how far we can get with it.

First of all, we want to see to whom he's praying. He makes a statement here that some religions love to pick up on and say that Jesus is really not God. He says, "... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,..." Now that statement can throw you if you don't understand a little bit about the terminology in that phrase that makes it look like Jesus is less than God. When you speak of "Jesus" you are speaking of the earthly name of the Son of God. When you speak of "Christ" you're speaking of His resurrected name, the anointed name, the role He came to fulfill in our life and on this earth. When you speak of "Lord," you're speaking of His authority and benevolent authority as ruler over all. That authority was given to Him because of what He did on the cross for us on this earth. So, you're not speaking of someone who is not equal with God. You're signifying with that statement the role that Jesus played in our redemption. So, it says, "... **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ**,..." Who is this "**God of our Lord Jesus Christ**?" Well, it's Christ Himself. Let me show you four ways we know that.

EDITORIAL COMMENT - I don't agree with Wayne that the name **God** in the phrase "**God of our Lord Jesus Christ**" refers to Christ Himself. And if you look at the following 4 points, each of them would refer to the Father, not the Son, so apparently Wayne meant to say God the Father. Clearly in context "**God**" refers to the Father. **What the Bible Teaches** adds "The **God** of our Lord Jesus Christ is God in relation to Christ [as a man]: Psalm 22:10 from His birth; Psalm 22:1 in the darkness of Golgotha; John 20:17 as a man risen from the dead; Heb 1:9 [as an] exalted man in heaven. The Father of glory is the source of all glory." ([What the Bible Teaches: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians](#))

First of all, He's the God Whose work Christ came to do.

Now maybe we can put it this way and somebody's mind will turn on to finally understanding these phrases. Look over in Colossians 1:19-note. Now Jesus is the fulness of the Godhead bodily. If you want to see God, look at Jesus. That's what He's saying. Christ came to reveal Him and to do a work for Him. He is God, but He came down to take upon Himself a body. Now He is not only uniquely God, but He is also the God-Man. Alright? Look in Ep 1:19.

"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him"

Look at Colossians 2:9-note. It explains it more fully.

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." ([Spurgeon's devotional](#) on Col 2:9)

Had it not been for our Lord Jesus Christ we would have never known God. God said, "I want the world to understand who I am. I want them to know I love them. Therefore, I'm going to come down." So He came down in the person of Jesus Christ who, as the God-Man, walked in complete submission to His Father while He was on this earth. There's a tremendous picture here, but it's hard for the mind to grasp it, isn't it? You see, the prayer that Paul's going to pray even has to be prayed when we mention phrases like this. God has just got to help us understand that unique relationship with the Father and the Son.

Well second, He's the God by Whom Christ was sent.

Christ is God, but He was sent by God. Look in John 4:34. I'm telling you, the Word of God to me is like a well that has no bottom. If

anybody says to you that he's absolutely got it all down pat, you had better back off and pray for that individual. It's like a well. Oh, it's unsearchable. It's impossible to search out all the riches of God's Word. I'm grateful for the work of the Spirit. Look at verse 34.

Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me & to accomplish (to carry through completely, to finish, to add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full, to bring to the proposed goal) His work'

Although He is God He came to accomplish that work on this earth. He came to die for our sins. That was the visible expression of the love of God.

Third, He is the God of Whom Christ testifies.

Now the world did not know the nature of God. They did not know that God was a benevolent God, a God that was like a Father, until Jesus came. Jesus came to reveal the heart of God. It's because of Jesus' coming that we know God to be a Father. That automatically softens our understanding of who He is. Yes, He is a heavenly Father, but He gives us an understanding of His care and concern for His creation. Look at John 6:44. It picks up both ideas, the fact that He's sent and the fact that He came to reveal the Father. He says,

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

So we see He is also sent to reveal the Father. John 5:18 says,

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

So we see the fact He is God, but He came to reveal the nature of God which is God the Father. He's the one whom God sent to this earth.

Fourth, He's the God to Whom Christ has returned.

Who is this "God of our Lord Jesus Christ?" He's the God to whom Christ has returned. Look in Hebrews 1:1, 2note. They pick up the whole thought.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

That tells you about His preexistence. Christ created everything. Then He came as the God-man.

Hebrews 1:3-note says,

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Where did He go? Right back to where He came from.

Who is He? He's **God**. "Wait a minute, Wayne. I thought you said He was **Christ**." **He is**. "I don't understand that." I don't either. If we could understand it all, He would be no bigger than our brain, and He wouldn't be much of a God.

EDITORIAL COMMENT - This statement by Wayne is confusing. In this prayer Paul has clearly separated out the members of the Godhead into Father and Son. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. I know Wayne is not teaching [modalism](#), but that is what his preceding statement might lead one to conclude. Is Christ God? Of course He is God, but He is not the Father. See [What does the Bible teach about the Trinity? | GotQuestions.org](#).

The first point is that He came. Paul is praying to a God that was so concerned about us that He sent His own Son to this world to die for us. He's concerned for you. He cares about you. He's the Father of glory, Paul said. In other words, He's the One to whom glory belongs. The same nature and glory that goes to the Father goes to the Son for they are equal. They care. They're compassionate. This is the heart of the One that you come to when you pray.

We could just pick up right there and go on, couldn't we? I have a heavenly Father who cares about me. How do I know He cares about me? He sent His Son into the world. He's already manifested His care and His grace for me. Now He bids me to come to Him in the name of His Son.

Well, Paul shows us then that God is concerned with us. He loves us, and has shown His grace towards us. This is the one He addresses, "... the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,..."

Secondly, let's look at the main focus of his prayer. There are three ingredients to his prayer. The main focus of His prayer is that the Ephesians come to a deeper understanding of God. Again look at 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."

Now folks this is not an easy Scripture. Please understand that. As a matter of fact I think chapter 1 is one of the most difficult chapters that I've ever studied. What does he mean by "a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation?" Many, many conservative scholars think that he refers here to the Holy Spirit. I don't agree with that, directly. Certainly he's including Him in his thought, but he's not speaking directly of Him because it says God will give you a spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. Secondly, there's no definite article here. It's not "the spirit". It's "a spirit" as the New American Standard brings it out. He prays that God will give them a spirit of wisdom and of revelation. They already have the Holy Spirit.

Look back in verse 13.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation --having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

They already had the Holy Spirit. That word **pneuma** without the definite article, can refer to several things. One of the things it can refer to is a special work of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of men that have been redeemed, that have the attitude and the willingness to let God do a work.

Now there are two things implied in that. He's asking God the Holy Spirit to give a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation concerning the knowledge of God to the Ephesian believers. Included and implied in that is a heart that has been made tender and is willing to let that happen. In other words, God does it, yes, but we make the choice. All of life is just saying "Yes" to God. When we're willing to say "Yes" to Him, the Spirit, as another work of grace, can give us a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation concerning the knowledge of God.

The word for "**knowledge**" is the word **epignosis (word study)**, which means more than just fact. He's already given them facts. He says, "Now I want something deeper for you. I want you to know God. I want you to have a deeper understanding of God." That word **epignosis (word study)** means "the fullness of knowledge." It means to not only know it but to understand it and literally, if you please, to experience God. In other words, it means to be drawn into God Himself and not just the facts about Him.

How many people do you know who come to church and quote **v3-14** and never miss a word, but do not have the deep understanding of what that means in their life? That's not something a man can get on his own. It's a work of God's grace as I bow down to Him, as I surrender to Him. Then the Holy Spirit, who is God, gives me a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation so that I might grow in that knowledge, not of His Word so much, yes, that's important, but of Him, the God of the Word.

"... the whole key of the Christian life is what Paul is praying... "

To me the whole key of the Christian life is what Paul is praying here because we need to know God and fear God. When a man begins to know God he begins to see himself. He knows Him through His Word. It's the Holy Spirit that gives that wisdom and revelation. The word for wisdom there refers to the practical knowledge that only comes from above. James says all wisdom of God comes from above (Jas 1:17-note). The Holy Spirit's got to give it. That teaches a man how he can relate to God, how he can experience God. That's wisdom. I hear people all the time telling me, "You know, the Word just doesn't meet my problem. I mean, God doesn't understand me. I pick up the Word of God, and it's like a news-paper." Oh yes, it does meet your problems. If God gives you wisdom He takes that same Word that you thought didn't apply and supernaturally shows you how the Word meets every need of your life. Not only that, it leads you into a deep, deep understanding of that by letting you experience what God's saying in that Word. That's what the Holy Spirit does. You see, wisdom is very important. How is this wisdom received? By revelation. This to me is one of the real keys of Paul's prayer. These Ephesian believers are not that old in the faith. These Ephesian believers were influenced by the Greek thinking of that day that said everything you do you have to do yourself. You have to intellectualize. You have to figure it out yourself. As a result, Paul is praying, "Oh no, you can't do it that way. I'm praying that God will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation concerning the knowledge of God."

To me it's very similar to what goes on in Colossians chapter 1, if you'll look there with me. You know, Colossians is really a commentary on Ephesians. I really saw a connection here in Col 1:9-note, Col 1:10-note, Col 1:11-note. There's a very similar thought. Paul is praying for the Colossian believers just like he's now praying for the Ephesian believers. He has the same heartbeat. Look what he says in Col 1:9:

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled (caused to abound, be liberally supplied, be filled to the top or the brim so that nothing is wanting) with the knowledge (epignosis) of His

will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (assembling together of facts into an organized whole & thus the ability to assess any situation & decide what practical course of action is necessary) so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. -- (Col 1:9-note, Col 1:10-note, Col 1:11-note)

Only the Holy Spirit of God can take the Word of God and make you wise as to your salvation and give you understanding as to what God wants to do, of who He is and of how to relate to Him.

Look at Col 1:10-note:

so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects"

Then Paul uses some present passive participles. **Present tense** means while you're working on it God's doing something else. It's going on at the same time. While I'm walking worthy, filled with knowledge that I could not get with my own mental faculties, but that God the Holy Spirit using my mind transforms it to understand, God turns on and begins to do something in my life. I begin

"bearing fruit in every good work" in Col 1:10-note.

Look at the second thing it says. It's another presentpassive participle. I'm not doing it, God's doing it. It says, you start what?

"... increasing in the knowledge (epignosis -word study) of God... "

How am I going to get this knowledge of God? You don't get it by your own personal pursuit. You get it as you bow before Him, cooperating with Him and surrendering to what His word says. The Holy Spirit of God imparts wisdom by revealing it to you as He wills and in His own time and in His own way. It's by revelation. Man cannot discover on his own what God has hidden. What God has hidden only God can reveal. Man can discover what is hidden by man, but man cannot discover what is hidden by God. To me this is one of the real root thoughts of Paul's prayer. He's leading them to a deeper understanding of God, but he's trying to show them that it doesn't come by their own intellect. It comes by the revelation of the Spirit of God. Yes, the intellect is needed because God gives understanding, but it's the Holy Spirit doing it in a person's life.

As a matter of fact, let me show you that. How would a natural man without the Spirit of God, go about doing it if he wanted to know God? Well, he would do it the way he has done everything else in his life. Man learns things by research. That's the way we're programmed. You find all the facts that you can. You compile all the facts, and then you draw a line and come to a conclusion. That's the way a natural man would want to find out about God. He would get into the Word and stack up all the verses he could find about Him. That doesn't mean he understands, but at least he can find facts out about God. He would seek by his own natural ability to discover God. I remember when I was in Chemistry class in school. I used to love lab because you got to fool around with stuff. I remember all the things they told us not to do. I used to always have that little mischievous something in me that I had to try it and see why they told us not to do it. I have burned holes as big as a quarter in my textbook with acid. There are several other stories I could tell you, but I'd rather not. I remember one morning, when I almost blew up the Chemistry lab, the teacher suggested that I might go into the ministry. The world might be a little safer if I went that direction. That's the way man goes about anything. We would always use the trial and error approach. We find a hypothesis. We get our facts. We put them down, draw a line and come up with a conclusion. When it comes to knowing God man can't do that, because he doesn't have a transformed intellect. He doesn't have a saved intellect. He doesn't have a saved mind. The Spirit is not in there.

Let me show you that in 1Corinthians 2:11. This is one of the greatest chapters I think of knowing God in the entire Bible. You've got to have the right correspondence if you're going to know something. God is Spirit. We've got to have that which is spiritual to correspond with Him as Spirit. In verse 11 it says,

"For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given (charizomai ~ "grace gift" or "gift of grace") to us by God" For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?...

In other words, I'm a human being. You're a human being. I know some things about you. Look in , " 1Corinthians 2:12,

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God

You see, you've got to have the right thing within you to correspond with God so you can know God. I think what Paul is saying is, "Don't fall into the trap that a lot of people fall into. You come out of a Greek mentality. You come out of a Greek culture. Now that you know God, and you've been saved, don't try to grow in Him by your own mental faculties. You've got to have that renewed mind.

Then the Holy Spirit of God will give you wisdom by revealing to you the deep things about God." That's the way you know Him. It's through the Word, yes, but it's not just the Word of God. It's the God of the Word.

Sometimes the more I do know about the Word the more confused I get. I look at a verse, and I'm thinking, "I know that's what it says, but what does it say?" Then God brings me to that realization of frustration. I can't learn it. I can't even remember it if the Holy Spirit hasn't taught it. As I bow down before what it is that I'm confused over, God with His Holy Spirit reveals it with the spirit of wisdom, teaches me how to use it, how it's practical, how to relate to Him, and who He is in light of it. That's what Paul is praying. A deeper, deeper understanding of just knowing God. That's the key.

Paul says,

"I'm praying that you know Him, and in that knowledge of Him I pray that He grows deeper and deeper and deeper."

It never will until your spirit has a brand new disposition and attitude of openness to God's Spirit about it so that He can rule and reign the truth in your life. Then He turns it on, and that light clears up. There it is. It's been there all the time. Man cannot learn this apart from what God does.

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Ephesians 1:18

A PRAYER FOR

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING, PT 2

by Dr. Wayne Barber

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Related Resource: See in depth common on Ephesians 1:18

Will you turn with me again back to Ephesians chapter 1? We're going to be looking at verse 18 as Paul is praying for the Ephesian believers.

I had a teacher tell me one time that the thing that they loved when they were teaching was when they saw in their students that look of "Ah Ha! That's it!" I know I had several teachers that probably were very disappointed with me being their student, especially in Algebra II. One day in class it just turned on. Isn't that amazing? I knew all the facts and could tell about them, but for some reason they had not sunk in. They had not fallen down in there in that seed of understanding within me. I had the knowledge of it, but not the understanding of that knowledge. One day the "Ah Ha" took place. Teachers love to see that.

The apostle Paul, being the teacher that he was, is praying for that "Ah Ha" to take place in those Ephesian believers. He has just told them about their salvation. "You know these things. You've read these things. I wonder if it's fallen yet into that seed of understanding in your life and into your heart," Paul says.

Ephesians 1:16 do not [cease \(1SPA\)](#) [giving thanks \(PAPMSN\)](#) for you, while [making \(PMPMSN\)](#) [mention](#) of you in [my prayers](#); 17 [that](#) the [God](#) of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#) the [Father](#) of [glory](#), may [give \(3SAAS\)](#) to you a [spirit](#) of [wisdom](#) and of [revelation](#) in the [knowledge](#) of Him.

He prays that God would just turn on that "Ah Ha." He can help you to see it, really see it. Once you have understood truth, that motivates you in all that you do in life. If you just know it but don't understand it, that may hurt you in your walk. God does that in His own way and in His own time.

In v18 it really says the same thing. He says,

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened"

Now remember the heart there was not like it is in some cultures. The **heart (word study)** is the seat of emotions in some cultures, but in the Greek culture it was not. In the Greek culture the seat of emotions would be the [intestines](#). If you're bothered in those areas, you're certainly emotionally affected. That was their seat of emotion. The heart was the seat of understanding. So he's praying here that your eyes might be enlightened, your spiritual eyes might be turned on. **Photizo (word study)**, to give light to, to shine light upon. Paul is still praying for a deeper spiritual understanding, that "Ah Ha. That's what you're telling me, Lord. I see it." In light of that knowledge of Him, we can go on in our walk.

Ep 1:18 / *pray* that the [eyes](#) of your [heart](#) may be [enlightened \(RPPMPA\)](#), [so that](#) you [will know \(RAN\)](#) [what is \(PAI\)](#) the [hope](#) of His [calling, what](#) are the [riches](#) of the [glory](#) of His [inheritance](#) in the [saints](#), 19 and [what](#) is the [surpassing \(PAPNSN\)](#) [greatness](#) of His

[power toward](#) us who [believe \(PAPMPA\)](#). These are [in accordance with](#) the [working](#) of the [strength](#) of His [might](#)

There are three specific concerns that Paul has in Ep 1:18, 19. We're only going to look at two of them now in verse 18. Paul feels like if they can understand these things, it will motivate their walk. They will do wonders in their living for the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 18 says,

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling"

Now one thing we need to understand about "the hope of His calling" is that when you see the word "hope" associated with God and His children, His believers, it is never, ever like the hope that is in this world. In this world when we say the word "hope" we mean something that we wish for but is highly uncertain. Never in Scripture do you find that word. "hope," associated with what God has promised and what God is doing, as meaning uncertainty. Oh no! It's always certain. As a matter of fact, the deepest level of assuring somebody of something is when you refer to their hope. Paul is saying, "I'm praying that you will have a deep understanding and an assurance of the [hope](#) of His calling."

Now that word "**calling**" is the word **klesis (word study)**. It comes from the word (**kaleo [word study]**) meaning to call. One of the ways it was used is to refer to **an invitation to come to something special**. I like that. You send it out. You want them to be there for something. It's a special, special bidding, a special calling that is being given. Here it is God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of His salvation, "the hope of His calling" which involves several things.

What is involved in the **calling** of the Christian? If God has spoken in your heart, and you've responded to that, then it involves everything God has in store for you. Go back to Ep 1:3-14. Paul is simply saying, "I just told you about your calling. I just told you about what God has done for you. Now I want you to understand it deeply, deeply in your heart. It involves not only the joy of being blessed with every spiritual blessing. It involves not only the joy of being chosen by Christ before the foundation of the world. It involves being redeemed by His blood. It involves being adopted as His Son. It involves being sealed in Him with His Spirit, but it also involves the hope of His returning, and everything that is to come after He returns for His church." That is the full payment of which we have the earnest right now.

So Paul is saying, "I want you to understand the hope, the assurance of your calling. Your calling involves everything that God has done, is doing, and wants to do one day regarding your salvation." Now you say, "I don't know when I was called or when was I invited." Oh, the invitation was sent years ago. It's found in John 3:16. Will you say it with me?

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (not annihilation ~ basically that which is ruined & no longer usable for its intended purpose) **but have eternal life."**

You got an invitation a long time ago. God has initiated a calling. You may not have responded to it yet, but when you respond to it, and you receive what God has said, then everything that calling involves you need to understand spiritually.

Where else is that calling found in Scripture? Look over with me in Romans 11. Here he's talking about the Jewish people. This is in that very difficult passage where I believe he's really talking about a demonstration of His power, not so much His election. In Romans 11:23-note, as he is referring to the Jews, he sort of gets on the Gentile's case here. He says, don't be arrogant, folks. Don't think God's written off Israel. He has not. In light of that he says in Romans 11:29-note

for the gifts and the **calling** of God are irrevocable

You don't repent of that. In other words, there will be no changing of God's mind. God called them, and He's honoring that call. As a nation they have not yet responded, but one day they will. Many of the remnant of Israel have responded, but the calling of God is [irrevocable](#). That's one thing to remember. God doesn't take back what He sends out. He's given you an invitation. If you've responded, that response and that calling is irrevocable.

In 1 Cor 1:26, 27, 28, 29 it speaks of their **calling**. I don't want to get into the full context of this, but there's something that caught my attention here. Many times we think God is selective to people that are more intelligent or more worthy than we think we are. Thank God He doesn't look at it that way. He's not a respecter of persons. Beginning in v26-29

"For consider your **calling** brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are so that no * man may boast before God"

In this calling God is not moved by the status of men. I was thinking about the way man goes after learning about God. He does his research, stacks up all his information, comes to his conclusions, but he never can find what he's looking for. I'm grateful for that because if God would have only come to those who were intellectually capable, I would have been left out a long time ago. You

know, a lot of third world countries and people that are illiterate would have too. We would have to say, "Don't bother to take the gospel to them because God favors the academic and those that are strong and those that are intelligent." Oh no! The people who respond usually are the ones who are willing to admit that they're poor. They're poor in spirit. He chose the weak things. He's not selective in His calling according to the status of men.

Look in Ephesians 4:1-note. I think it's found three times in Ephesians. We'll just look at this other one. Your calling, what does it involve? Paul says in verse 1,

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been **called** (word study)"

Now, what does that tell us? That tells us there's a responsibility if you've responded to God's invitation. If you've responded to His call then there is a worthy walk that He's looking for you to live. Your response begins something. It doesn't end something. The walk begins at the time you respond to His invitation. (**Ed:** on "calling" see Torrey's Topic specifically the subtopic "To Man Is... ")

Look at 2Th 1:11. Who is it that determines whether our walk is worthy? I'm grateful that it's not you and me.

To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your **calling** and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,"

Who is it that makes us worthy? Who is it that determines that walk? It's the Lord Himself. That's another act of His grace.

In 2Timothy 1:9-note ([Spurgeon's devotional](#)) we find that calling. He tells us it's a holy calling. Let's look at verse 8 to catch the whole sentence.

who has saved us, and called us with a holy **calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

So it's a holy calling not based on man's works, but based on God's grace. Isn't that a precious thought?

Hebrews 3:1-note tells us it's not only a holy calling, but it's a heavenly calling.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly **calling** consider (Put the mind down on ~ give very careful consideration & attention & continuous observation) Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession,"

There's one more place in 2Peter 1:10-note. He says that this calling can be "**make certain**". In other words, you can know that it's there. This is where a lot of people trip up. The way that you know that it's there is by God letting you know in His own way. Romans says His Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you're a child of God (Ro 8:16-note). So often we make ourselves think that we've got to understand every little facet of it. Oh no! As a matter of fact, the older I get the more I'm wondering how much of it I do understand. One of the ways that He bears witness in your life that He is there and makes you certain of your calling is the chastisement He brings and the conviction that He brings when you sin. One of the best ways of knowing that you're God's child is that, when you sin, God won't let you get away with it. (Heb12:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11-notes)

2Peter 1:10-note says,

"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent (exert intense effort & motivation being zealously persistence to accomplish the goal) to make certain (firm, stable & which can be relied upon or trusted in) about His **calling** and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble."

So Paul sees that one of the things they need to fully understand and to deeply realize. is the hope of their calling. He had just told them what their calling involved. Now they need to understand the hope of their calling. It is all wrapped up in the destiny and the glory of the believer that is coming in the upcoming kingdom. We need a deeper understanding

of our calling.

You know, we try to remind one another quite frequently, not only in the preaching of the Word, but by having the Lord's Supper. What is that? It's a reminder of when we received the invitation of the Lord one day and entered into that covenant with Him. It's a reminder of who we are. Do you realize folks, when you walk outside the church walls, in a sense you lose your identity? You don't lose it, but you feel like you do. You're on your own. You've got to be reminded all the time, "Wait a minute. I'm not my own. I'm bought with a price. I'm God's property. I've got a calling. I responded to His invitation, and I know God's doing a work in my life. He chose me, blessed me, adopted me, redeemed me, all these things He's done, and I can't live out in this world like I want to live. This calling involves a walk. I've got "to walk... worthy of the **calling**" That's what it's all about. We try the best we can to remind

each other and encourage one another, but Paul says he wants them to come to a deeper understanding of the hope of their calling. We voice this hope in a hymn we sing all the time. It's one of my favorite hymns, and I'm certain it's one of your favorites.

MY HOPE IS BUILT

(The Solid Rock)

[play hymn](#)

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.
His oath, His covenant, and His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around by soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne
Refrain:
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

When you begin to understand what is the hope of your calling, the assurance of it, when you begin to realize that now we only have the earnest of that calling, that one day we'll have the full payment, then whatever comes your way you can stand on what God has done in your life. You can stand on who He is and His faithfulness and love towards you. Paul felt like that was important for them to understand. He said, "I pray that you will have that deeper understanding through wisdom and revelation of the hope of His calling."

Well, there's another thing that he mentions here in verse 18. Paul is talking about, not only what the hope of His calling is, but also "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

"... so that you may know" The word [eido](#) ([oida](#)) is used there. It's the word that means not so much by experience as intuitively. I mean, it drills into your heart. Eido is that perception, that being aware of, that understanding, that intuitive knowledge that only the Holy Spirit of God can give.

There are several views as to what "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" means. Before I go too far, remember he's writing to Gentiles. This is his mission, to let them know that they can be in on this inheritance.

Look in Acts 26:18. Paul is talking about his ministry, and I want you to see what he says here. He's giving his testimony, and he says in verse 16 when God talked to him, God said,

"But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing (delivering, drawing or plucking out) you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from

darkness to light and from the dominion (the right & the might) of Satan (adversary = opposes God's purposes) to God, that they may receive forgiveness (basic idea of sending away from, release from bondage or imprisonment, deliverance w/ canceling out of all judgment) of sins & an inheritance among those who have been sanctified (note: perfect tense = past action to set apart at time of salvation w/ continuing effect of remaining set apart or holy) by faith in Me" (Acts 26:16, 17, 18)

Now what are we talking about in our verse in Ephesians? "... that the eyes of your heart may be (opened) enlightened." This is the ministry that God gave to Paul on the Damascus road,

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

That was the ministry of Paul that God had given to him. Here he is carrying out that ministry from prison, and he says to the Ephesians there, the Gentile believers, "I'm praying that your eyes might be opened, that you have a deep understanding of the riches of His inheritance in His saints." What is he saying? There are several views on this. One of the ways this might be viewed is that Paul prays that the believers in Ephesus could have their spiritual eyes open to the inheritance that's coming to Jesus of which they can be a part.

Look in Ro 8:16, 17-note. This is one view. He talks about the fact we're heirs. What is an heir? It means we've got an inheritance coming. Who are we joint-heirs with? It says in verse 16,

"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him"

In other words, we have a share in that inheritance that is promised to Jesus. Some people look at "His inheritance in the saints" as being His own inheritance, that which is coming to Him to which the saints can also partake. Just think of the fact that we are given a share of what's promised to Jesus be-cause

we're joint-heirs with Him.

The second view that's used there in Ephesians 1:18 when he says "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," refers to the saints being God's inheritance. Not only is He our inheritance, but we're His inheritance. That's a true statement. Deut 32:9, speaking of Israel, refers to the Lord's portion as His people ([Spurgeon's devotional](#)) . I have a problem sometimes thinking about God needing an inheritance because He owns everything. But in that light it says the Lord's portion is His people.

1 Peter 2:9-note, referring to believers, says that we

are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

Some people view this that the saints themselves are His inheritance. That's true. Whether he's saying that here or not, it's still a truth that we need to understand. I belong to Him. I'm His own possession. He considers me as His portion. Isn't that a great thought? I belong to somebody, folks. I have His mark on me. Do you know what it is? It's within me. It's the Holy Spirit of God in my life and in your life.

Another view, and I think this is the view that perhaps he's alluding to, is that "His inheritance in the saints" refers to all that is in reserve for us when we get to heaven, that which is coming, that we have not yet experienced, that which we have the earnest of, but we haven't yet seen what's coming. Look in 1Corinthians 2:9. I believe this is what he's alluding to here:

"but just as it is written "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM "

Now think about what's coming. Just think about it. We're going to have glorified bodies. Have you looked at yours lately? When I look in the mirror in the mornings I'm thinking, "Thank you, God, for that inheritance I have not yet received. This one is falling apart." What else is coming? Well, we've got a mansion in heaven. Remember in Revelation 21:1-[note](#) when the new city came down finally. Well, it says that it's His house, and we're in there with Him. I don't know what it's going to look like. You see, it's 1500 miles wide, long and high. If every family since Adam was there, we would each have 198 square miles in which to live. I like that, because I like to be by myself sometimes.

Think about what's coming, folks. We will receive that inheritance that we only have the earnest of right now. You say, " You mean all the glorious victories we're having now are nothing compared to that?" You're exactly right. What men pursue down here we'll walk on up there. Our value system is going to be so turned upside down we'll walk on streets of gold. Can you believe that? I mean, all of that's coming.

There are forty-something commands from Ephesians chapter 4 to chapter 6, but we're not in chapter 4 yet. We're in chapter 1, and for three chapters Paul lays down what God has done, who God is, who you are, and what you have. Then in chapter 4 he says, "Alright, now do you understand it? I pray you do, because now you're going to have to live like you understand it down here on this earth." Why is it we need that deep understanding? Because folks, some of the things some of us are pursuing down here are not worth the time of day even thinking about in light of eternity.

I think of the man who came from Campus Crusade one time. He drew a line all the way across several blackboards that were put together. He drew a huge line, and he said, "That represents eternity. I don't have enough chalk to draw it far enough because it would never end." In the middle of that line he put a dot, and he said, "Listen, God wants us to live for the line, not for the dot because that dot is so small compared to eternity." Folks, a lot of people don't understand...

the riches of the glory

of His inheritance in the saints.

What do they do then? They wake up tomorrow morning, go out and beat themselves to death to make another dollar. I love Psalm 127:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 ([notes](#)). He says it's vain to rise up early and work late and try to get it. You can't ever get it. God gives to His beloved in their sleep. I just love that. He says, "Go on. Try that. Help yourself. I'm not going to follow you around. If that's your choice, help yourself." Sometimes I think we ought to have a Thursday night service and hang a big dollar bill from the ceiling. Everybody could come in, bow down and sing choruses to it. That's what most people are worshipping. Why? They're living for the dot. They're not living for the line. They don't understand the riches of His glory in His inheritance that's in the saints. That's why Paul says, "You'll never figure this thing out. God the Holy Spirit by revelation will give you wisdom. It'll sink deep inside of you. It will become one of the roots of your motivation that makes you walk worthy of Him." Then it starts dawning on you what God has done, and what God wants to do, and what He will do one day in your life.

Look at Colossians 1:12-note. I want you to know that you've been qualified for that inheritance. It's talking about people walking worthy. This is the only time you understand this. If you're not walking worthy you don't have this understanding. Paul says in verse 12,

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

In other words, we have been qualified. We didn't qualify ourselves. He qualified us, and that's very, very important..

1Co 15:19 is another verse that I think ought to be brought in when we're talking about "the riches of the glory in His inheritance in the saints." It falls right in that context.

If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Do you see what he's saying? The whole context is on the resurrected body that's coming that we have not yet experienced. Oh woe to the person who only hopes in Christ for now. He says, "Oh man, I'm praying you're going to get a deep dose of this Ah Ha! That's what you're talking about."

The Spirit reveals to your spirit what's coming, and folks, it'll make you jump up in the morning. You might not jump up. I don't usually jump up. I stagger up, but once you finally get your eyes open, it'll dawn on you that whatever you're doing tomorrow is in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Every victory that you have tomorrow in this world, is nothing more than God saying, "That's just an earnest. Enjoy my earnest today because I've got something coming that's full payment that eye has never seen nor ear heard." It'll motivate your walk like nothing else in the world.

Who you are, whose you are, what you have in Jesus Christ. That our eyes may be open that we might see and know. Ephesians 1:14-note the text that we looked at just the other day, says it's guaranteed. It is going to come. You have already been qualified if you're a believer. You should not be hoping in Jesus just for now. You ought to be looking for what's coming.

Ephesians 1:14 says that inheritance is absolutely guaranteed. All that salvation encompasses is guaranteed one day to all of His believers. "... the riches of the glory" refers to one thing: It refers to the fact that Paul doesn't have enough words to continue on to describe it. It's unspeakable. Paul doesn't have anything else he can say about it. As a matter of fact, he's just sort of at a loss for words. He's probably seeing something as the Spirit is revealing it but has no human language in which to express it. So he just says, "... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Well, "Ah Ha!" God loves us, absolutely loves us. He has given us everything necessary for life and godliness. He has given us everything we ever could need all by grace. Not only that, oh folks, it has not even begun yet in the sense of what's coming. There's so much more yet to come. If we could just wake up in the morning and realize that. "... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in His saints," and "... the hope of a calling." Who in the world could ever describe that? Paul says that when you see it you won't have

any trouble with chapters 4 through 6, but until you see it you may struggle a little bit.

[Return to TOP of page](#)