

Armando Rodriguez & Abel Sosa

God's Life-Changing Curriculum

Becoming an Agent of Change

Paul's Discipleship Program

God's Life-Changing Curriculum

Becoming an Agent of Change

Armando Rodriguez
Abel Sosa

Covenant Publishing
Corpus Christi, Texas, 78412

Copyright © 2014 by Armando Rodriguez

All Rights Reserved

Revised 2/25/2016

To my wife Teresa and children for their love and support

PREFACE

There are approximately 90 million Christians in Asia today. This has not always been the case. The work there began 2000 years ago in the city of Ephesus. During his third missionary journey, Paul found a group of twelve men who were confused about their faith. He took them aside and taught them. The group of men became agents of change and were instrumental in bringing about a great revival in Asia. Thousands were transformed by God's power as a result of their influence. What did Paul teach them? He taught them the content found in his epistle to the Ephesians. In that epistle, we find **God's Life Changing Curriculum**. God has not changed. He is immutable. What He did then, He will do again if we are willing to expose ourselves to a systematic study of Paul's curriculum. We pray that God would bless you with a taste of heaven as you read. May He grant you a fresh vision of Himself and infuse you with His power. His Word will not return void.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Incomplete Christians #1 - 5

Divine Work Requires Divine Power #2 - 9

OUR DOCTRINE

Lesson One: Blessed with All Spiritual Blessing - 11

Lesson Two: The Blessing of Father - 13

Lesson Three: The Blessing of the Son - 16

Lesson Four: The Blessing of the Holy Spirit - 19

Lesson Five: Paul's Prayer for Knowledge - 23

Lesson Six: The Supremacy of Christ - 26

Lesson Seven: Our Pre and Post Conversion Condition - 28

Lesson Eight: God's Initiative

OUR PRACTICE

Lesson Nine: God's Eternal Plan - 31

Lesson Ten: Paul's Prayer for Experience - 35

Lesson Eleven: Walking Worthy of the Lord - 38

Lesson Twelve: Divine Resources for the Work - 41

Lesson Thirteen: The Task of the Ministry/Gifts - 44

Lesson Fourteen: The Marks of a True Believer - 47

Lesson Fifteen: Imitate - Prove - Practice - 50

Lesson Sixteen: Relationships #1 - 53

Lesson Seventeen: Relationships #2 - 56

Lesson Eighteen: The Armor of God - 59

INTRODUCTION #1

Incomplete Christians

[Acts 19:1-7](#)

Jesus came into the world to give us life in abundance and restore all that was lost as a result of sin. He closed the door of the curse and opened a door of blessing.

If this is the case, why is it that we find the church in such a state of decline. Where is the zeal and love for the things of God? The text we have read deals with the idea of the incomplete Christian. During his third missionary journey, Paul encountered twelve men in Ephesus who had received only half the gospel. They had not been properly disciplined.

Paul asked them two questions (vs. 2)

1. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost when ye believed?"
2. "Unto what then were ye baptized?"

Their response to Paul's first question was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Their response to Paul's second question was, "Unto John's baptism." They had only received pieces of the gospel.

The believers in Ephesus were confused about the Holy Spirit and baptism. In verse 4, Paul summarizes the baptism of John and informs the disciples that John's baptism dealt with only the putting away of sins. John's message of repentance focused on the burial of our sin and oldness in order to prepare us for the coming of Christ. After explaining John's baptism, Paul then introduced the baptism of Jesus – It offers the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT! What happened?

The Scripture informs us that:

1. Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. (vs. 5)
2. He layed hands upon them.
2. The Holy Spirit came upon them.
4. They spoke with tongues, and prophecied. (vs. 6)

The Problem

The PROBLEM we find in these passages is that twelve men were trying to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit. They were ignorant about the Holy Spirit. Up to this point, they thought the Christian life was about commandments and faith in Jesus as Messiah. They thought the Christian life was only about "setting aside sin." Have you ever purchased a toy that did not include batteries? It has no power to move. Without God's Spirit, we have no power to act.

Our churches are full of people who live without the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. They may be moral, but are void of God's joy. They may want to do God's will, but

have no drive. There is no real direction in their life. They fear the future, worry about the past and are confused about the present.

The Solution

What did Paul do when he encountered incomplete Christians? Paul prayed and laid hands on them until the Holy Spirit became manifested in their life. We should do the same. We should pray that the Holy Spirit would manifest Himself during our services. Spurgeon had a group of men praying in the basement of the church while he preached. They prayed that the Holy Spirit would empower him and convict the sinner. He was called the prince of the pulpit, not because he was great, but because the Holy Spirit was great.

When the twelve disciples of John were filled with the Holy Spirit and became aware of his presence, their lives were changed. Recently, I was asked by a teenager, "Why do we need the Holy Spirit? What difference will he make? What does the Holy Spirit add to the Christian life? Great questions!

The authors of the Bible provide some wonderful answers.

The Holy Spirit...

1. Leads and guides us into all truth
2. Speaks to and through us
3. Gives us the desire and the power to act
4. Regenerates, empowers, sustains, enlivens and comforts
5. Reveals things about the future
6. Moves us to action and builds us up
7. Renews, transforms, and sets us apart for divine use
8. Strenghtens and enables us to obey God's Word
9. Cleanses us
10. Gives us new desires
11. Causes us to seek God
12. Gives us access to Father
13. Searches and reveals all the deep things of God
14. Helps us in our trouble and intercedes for us
15. The Holy Spirit provides us with:
 - a. wisdom

- b. knowledge
- c. faith
- d. gifts of healing
- e. the ability to work miracles
- f. the ability to prophecy
- g. the ability to discern spirits
- h. the ability to speak in tongues
- i. the ability to interpret tongues

16. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in us such as,

- a. Love
- b. joy
- c. peace
- b. longsuffering
- e. gentleness
- f. goodness,
- g. faith
- h. meekness
- i. temperance

17. The Holy Spirit takes a dull life and transforms it into the greatest adventure on earth.

These are **just a few examples of the benefits we enjoy as a result of being filled with and governed by the Holy Spirit.** Have we trusted Christ? Have we **set aside** our sin? Have we **appropriated** God's gift? Are we **enjoying it?** The Bible states that we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and that he is indwelling us. He is ready to totally transform us. **Are we ready to surrender?**

I have often been asked, "How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?" The Scripture is clear. If we surrender our life to Christ, the Holy Spirit will put God's seal upon us. If we ask in faith, Father will give us the Holy Spirit. Luke states,

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (11:13)

God's intention is to give us His Spirit. Paul states, "be being filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

When you become aware of His presence, **do not resist Him**. When he speaks to you, **do not harden your heart**. Surrender to his work in your life. Invite him to come and change you.

What will the Holy Spirit do, if I surrender? He will strengthen, empower, and regenerate you. He will lead and guide you into all truth. He will sustain, enliven and build you up. He will renew and transform you. He will give you new desires and set you free from your oldness. He will infuse you with newness. Are you ready? He is waiting.

What can I do to prepare to receive?

Three things are essential. First, acknowledge your sin and ask Jesus for the **gift of forgiveness**. Jesus Second, surrender to Him and receive His **gift of eternal life**. Thirdly, ask for the **gift of the Holy Spirit**.

Concluding Remarks:

We have reviewed the context of the passage, discovered the problem of incomplete Christians and have discussed the solution offered by the apostle Paul. The Holy Spirit is already present. He wants to fill you. He wants to show you the difference He can make in your life. Will you invite the Holy Spirit to fill you?

Prayer:

Father, your word invites us to ask for the manifestation of Your Holy Spirit. We stand before You pleading that you would conquer our hearts, rescue us from our oldness and revive us from our death. Breathe on us Lord. Cause us to surrender to Your work. Without you, we are incomplete. We are dead. Oh Spirit of the living God, cleanse, renew and transform us.

Father, your word states that the Holy Spirit reveals secrets and mysteries. I pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal our need to be filled and governed by You. Do not allow us to grieve and quench your Holy Spirit with our pride and rejection. Save us from resisting. Save us from hardening our heart when You speak. Right now, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION #2

Divine Work Requires Divine Power

[Acts 19:8-10](#)

Paul met a group of incomplete Christians. Even though they were believers, they were confused about the Holy Spirit and baptism. The apostle did not criticize these believers because of their immaturity. Instead, he taught them for about three months. While he disciplined the group of twelve men, he encountered opposition. The Bible informs us that Paul spoke with boldness. He had to dispute and persuade. He spoke to his audience about the kingdom, but not everyone was open to his message. Some of those in attendance were hardened and did not believe. (9) Paul proceeded to separate the disciples and went to teach them in the school of Tyrannus. They continued there for two years. I want you to note the results of Paul's discipleship program. The writer of the book of Acts states that all those that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus. Both Jew and Greek became recipients of the blessing. (10) Paul turned the world upside down. The world was inconvenienced by Paul's message. In this study, we will review the context, interpret its components and make some applications.

What transpired as a result of being led by God's Spirit? In verse 11, we see God working extraordinary miracles through Paul. Handkerchiefs and aprons from his body were taken to the sick. When the sick came into contact with these articles of clothing, disease departed and evil spirits fled from those afflicted. (12)

The text we have read, introduces us to some exorcists. The writer of the epistle records, "certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." (13)

Who were these exorcists? They were the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests. The writer reports that these men tried to do divine work without the Holy Spirit.

"And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? (15) And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (16) This was published in the city of Ephesus. "

The sons of Sceva tried to duplicate the work of the Holy Spirit. How many of you know that we cannot do divine work with human strength. Divine work requires divine power. The Scripture records that fear fell on all who witnessed this incident and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. (17)

The story does not end here. We are informed in verse 18 that many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. (18) Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (19) We are told that the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed. (20)

Verses 21-42 indicates that the multitudes were puzzled. The religious people in the community were stirred to anger. The business community was unhappy. The politicians were inconvenienced. Verse 29 informs us that the whole city was in an uproar. This is the context of the narrative.

I want to remind you that all this began with twelve incomplete Christians who were exposed to Paul's discipleship program. After Paul trained them, a great revival ensued and the city of Ephesus was turned upside down. Multitudes were converted. My question is, what was the content of Paul's discipleship program?

What curriculum did he use to create world changers. Some believe the discipleship program was none other than the book of Ephesians.

Concluding Remarks

We have seen how God used a small group of men in order to bring revival and renewal to the world. As we read Paul's discipleship program, (The Letter to the Ephesians), I hope that we will also become a channel of God's blessing. I pray that the truth of this epistle will rekindle our passion for God.

LESSON ONE

Blessed with All Spiritual Blessing

[Ephesians 1:1-3](#)

Paul worked in the city of Ephesus. Twelve Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit and became witnesses of God's power. These men were disciplined and in turn introduced Christ to the province of Asia. They healed the sick, cast out devils and set the oppressed free. God took a small group of men and changed the world. **How many of you think God can do the same today?** God has not stopped working. He is searching for men, women and young people who will become His channel of life, power, and blessing!

I want to become God's tool of transformation. Paul taught a group of men for 3 years. As we review the epistle to the Ephesians, I hope to be changed by its content. Let's begin by reviewing three points:

1. The Author & his Audience
2. The City of Ephesus
3. The Theme of the Book

The Author and His Audience

Paul begins this epistle by introducing himself as an apostle or ambassador. The word apostle means sent one. He is not a volunteer. He is sent by Jesus Christ. He is writing to a group of people who have been set apart by God. They are full of faith (faithful) because of their relationship with Christ.

The City of Ephesus

The recipients of this letter lived in the port city of Ephesus. It's population was about 300,000 and was inhabited by philosophers, painters, orators, traders, and superstitious worshippers of the goddess Diana. It included a stadium that could house 25,000 people and a temple that was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It was **in this city** that God **raised up a group** of people that would **become his testimony**. It was **in this city** that God **saved thousands** when Paul preached and worked miracles among them.

What about us? Has God raised up Christians in this city? We are God's testimony in this city. We are the evidence of God's presence. What God did in Ephesus, He wants to do among us. Are we ready?

What is the theme of this epistle? The book includes two major sections. The first three chapter focus on doctrine. The last three chapter deal with practice.

Verse three of chapter one is key. "Blessed be the God and Father..." We are commanded to bless God. **What does it mean to bless? This word has been defined as the ability** "to speak well concerning, to laud, praise, or do some fine speaking on behalf of

another.” When Paul states, “Blessed be God,” he commands us to “speak well concerning God.”

I want you to note the context of Paul’s command to bless God. Paul is about 65 years old. He is in prison/house arrest and is possibly chained to a couple of soldiers. Even though his circumstances may not inspire most of us to “bless God,” Paul rises above his circumstances. Paul states, “I want to bless and speak well concerning God.”

Can we bless God when we are going through a trial or trouble. If we were in jail, could we write home to tell others about the blessings of God? Can we find something good to say about our God? Paul had a wonderful testimony. In Romans 8:35-39 the same attitude is evident when he states:

“35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Listen to Paul’s basis for praise. He states,
“God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.”

We can speak well about God, because He has spoken well concerning us. What a wonderful verse. Even though God knows all the secrets of our heart, His message about us is positive. He knows our weakness, our failure, our sin yet He speaks well concerning us. How do you speak about others? We do not know hearts. We do not know the details, yet sometimes we are quick to slander and curse instead of bless. The epistle to the Ephesians is about God’s fine speaking. It is about God’s blessing.

Why could Paul bless God even when things were not going his way? I think the epistle gives us a clue. Paul uses the phrase, “in union with Christ” 35 times. He uses this phrase 73 times in all his letters. **This is his secret!** Paul was a man in union with Christ! In his epistle to the Colossians he states, **“in union with Christ, everything falls into place.”** The author to the Hebrews points out that **Christ holds all things together.** If Jesus is not our center, who is going to hold things together for us? This is Paul’s main point in this letter to the Ephesians. Without Christ, we are a walking civil war. Without Christ, our life will spin out of control. Without Him, our horizontal relationships will crumble. Without Christ, our condition is hopeless and helpless. The answer is union with Christ

Concluding Remarks:

Without Christ, life is meaningless and a journey to no-where. Without Jesus as our center, we will never experience God’s presence and power. Until we surrender our life to Jesus Christ, we will be lost without a compass. The key idea of Paul’s discipleship program is “Union with Christ.”

LESSON TWO

The Blessing of Father

[Ephesians 1:3-6](#)

In the previous lessons, we saw how God used Paul to prepare twelve men to become change agents. Paul taught them and in turn, they became God's tools of transformation. What did the apostle teach them. In this lesson, we will review the content of the Paul's discipleship program as found in verses 4-14. Many believe that these verses compose a hymn sung by the early church. It makes sense. These verses seem to be divided into three stanzas.

Stanza 1 deals with the blessings of God the Father. (vs. 4-6)

Stanza 2 deals with the blessings of God's Son. (7-12)

Stanza 3 deals with the blessings of the Holy Spirit. (13-14)

In this glorious hymn, we have a record of God's good intention toward us. Again, why are we studying this epistle? We desire to discover the curriculum Paul used to bring about change. Our desire to become channels of God's power and presence.

This week, I read a book written by Dr. James Kennedy about the growth of God's kingdom. God's work began in Asia with twelve men. They were discipled and a great revival ensued. By 1980, the number of Christians in Asia had increased to **16 million**. Today there are over **90 million** believers in Asia. God's Word does not return void. I am praying that God would stir us up as a result of reviewing the epistle to the Ephesians.

The first stanza of the hymn under consideration focuses on the blessings of God the Father. Paul informs us that we have been blessed by God the Father in three ways.

He has chosen us

He has predestined us

He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Blessing One: Chosen

Paul encouraged the Christians in Ephesus by reminding them of the fact that Father had chosen them? The word "chosen" means **hand-picked**. God has selected us. If we are in Christ, we have been chosen. This should fill us with a sense of Godly pride. We have value. We have been hand picked. Jesus said to His disciples,

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (John 15:16)

How many of you know my best friend, Bill Gates! Are you impressed? Probably not. Anyone can make a claim that Bill Gates is their best friend. Now, if you went home tonight and turned on your TV set and heard Bill Gates say, "I want to say hello to my best friend, Armando Rodriguez from Corpus Christi, Texas." You might be impressed. It is no big deal to say "I chose God, but it is a big deal when others discover that God has chosen you. There are 7.2

billion faces in the crowd and God hand-picked you. Paul continues by stating that God chose us before the foundation of the world. What a wonderful thought. You and I were on God's mind even before He created the heavens and the earth. The Psalmist confirms this point when he states, "His thoughts concerning us are without number."

Blessing Two: Predestined

Paul moves on to a second blessing which we have received from Father. Paul states that "He predestined us." Not only did God choose us, but He did it with a purpose in mind. The word "predestined" can be translated as "**marked out before-hand.**" God set us aside because **He has a divine mission for our life.** You were not "hurled" into this world and left to fend for yourself. The Bible states that Christians have been sent here to carry out a predetermined destiny. **What a wonderful thought.** Obviously, many do not believe this. The popular school of thought states that we are the products of chance. They tell us that we are the result of millions of accidents. One article indicates that we are nothing more than a complex cock roach and that our ancestors crawled out of some primordial pool of slim a few million years ago. I am not making this up: The evolutionist is a pessimist when it comes to the future. G.N. Clark in his inaugural address at Cambridge summed it up when he announced to the graduating class, "There is no secret or plan in history to be discovered." I am glad he was not the speaker at my graduation. The French biographer, Andre Maurois, made a similar comment when he stated, "Who created the universe? Why are we here on this tiny mud heap spinning in infinite space?"

The Christian world-view is more optimistic. We believe human beings have been created by a God who loves us. We were chosen by a God that had us on His mind before the world came into existence. We have received a divine assignment that must be carried out in our lifetime. Do not forget that what we do today will echo into eternity.

What else does this verse tell us? You have been marked out to become a son. In the Roman tradition, a child did not have access to the inheritance of the family until he became a Son. He had to mature before he was entrusted with the family fortune. Today, there are many children in God's family who have not matured. God cannot entrust them with His power. What is God saying, "Grow Up!" If you want to be a channel of His blessing, you have to leave behind all those childish things. If you want to be entrusted with the family fortune, you must stop flirting with sin. There are many children in the church who have never become productive adults.

Blessing Three: Accepted in the Beloved

Paul moves on to share a third blessing we have received from Father. He states, that Father, "**made us accepted in the Beloved.**" **There is only one way to find favor with God.** We must embrace Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, we find a good example of this in Noah's ark. Only those who entered the ark found favor with God and were rescued from the judgment of the flood. Today, it is only those who repent and surrender to Jesus Christ who will find favor with God and will escape the final judgment. Paul states, "You have been accepted."

What can I do to gain God's favor? I have heard many answers to the question such as:

We have to work for God's favor!

We have to be good!

I am accepted because I donated the bell to the church.

The day is coming when we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. We all have an appointment with God. What will we answer if we are asked, “Why should I allow you into my heaven?” Some will say, “I’ve been a good person.” Some will say, “I have kept 6 out of 10 of the commandments or I was baptized and I went to church.”

There is a wonderful song I enjoy singing:

I had a debt I could not pay
You paid a debt you did not owe.
I needed someone to wash away my sins.
And now I sing a brand new song,
amazing grace
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could
never pay.

We do not enter the gates of heaven because of what we do for God; we enter because of what Jesus did for us. All we can do is accept His gift of eternal life and forgiveness.

Concluding Remarks

We have discussed the three blessing Father has granted us. He chose us or hand-picked us. He predestined us – We have a divine mission to carry out. He made us accepted. Remember, it is God’s Word that defines us. God holds us in high regard. Is it any wonder that the angels look upon the believer and marvel?

LESSON THREE

The Blessing of the Son

[Ephesians 1:7-12](#)

In this chapter, we will deal with stanza two of the hymn we are reviewing. The stanza consists of verses 7-12 and focuses on the blessings of Jesus Christ. Once again, this hymn is part of the discipleship program that Paul used to instruct twelve men who in turn changed their world. Today, there are approximately 90 million Christians in Asia because of the power latent in God's Word. The writer to the Hebrews tells us:

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." I believe that we will see wonderful results as we continue to review the content of this epistle.

The second stanza of the hymn deals with four blessings that have come to us in Christ. God's Son has done the following on our behalf.

1. He redeemed us
2. He forgave us
3. He brought us into God's confidence
4. He gave us an inheritance

Blessing One: Redeemed

"In whom we have redemption through his blood..."

What was our condition prior to becoming a Christian? We were in a hopeless and helpless situation. We were criminals in the court of heaven and slaves under the rule of a tyrant. This passage draws a picture of a slave block. The Romans would sell human beings like they sold animals. Slaves were put on a block and sold to the highest bidder. You and I were slaves. Nobody wanted to buy us, but Jesus stepped in and made the purchase. Jesus confirmed that we have value! What was the price of our freedom? It was His blood. He did not offer money for our purchase; He offered His life. This is why the verse says, "We have been redeemed by His blood." There are people in our community that do not know that **Jesus wants to set them free**. They do not know that Jesus wants to **revive, restore** and **change** them. They do not know that Jesus wants to **break the chains that bind** them. We have to tell them!

The Second Blessing: Forgiveness of Sins

"In Him we have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace..."

We have here a second picture of the benefits of redemption. Our life was previously characterized by darkness, emptiness and chaos. Because of sin, we had incurred a great debt before God. We could not pay! **What did Jesus do for us?**

He cleaned us up.

He **cancelled** our **debt**.

He took our sin, our failure, our past and erased it all.

When we stand before God, our invoice will show, “**Paid in Full.**” Forgiveness points to a new beginning.

There are people in this community that do not know that **Jesus would like to cancel their debt**. They do not know that **Jesus would like to give them a new beginning**. We have to tell them.

Blessing Three: He Brought us into His Confidence

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”

Jesus set us free from slavery. He paid with blood. He cleaned us up by forgiving our debt. In this verse, we are able to see that **he has taken us into His confidence**. He has shared His secrets with us. He has made know all His mysteries and has revealed His heart. How many of you know that **Jesus wants to reveal the secrets of His heart?** After He buys and forgives us, He then befriends us.

There are **many people in our community** who are not aware that Jesus wants to **befriend them**. There are many that are not aware that Jesus **wants to share His secrets**. We have to tell them! Jesus wants to gather us together. He wants to bring us into His fold. If you approach Him, He will not reject you.

Blessing Four: He gives us an Inheritance

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

Let’s review for a moment. First, Jesus died for a guilty criminal. (Redeemed) Secondly, he cleans him up. (Forgiveness) Third, he takes him into his confidence. (Reveals His Secrets) Now, in these verses, he shares His inheritance with him. Do you think the criminal deserves all this? It is all grace! It is all mercy! **This is what God offers the human race**. He wants to **set us free** from our slavery. He wants to **erase our sins**. He wants to **share His secrets**. He wants to **make us beneficiaries** of all His wealth and make us His best friend. This is what Jesus has done for us and wants to do for others! **We have to tell them!**

Concluding Remarks

We have discussed the blessings of the Son.

1. He redeemed (bought us – paid with His blood)
2. He forgave us. (erased our sin and failure)

3. He revealed His secret. (eternal plan)
4. He made us beneficiaries. (gave us an inheritance)

Father, we thank you for your great love and mercy. When we were without hope in the world, Jesus reached down and pulled us up. When we were slaves, he set us free. When we had been contaminated by sin, he cleansed us. When we were in poverty, he gave us an inheritance. When we were strangers, he befriended us. Lord Jesus, thank you for these wonderful gifts.

LESSON FOUR

The Blessing of the Holy Spirit

[Ephesians 1:13-14](#)

In this study, we come to the third stanza of the hymn found in the epistle to the Ephesians. This stanza focuses on the Holy Spirit. Our discussion will deal with the three points outlined in these verses.

- a. We have been **sealed**
- b. We have received a **foretaste**
- c. Continued Construction

Before we begin with these three points, I would like to ask the following question: **Who is the Holy Spirit?** He is the third person of the Godhead. The Bible informs us that both the Father and Son have **sent Him from heaven**. The purpose for his coming is to apply and **make real what Jesus has accomplished on our behalf**. Again, the Holy Spirit is a **person**, not an experience. He is not just an “active force.” The Holy Spirit is assigned several titles in the Bible:

He is our Teacher

He is our Guide

He is our Helper

He is our Intercessor

He is our Sanctifier

He is the owner, administrator and the giver of gifts

He writes on the tablets of our heart

He is the Fruit Bearer

He is the gift of God to us

And the list continues

What is the work of the Holy Spirit? What has he come to do?

He strengthens

He unites His people

He fills

He regenerates

He renews

He comforts

He transforms

He seals

He helps

He empowers

He leads us into all truth

He reveals things to come

He bears fruit in and through us

The list continues

Do you see why the Holy Spirit is so important? He is the one that **takes “dull” out of life**. He is the one who **brings meaning and excitement** into our existence. If **the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us**, these are some of the things that **He is ready and willing** to do. The Bible warns us that we are to take care not to **resist, grieve, or quench** the Holy Spirit.

We have read the third stanza of a wonderful hymn. Let’s go to the scripture to review the three blessings of the Holy Spirit as outlined by the apostle Paul.

Blessing One: Sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise”

What does it mean to be sealed? During the time of this epistle, whenever a king would go into the market place, he would wear a ring. If he saw something he liked, he would seal it with the ring and later send a servant to pick up those thing which he had sealed. Whatever the king sealed belonged to him. The seal signified ownership. In this verse, we are told that the **Christian is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**. The **king of kings** has put **His seal upon us**. When He returns, He is only going to gather only those who have been sealed by Him. The seal means that **we belong to God**. **Have we been sealed?** Have we allowed Christ to put the seal of ownership on our life? It is not enough to acknowledge that there is King. We must surrender to Him. In the Bible, it is those who repent and are baptized that are sealed and filled with Holy Spirit. In the Bible, it was those who obey God that are sealed.

What is the blessing in this verse. The Holy Spirit, whom Father promised, wants to seal us. If the Holy Spirit has sealed us, then we belong to God. Paul goes on to deal with the second blessing we have received from the Holy Spirit.

Blessing Two: The Earnest of His Inheritance

What does Paul mean by the word “earnest?” I often visit a coffee shop that sells ice cream. I see people stop by and look at all the flavors. They request a sample. The salesperson looks at the customer and informs him that He can have more. The sample of ice cream is called the earnest. It is a foretaste. Paul tells the Christian, the Holy Spirit is just a down payment of

what is to come. The Holy Spirit is just a foretaste or a sample of all God has in store. There are wonderful implications in this passage. We have been **called to experience the unsearchable riches of Christ** and **be filled** with the **presence** of the Spirit. We have been **called to enjoy the fullness** of God. We have been **called to comprehend and apprehend** God. These are **all samples**. God wants us to **taste heaven on this side of eternity**. We do not have to die to enjoy the bliss of glory, we can taste it now. Listen to the words of the Psalmist David,

“O taste and see that the LORD is good” (Psa. 34:8)

We are **called to experience** the heavenly gift and **partake of his divine nature**.

What blessing is granted us in the passage? Paul tells us: “**After you have tasted all the flavors, remember, they are just a small sample of what awaits you.**” Enjoy **all you can**, but remember, its just a **taste** of what we will **experience throughout eternity**.

Blessing Three: Continuous Work of Sealing

"until the redemption of the purchased possession..." (body)

Paul tells us that the work the Holy Spirit begins in us when we surrender our life to God and continues until the day we are transferred into eternity. This verse paints a beautiful picture of what God intends to do. **God is not satisfied to have general ownership**. He wants to seal every aspect of our life.

I purchased some invisible ink the other day. I put my name on every piece of equipment that belongs to me. I also purchased a special light. When I shine it on the equipment, it makes my name visible. God has put his invisible seal on all those who have surrendered to Christ. How many of you know that everything God touches, he transforms. We are like a book. On the cover, God has placed His seal. **That is just the beginning**. Now, God desires to seal **every page of the book**. God wants ownership of our worship, our relationships, our work, our eyes, our ears and our hands.

I have told you the story of my mother. She has a wonderful problem! One day, she came to my home when I was not there. She mowed the lawn. One time she came and was digging up the flower bed. I have trouble when she comes because she loves to fix things. During her last visit, she painted our kitchen area. She loves to make things beautiful.

This is what the Holy Spirit does when we invite Him into any area of our life – He transforms it! He makes it beautiful. I have learned to say, Come Holy Spirit! Breathe into every area of my life!

Concluding Remarks

We have focused on the blessings of the Holy Spirit. He wants to seal us – **take ownership of our life**. He wants to give us a **taste of eternity**. He wants us to know that His work of sealing will continue until we step into the presence of God. He is inviting us to **taste heaven on this side of eternity**. He wants to give us a **sample of His unsearchable wealth**. **He wants to make us aware that He is present until we exit this life and enter the next**.

Father, thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Help us to surrender to you without reservation. Thank you because the Holy Spirit is present to strengthen, regenerate, renew and empower. Rescue us from all those things that rob us of Your fullness.

LESSON FIVE

Paul's Prayer for Knowledge

[Ephesians 1:18-23](#)

God used a small group of people in order to **change the world**. **Our pray** is that God would **do the same** in and through us. In the last three studies, we covered an ancient hymn that may have been sung by the early church. What was the central message of that hymn? You are so special that the Triune God has purposed to bless us beyond belief. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have spoken some wonderful things about us. We are the apple of God's eye. He is for us. God has good intentions toward us. He is ready and willing to move us to the next level. All that is required is our surrender.

After discussing the blessing of the Triune God, Paul moved on to pray for the church. The content of Paul's prayer reveals that the church had a need to understand three important things:

1. The hope of their calling. (18)
2. Where God has stored His wealth. (18)
3. The exceeding greatness of the His power (19)

These three points will be the focus of this study.

Paul begins this epistle by informing the reader about the recipients of the letter. The believers have:

1. A good vertical relationship (Faith in the Lord)
2. Good horizontal relationships (Love for all the saints)

Paul continuously prays that the Father of glory would reveal Himself to His people (16-17)

In verse 18, we have a specific prayer. The first thing the church must understand is related to the hope of her calling. The **Bible reports that we have been called**. There are several verses that outline our calling. We have been called:

1. **To repentance** (Release your sin)
2. **To salvation** (Embrace God: Receive forgiveness & eternal life)
3. **To sanctification** (Set aside for divine use: Be conformed to his image)
4. **To glory** (Called to display divine reality)
5. **To Accountability** (We will answer to God for our response)

There are two sides to the coin. **If someone calls, there must be a corresponding response**. We will all have to **give an account** for God's call. We have been called to

repentance. Have we obeyed? We have been called **to salvation.** Have we received God's gift? The Bible informs us that "Today is the day of salvation!" Rejection is viewed as open defiance. If we die before acquiring salvation, our defiance becomes the unforgivable sin. We are being called to **"set ourselves aside for divine use."** Stop running. God always gets His man or woman. We are being called **to baptism, membership, ministry** – God is waiting for our response.

"If you hear His voice, **do not harden your heart, do not resist.**"

What happens when we ignore God's call? If it is to repentance or salvation, God may turn us over to a reprobate mind. If it is to service, God may send someone else? God may set us aside. Paul prays that the church would **understand** God's calling to **repentance, salvation, divine service, baptism, membership, accountability etc.** Have we heard God calling? Do not ignore His voice.

Paul continues his prayer regarding the second thing God's people should understand, "I am praying that you would understand where God stores HIS Wealth" (vs. 18)

Paul reveals something wonderful about Christ. He writes that ...

1. In Christ **all fullness dwells**
2. **In Christ are hidden all the treasures** of wisdom and knowledge
3. **God has poured the sum total of Himself into Christ.**
4. **All God's attributes** are in Christ.
5. **All God's power** is present in His Son.
6. **All God's blessing** is present in Christ.
7. **God has deposited all the treasures** of His wealth into Christ.

Now comes the application. (vs. 22-23) Paul states, I want you to understand – **GOD HAS DEPOSITED CHRIST INTO YOU.**

The riches of **HIS INHERITANCE** are now found in the saints – **YOU, ME, THE CHURCH.** When my son Joseph was about 12 years old, he heard me share this with someone. He looked to me and said, "Dad, are we like God's bank?" YES! God has many banks. We are God's safe and treasure-house. Sometimes, we ask God to drop a blessing on us. If we could hear God, He would probably say, You are too late. I have already deposited everything into Christ! **If you want all of God, you must take all of Christ.** Stop looking for something to fall from heaven. All God has is already in you if Christ is indwelling. **NOW, You must allow God's wealth to flow through you.** I have often told the story about the man who lived in abject poverty. When he died, they discovered oil on his land. Was he rich or poor? **He was a rich man who never tapped into the resources of his wealth.** Are we rich or poor? Are we tapping into the wealth God has deposited into us? Paul prays that we would understand the fact that God's riches are in us.

Paul tells the Ephesians, “I have been called to share the unsearchable riches of Christ.” This is our mission as well. When we embrace Christ, God pours unsearchable riches into us.

Paul makes a third request in his prayer,

"I am praying that you understand the power that is at work in you."

God is faithful. He is going to complete the work that He began in us. According to Paul, the **same power** that was at work in Christ when He was raised from the dead is **NOW at work in us**. That power is transforming us into a masterpiece.

Are we submitting to His creative work? Are we cooperating with Him? If we surrender, God will re-create and restore our life. The power at work in us is stronger than death itself. Eternal death will not survive because of resurrection power. Yes, we will sleep – This is what Paul calls death. Death cannot hold resurrection life down. We have to take this **one step further** – the same power that worked in Christ is available to us. **Are we allowing God’s power to flow through us?** Paul is praying that we understand two things here:

1. God’s power is working in us to transform us.
2. God wants His power to flow through us to reform culture
3. Is it flowing?

Conclusion

Paul wants the church to understand 3 things.

1. We are being called by God – Have we heard and are obeying Him?
2. God wants to deposit His wealth in us – Are we receiving and sharing it?
3. God wants His power to operate in and through us. – Is he flowing through us?

LESSON SIX

The Supremacy of Christ

[Ephesians 1:18-23](#)

Paul's first prayer focused on understanding. Sometimes, we rob ourselves of God's best because we have not invested the time to study God's Word with the intent to discover His thought. In our last study Paul prayed that God would grant the Ephesians understanding. In this lesson, Paul focuses on the supreme position that Jesus holds in Father's plan.

Paul outlines the supremacy of Christ as follows:

1. Father raised Jesus from the dead,
2. Father set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.
3. Father set Him above principalities
4. Father set Him above power
5. Father set Him above might
6. Father set Him above dominion
7. Father gave Him a name above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.
8. Father put all things under his feet
9. Father **gave Him** to be head over all thing **to the church**

In these verses, the apostle makes clear that Christ is found at the heart of all God's activity. Not only did Jesus overcome death, but He was also honored by Father for accomplishing the work of redemption. Nothing stands above Jesus. He will be supreme in both this life and the next. Paul points out that Jesus is the universal and supreme Head of the church. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, deacons, elders, etc. are servants of the Head. It is sad to see how easily men usurp the headship of Christ by assuming that they are in control of the church. God forgive us for the sin of pride.

Paul calls the church the body of Christ. The church is one with Christ. It is not a social club. It is comprised of all those who confess Jesus as Lord. We cannot join it; we must be born into it. As believers, we must ensure that we maintain a personal and corporate relationship with Christ. There are two sides to our walk with God. First, we are to be in union with Christ. Second, we must be in fellowship with His church. If we want to reach our divine potential, we must maintain both relationships. I often here people say, I worship God at home. I do not need to meet with the church. I worship God at home and I watch God's people on television. I used to work as a security guard. One night, I went into a giant warehouse about the size of a football field. When I entered, it was pitch black. The other guard turned to me with a small flash light. He turned it on and said, "This is you as an individual. You are the light, but not a very strong one." I could see things in my immediate surrounding, but not much. He then turned on all the

lights in the warehouse . The darkness vanished. He told me, “this is the light of the church.” We need the church. I was able to see every detail. We need God’s people. God makes clear that we are to set aside a day to meet with the church. The writer of the Hebrews warns us,

“Do not neglect gathering with the saints.”

Paul makes clear that we need both the Head and the Body of Christ. We are incomplete without both.

In verse 23, Paul discusses one of the most profound passages in the Bible. He defines the church. Listen to how the Amplified Bible translates this verse:

“[the church] is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself.”

Paul states, the church is the fullness of Him Who fills all in all. I was listening to one of Watchman Nee’s coworkers as he explained this verse. He addressed a room full of theologians and asked, “What is the difference between the riches of Christ and the fullness of Christ? He pointed out that when he came to the United States, he was amazed at the size of our young men. As he travelled across the country, he stated that he was struck by the abundance of food we produced. He realized that our young men were the fullness of America and that our vast abundance was equivalent to the riches of America. He said, when the Young people in America eat the riches of America, they become the fullness of America. When we enjoy and appropriate the riches of Christ in His Word, we become the fullness of Christ. The riches of Christ are found in the Scripture. We must allow the Word of Christ to indwell us richly. We must be nourished by His Word. The Bible is our spiritual food. We cannot become the fullness of Christ if we are not consuming the riches of Christ.

The Bible is clear, Paul points out that Father poured His fulness into Christ. Paul states, “It pleased Father that in Christ should all His fullness dwell. John states, “Of His fullness we have received.” The fullness of Christ has been dispensed into us. Paul states, “We are to become the fullness of Christ.” Paul takes this a step further when he declares that we are now called to dispense the fullness of Christ to others.

Concluding Remarks

We have seen how Paul reveals Christ as supreme in this live and the next. As we assimilate the riches of Christ, we become the fullness of Christ. Are we receiving the Word of God? God has a desire to both fill us and flow through us. Our cooperation is required.

LESSON SEVEN

Our Pre and Post Conversion Condition

[Ephesians 2:1-5](#)

The truth as taught by Paul transformed a group of weak Christians into world changers. How do you think these Christians felt after being told that the **Triune God wanted to bless them beyond belief and deposit all His wealth into them?** What a joy they must have felt when they became aware that the **Creator desired to manifest Himself to and through them?** I think their spirits were stirred when they discovered who they were in Christ.

In this study, we come to chapter two of Paul's epistle. The apostle reminds the Christians about their past. Up to this point, Paul had been unpacking the riches of God's grace. Paul reminds the believers about how important it is to remember the condition from which God rescued them. Many of us can relate to this. We experience God's blessing. God performs the miracle of conversion in our lives and **rescues** us from our hopelessness. He **brings order** into our lives and **fills our emptiness**. He **restores** our vertical and horizontal relationships, but we **then forget that there are others that want to be rescued as well**. We forget that there are others who also want order in their lives. There are others who also want their emptiness filled. We forget to go back to give others a hand.

What does Paul do in this chapter? He reminds the Christians about the past. **Paul reminds them of two important truths.**

1. The Human Dilemma
2. The Divine Solution

These two points will be the focus of our study. **Do we remember our dilemma prior to being rescued by God? Before Christ came into our lives, we were dead.** What was the cause of our death? Paul gives two reasons.

The first cause for our death was **trespasses**. That word means to **slip or fall**. It is used of a man who has **strayed from the right road**. Paul is saying, You were **on the wrong path**. Your life was **headed in the wrong direction**.

The second cause for our death was sins. The word "sins" was **used by the archer** and meant **"to miss the mark."** Paul is informing the believers that we **missed the bull's eye**. We all **fell short of God's intention for our lives**. We were destined for greatness, but instead we chose our own way and failed. In these verses, Paul describes our internal condition. **When Christ is absent, men are dead** to God. When Christ is absent, we do not have the ability to communicate with God.

What does it mean to be "dead" to God? We are like a transistor radio that is out of order. We cannot hear or receive divine radio frequencies. We cannot hear God's frequency. Paul says to the Christians, remember what it was like!

You were on the wrong road

You were aimless

You were dead in your relationship to God

This is bad news. **After describing our internal condition, Paul moves on to deal with the three things that dominated us before Christ came onto the stage of our life.**

The **first thing** that dominated our life is the **course of this world**. These words paint a picture of a **dead leaf** hurled away by the current of a mighty river. Our life was governed by the trends and styles of our culture. We were being molded by the godless system in which we lived. Peer pressure was our master. Now as Christians, we are trend setters. Now, we are **models**.

The **second thing** that dominated our life is the **prince of the power of the air**, Our life was being **governed by God's enemy**. Our life-style reflected his character. Our life was being lead by the spirit of this age.

- * It was a spirit that kills
- * A spirit that steals
- * A spirit that destroys

That spirit that dominated our life destroyed our relationship with God. That spirit stole our inheritance. This is bad news, but it is not all.

There was a **third thing** that dominated our life - our contaminated fallen nature. We were not victims. We chose to follow the corrupt and rotting desires of our flesh. Where did all this lead us? We **became children of disobedience**. We became **children of wrath**. Do you remember? **This was our dilemma until Christ appeared on the scene**. Our story took a turn.

God stepped into the picture. God rescued us from the currents of the raging river. He gave us life. He lifted us up. He revealed and manifested Himself. **What moved Him** to do all this - **HIS LOVE**. **What happened?** God took the initiative to move in our direction. We were not searching for Him, He found us. **Why does Paul want the Christians to remember?** He wants us to go back and **rescue others**. He wants us to **share the divine solution**. He wants us to **introduce the God who can give life, rescue and sustain**.

Concluding Remarks

Today, we have focused on two points. The human dilemma and the divine solution.

Do we remember what it was like to live without Christ? Some of the words that describe our condition might include disorder, emptiness, failure, and sin. What has Christ done for us?

- a. He brought order into our lives
- b. He filled our emptiness
- c. He lifted us up and began the process of transformation

The world is drowning in a raging sea and we have the life raft in our hands. What are we going to do with it?

LESSON EIGHT

God's Initiative

[Ephesians 2:5-10](#)

Paul's God-centered message transformed weak Christians into agents of change. Asia was blessed with a great revival of God's presence and power. We believe that what God did then, He wants to do today. He wants to bless the human race. He wants to renew and restore everything that has been lost when the human race fell. **How is God going to bring about change?** The writer to the Hebrews informs us that

“ The word of God is **living** and **powerful**, and **sharper** than any twoedged sword. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God used His Word to **create the universe and now God** is going to use His Word to **change us!**

Paul begins chapter two with a dark picture of our condition. We were dead in trespasses and sins. Three things dominated us: the currents of this age , the prince of the power of the air and the passions of our old nature. In our reading today, Paul uses a coordinating conjunction to signal good news. Something wonderful has happened. God has revealed His mercy. He has demonstrated His love. Paul shows us a contrast.

Let's review the passages we have read. In verses 1-4, Paul outlines the bad news. In verses 5-10, Paul shares the contrasting good news. In this study, we will focus on God's initiative, work and masterpiece.

God's Initiative

The first thing we discover in these verses is God's initiative. What was our condition before being rescued? We were **unable to contact God**. There was a **death sentence hanging over our head**. We were **enemies of God and slaves to our base nature**. We were **not seeking for Him and were in fact running from Him**.

What does Paul say? God took the initiative. He took the first, second and last step in our direction. We did not chose Him, He chose us. We were dead in sins, yet He made us alive. **He restored our ability to hear His voice**. The first point that Paul makes clear is that God performed:

Paul outlines the process:

1. He made us alive
2. He raised us up
3. He made us sit in heavenly places
4. He will display His riches for ages to come

Paul tells us that Father took the initiative. We are passive recipients of His grace. What did we bring to the relationship?

1. We brought **sin**; He brought **forgiveness**.
2. We brought a **curse**; He brought the **blessing**.
3. We brought **eternal death**; He brought **eternal life**.
4. We brought our **failure**; He brought His **success**.

He did all the work. Our part is to **accept His gift.** Our part is to **surrender.**

Look at verse 8, Paul states that it is by grace that we are saved. What does this mean? God did not save us because of our worthiness. God did not give us the gift of salvation because we paid for it. Paul uses the word grace, “unmerited favor” to describe the source of our salvation. What is he saying? “The gift of salvation belongs to the Lord. Salvation is a free gift from God! Now, what happens after we receive God’s gift?”

God begins a work in us that will transform us into a masterpiece. The word “workmanship” brings two pictures to mind. The **first picture** is one of a potter working a piece of clay. He takes the clay and creates a master-piece. Did you know that **God’s desire is to make our life a master-piece so He can display us to the world?**

The **second picture** we see in this verse is that of a poet creating a poem. Before we come to Christ, we are like a poem that makes no sense. Jesus wants to make our life a beautiful **poem** that reflects God’s heart

After speaking of God’s desire to bless us, Paul then makes it clear that when God is done with us, **there will be no room for boasting.** Verse 10 states that when we become that new person into which we are transformed, **we then have new desires.** We then move to do good works.

Conclusion

We have discussed three points. God’s initiative. We are not waiting for Him. He is waiting for us to surrender. God has done all the work of redemption. God desires to make us a masterpiece and a poem. He wants to take our life and re-create it. He wants to bring meaning to our existence

What are we going to do with His offer? The writer to the Hebrews states:

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

God is offering us power for living. He wants to give us a new beginning. What is our part? - To receive God’s free gift.

LESSON NINE

God's Eternal Plan

[Ephesians 3:1-13](#)

Paul begins this chapter by speaking about his tribulation. **He declares that God is present in his trial.** He makes clear that he is a prisoner of Jesus, not of the Roman Empire. My tribulations are not in vain says Paul. They have produced divine fruit. God does not waste any of the trials we face; He utilizes everything that comes into our lives to produce something positive. He uses the storms we face in two ways:

1. To remove the dross
2. To add things of eternal value

Paul moves on to speak about the Economy of God. We have been assigned a mission to carry out. God has conferred upon us a ministry. Paul calls the ministry an “**Administration of God’s grace.**” The greek word for administration is “economy. It refers to the responsibility of a servant who distributes food to a household. Paul is in essence saying I wait on tables. I am a servant of the economy of God. If Paul is a server, what is on his menu? Paul has only one dish on his menu! He serves the grace and unsearchable riches of Christ. He did not volunteer for this job. God set him aside for the task. He is a minister for the benefit of others.

How did this ministry come to Paul? (vs. 3-5). Paul had a revelation! God revealed His secrets to Him. Paul spoke to us about the mystery in chapter one verse 9. God wants to gather together all things around the main point – even Christ. God wants to sum up all things in Christ. He desires a comprehensive restoration to come about in the person of Jesus Christ.”

Paul writes about the mystery in his letter to the Colossians. Jesus is the mystery of God and the church is the mystery of Christ. ”Paul states,

”Great is the mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. ”

What is all this business about the mystery or the secret of God? God is invisible. Jesus made Him visible. He came into this world as the complete expression, explanation, definition, revelation, and interpretation of God. All God's fullness has been poured into Christ and Father has revealed Himself through him.

Jesus is the second person of the deity and Father’s extension on the earth. He became flesh, lived a human life, died, was buried, rose and ascended into heaven. He is sitting at the right hand of God. As a man, Jesus is now invisible to us. He has therefore established the church. The church is visible. The church is now His fullness (Eph. 2:23) The church is His expression and evidence on the earth. The church is His explanation to the world.

Christ is the expression of the invisible God

The church is the expression of the invisible Christ.

God is going to restore order to the universe through His church.

Let's summarize Paul's idea regarding the secret of God.

- a) Christ is God's secret (God's complete revelation)
- b) The church is Christ's secret (The fullness of Christ)

The church is now dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ to the world. The riches of God's grace have now moved beyond the borders of the Jewish community (6-10) and are now being served to the Gentiles. What was once confined to a race is now available to all the races of the world. We have become coinheritors (vs. 6). We are now members of the royal family. We now participate in the promises of the gospel.

This is God's eternal plan. A comprehensive restoration of all things through Christ. This is the reason God is working in us.

Listen to Paul's words:

I have been called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

God deposited all His fullness into Christ. Christ deposited all His fullness into us. The church now has the task to dispense all the riches of Christ to the world. Would you like to participate in this task? The result of sharing the unsearchable riches of Christ will be the development of a new culture and society. We will see a comprehensive restoration. All creation is waiting. (Rom. 8:22)

The second result of God's economy is that God will reveal his manifold wisdom through His people. Who are the recipients of the wisdom revealed by Christ?

To principalities

To powers in heavenly places (vs. 10)

This is what Paul calls the eternal purpose of God. God's desire is to display His glory and wisdom through us. In Him we have liberty and access with confidence to enter into and enjoy His presence forever.

Conclusion

Father has deposited His fullness into Christ. Father and Son sent us the Holy Spirit and poured out the fullness of Christ into the church. Now the church is pouring out God's wealth into the nations. Father-Son-Holy Spirit have done their part. They have poured out their fullness. We are now charged to share God's wealth in order to bring about a comprehensive restoration of our culture. What a privilege! We have the awesome task of sharing and depositing God's wealth into the nations. It is our great privilege to be allowed to participate in this task.

LESSON TEN

Paul's Prayer for Experience

[Ephesians 3:14-19](#)

I have intentionally and repeatedly stated that the apostle Paul used the content of this book in order to disciple twelve Christians who in turn brought about a great revival in Asia. God manifested His presence and multiple miracles occurred. Multitudes were freed from idolatry and sin.

If God restored a culture 2000 years ago, He can do it again today. The book of Ephesians includes two major divisions. Part one includes the first 3 chapters. They focus on doctrine and things we should understand. Part two includes the last 3 chapters. They focus on our walk and practice. In this study, we will complete part one. Paul utters a second prayer for the believer. In his prayer, Paul makes a request asking God to grant His people five experiences. This will be the focus of our study.

Paul outlines five things that should be present in our life. Paul prays that:

We be strengthened with power

Christ make His home in our heart (17)

We comprehend the vast dimensions of Christ (18)

We experientially know the love of Christ (19)

We be filled with God's fullness (19)

Strengthened with Power:

"16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"

Paul's prayer is that the inner man be strengthened. Why is it necessary that the inner man be strengthened? The last three chapters of this epistle deal with how we ought to live. Paul speaks about husbands, wives, raising children, employees, bosses, weak Christians, the outsider, and Satan. We need the power of the Spirit. In order to successfully deal with the groups outlined above, it is necessary to be strengthened by God in the inner man. How can we be strengthened. The Bible reveals that we are strengthened by God's presence and word. (Job 4:3; Psa 27:14; Isa. 41:10; Phil. 4:14; 1 Pet. 5:10; Daniel 10:18) As we enjoy God's presence and word, we are infused with divine strength. This should be our daily experience.

What happens with the relationships mentioned above when we fail to walk with God? What happens when we begin our day without being strengthened? We run out of fuel and fail. The prerequisite to establishing good relationships is to be strengthened in the inner man.

Christ will Make His Home:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,"

Is Christ an inhabitant or a visitor? Paul speaks to us about the need to allow Christ to have the preeminence in the home of our heart. Paul speaks to us about a Christ who is present, but not prominent. Paul speaks about a Christ who is present, but does not rule because of our independence and rebellion.

What does it mean for Christ to be at home in our heart? There are two ideas that are relevant to this passage. Firstly, we must rid ourselves of all those things in our life that are an offense to God. Secondly, we must welcome all those things that are conducive to growth and strengthen our relationship with God. Christ wants to be Lord of all and every area of our life.

Know all the dimensions of Christ (vs. 18)

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;"

In this passage, Paul is requesting that we be able to apprehend all the vast dimensions of Christ. Paul paints a picture of a diamond with many beautiful facets. God is calling us to appreciate the person of Christ. Do you know Him as the Savior? Do you know Him as King and Lord. Do know Him as Healer, Counselor, Teacher, Light of the World, Prophet, Priest and Lawyer. Do you know Him in all His dimensions? How can we know and experience Christ in all His vast dimensions? We must seek Him in His Word. The Bible is a revelation of Christ. As we study it, we will discover the unsearchable riches of Christ.

To Know the Love of Christ: (vs. 19)

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,"

Christ has demonstrated His love through the work He has accomplished. We were under an eternal death sentence, but he died in our place. We were guilty of sin, yet the innocent Jesus gave His life. Our testimony should be evidence of God's love. Our message to the world includes two points:

Our condition before knowing Christ

Our condition after being introduced to Him

The Christian life is a "life under construction. The Love of Christ was demonstrated when Jesus sacrificed His life for ours.

Be filled with the Fullness of God (19)

"that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

In this passage, Paul again speaks to us about God's desire to fill us with all His fullness. What is the meaning of the Word fullness? It is "the sum total of all God is." God desires to fill and saturate our lives with Himself.

How can we be filled with God's fullness? Paul gives us several examples. We are filled when we"

Speak to one another in fellowship

Sing and make a melody in heart to the Lord

Pray

Read the Word of God

Worship Him

Submit to Him

Submit to one another

Obey God's voice

Conclusion

We have dealt with Paul's prayer and the five things God is ready to grant His people. Paul prays,

Strengthen them with power (16)

Lord, make your home in their heart. (17)

Help them to know and experience all the dimensions of Christ (18)

Help them to know and experience the love of Christ (19)

Filled with Your fulness (19)

Why is this prayer so important? Paul is giving us a list of things for which we ought to pray for each other. I like the way Paul ends his prayer:

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

Paul tells us that God will always answer these prayer. Our very thoughts become a prayer. We may not be able to kneel and direct our pray. We can, however, pray as we walk through our day.

LESSON ELEVEN

Walking Worthy of the Lord

[Ephesians 4:1-8](#)

We have been reviewing the book of Ephesians as a curriculum used by Paul in order to disciple believers. The content of this book was used by Paul in order to bring about revival. We believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. God's desire to revive and renew the world has not changed.

In this study, we turn our attention to how we should live. Paul begins with an exhortation.

" I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. "

We should walk according to the truth we have just learned in the first three chapter. There is a difference between understanding the truth and appropriating it. There are various examples of this in the Bible:

Jesus said to Nicodemus: You must first **understand** and secondly **experience** the new birth.

When the Samaritan woman preached to the crowds, they believe and then after listening to Jesus said,

"We used to believe because of what you said, but now we believe because **we have seen and heard** ourselves."

This principle is present in the work of the Triune God: Father purposed a plan, the Son accomplished that plan and now the Holy Spirit is applying it to the believer. What is our responsibility? Do not become satisfied with gathering religious information. Do not rest until you have experienced what you have come to understand.

We have to be like Jacob when he wrestled with the angel (Gen. 32:26)

"Let me go said the angel because the sun is about to rise! Jacob answered, I will not release you until you bless me."

How can the church appropriate God's fullness? The church has misunderstood the purpose of its meetings! What is the purpose of our church meetings? Jesus said we are to be a house of prayer! The Jews met in the temple for several reasons. They met to seek God's face and hear His voice. What about us? Are we seeking God's face? Do we hear His voice? The Jews gathered in the temple in order to enjoy God's presence! What about us? Do we enjoy His presence? The Jews gathered to confess their sins and start over. What about us? Have we exchange our sin for His forgiveness? The Jews gathered in order to find ways to apply God's Word. What about us? Do we gather to discover ways to apply God's Word to life?

Again, Jacob said, " I will not release you until you bless me." This should be our attitude. Do not become satisfied with understanding. Pray that God will help you appropriate the truth

you are learning. If we appropriate God's truth, God will produce in us what is necessary to live a victorious life.

In verse 1, Paul expects the believer to produce external evidence of internal faith. The following verses reveal the characteristics of the new nature we have received. (vs. 2) Paul describes 4 attributes produced by the Holy Spirit when we surrender to God's working.

The first attribute is humility. This attitude is exemplified throughout Scripture.

Example #1:

Even though Jesus is king of kings, he set aside his position in order to wash the feet of His disciples. He knew they were going to abandon him.

Example #2:

Jesus said, If someone invites you to a feast, sit in the back.

Example #3:

Allow God to promote you. Humility is an attitude that recognizes God's sovereignty and allows God to do justice in relation to our life and work.

The second characteristic is longsuffering. It refers to being considerate even though you have great strength. It focuses on how we are to handle others with care.

Example #1:

Jesus speaks about being wise as serpents and gentle as doves.

Example #2:

Paul speaks about being longsuffering with our husbands, wives and children.

The third characteristic is patience. This refers to supporting the pain and immaturity of others. It refers to an understanding that we are all in a process of transformation. We are under construction. The problem we face with this attribute is that, too often, we want to help the Holy Spirit. We want to do the work of transformation ourselves. We want God to be patient with us, but we are not able to handle others.

Support

The last characteristic that is part of the new nature we have in Christ is the word "support." The focus is on how to lift the weak. We are called to encourage others. It is not enough to be longsuffering when we see the immaturity of others. This word "support" calls us to assist in the development and maturity of others. God calls us to be part of the solution.

If these four characteristics are not present in our life, it is evidence that we are not surrendering to the God's working.

Why are these four attributes necessary?

If these four attributes are not present, it is difficult to have unity. Paul states, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

This verse (3) puts a burden on us to “work at keeping unity”

Listen to the words of David: (Psalms 33:1,3)

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity for there the Lord commands the blessing even life for evermore...

Why do we want to keep and guard unity? God promises blessing and eternal life. God is able to work freely. Where there is no unity, there is no growth or development.

In verses 4-6, Paul reveals the unity present in the Triune God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit have worked together in order to plan, carry out and apply the work of redemption to each believer.

In verse 4, Paul discusses the activity of the Holy Spirit first. He states that there is one body. Here, he is referring to the Church which was born when the Holy Spirit was poured out. There is one Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that is applying God’s plan of redemption to each believer. He states that there is one hope of our calling. As discussed previously, we have been called to repentance; salvation: justification, sanctification and glorification; eternal life, and glory. If God calls, we must respond.

Paul moves on to a discussion about Jesus and states that there is one Lord. He then moves on to one faith. Most agree that this reference to faith deals with a non-negotiable body of teaching that every believer must embrace. Paul also makes reference to one baptism. He does not elaborate regarding the Lordship of Christ, faith or baptism, but there is much to be said about these important doctrines.

In verse 6, Paul makes reference to One Father God. He establishes His supreme place and position in the Godhead. He is above all, through all and in you all. Paul refers to both the transcendence and immanence of God. God is not only above all. Here we see the altogether otherness of God. We see the great gulf between the Creator and His creatures.

Paul then moves from transcendence to immanence. God is in you. Paul brings the eternal, immortal, invisible God into our experience. Even though God is out there, He can be found in each believer. Again, Paul emphasizes the importance of maintaining unity and peace in the church in order to provide believers with an environment that is conducive to growth. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have modeled the unity as they carried out the task of redemption.

In verse 7, Paul reminds the Christian that every believer has received grace. How has this grace come to us? We become recipients of grace when we receive the gift of Christ. In verse 8, we are reminded of the redemptive work of Christ. Jesus ascended – this makes reference to His resurrection. He led captivity captive. Here we find reference to His victory over God’s enemy. After accomplishing His work, Jesus then gave gifts unto men. This idea will be the discussion of our next study.

LESSON TWELVE

Divine Resources for the Work

[Ephesians 4:7-12](#)

We continue our study in the book of Ephesians. Using the content of this book, Paul prepared a group of twelve individuals to become agents of change. Paul and the disciples then ministered a life changing message that transformed all of Asia. God honored His Word and brought about a great revival. We believe that God wants to do the same today. God wants to bless our community. In order for that to happen, we must become familiar with and appropriate the ideas found in the epistle to the Ephesians.

In the previous lesson, we discussed four important attributes that must flow through us so that the unity of the Spirit can be maintained among us. Paul tells us that there must be an external expression of the internal reality. Paul speaks to the believers about:

Humility (Put other first)

Meekness (Be considerate of others)

Patience (Bear the immaturity of others)

Supporting (Lift and encourage the weak)

If we allow these attributes to flow through us, we will demonstrate the kind of unity that draws the world.

Unity brings blessing

Unity brings life forevermore

Unity makes growth possible

The opposite is true as well. When unity is absent, we open the door to the curse of chaos.

Examples:

How many churches have lost the blessing of God because everybody wants to be first. Instead of meekness, we are inconsiderate of others. Instead of patience, we treat others as inferior to us. Instead of supporting the weak, we slander and kill them with our words. Paul tells us that unity is a prerequisite to revival. When it is present among us, the outsider will see God manifested and will respond accordingly.

In this study, we come to verses 7-13. Paul outlines the results of the work of Christ.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (vs. 7)

Every believer has received “charisma”, the gift of Christ. Why has God given us Christ? Initially, he rescued us from self, sin, the world and the devil. After becoming believers, Christ makes us complete.

In verse 8, Paul informs us concerning the work Christ has accomplish in order to make our redemption possible. Christ had to empty himself. He had to leave his throne of glory and become flesh. He lived among us, was crucified, was buried, died, and descended into hades. He became poor so we could be enriched.

When he descended, he completed the work of redemption. He set us free from captivity, paid our debt and rescued us from an eternal death sentence. All this is included in the words “He descended.”

We are also told that He ascended. This word refers to resurrection, ascension, and glorification. Through His ascension, he is applying all His work. The words “descend and ascend” summarize the finished work of Christ. Why did Jesus do all this?

He led captivity captive (8)

He gave gifts to men (8)

NOTE: The Romans would conquer an enemy and parade them through the city court. To show their victory, they would crush the captives’ neck using the heel of their foot. It must have been a horrifying scene to many. Paul seems to link this practice to what has happened to the new believer.

Jesus not only conquered God’s enemy, but also captured us. When he marched us into the square, instead of breaking our neck, he shocked the multitudes and showered us with gifts. Paul informs us that God wants to fill the whole universe with Himself. Jesus begins with the church. He wants to fill us with His presence. He wants to saturate our whole being with His life, nature, power, peace and glory.

How is God going to fill the Universe?

Paul indicates that God has provided five gifts for the purpose of filling the universe with His presence. Paul states the following concerning Christ: (vs. 11)

- 1) He gave some apostles
- 2) He gave some prophets
- 3) He gave some evangelists
- 4) He gave some teachers
- 5) He gave some pastors

Christ will do His work through these five ministry/gifts. (vs. 12) Paul does not provide any detail regarding each of these gifts. He focuses on the results of their ministry. What work

will God carry out through these gifts? Their primary responsibility is to equip the believers so they can in turn do the following:

Do the work of ministry

Build the Body of Christ

Bring the believer to the unity of faith (vs. 13)

Assist the believer to attain to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.

Assist the believer to become mature

Assist the believer to arrive at the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Conclusion

Are we tapping into the ministry of these five wonderful gifts. How do we use them? We must expose ourselves to the ministry of these five gifts in order to become agents of change in the world. These gifts will provide us with the resources necessary to carry out God's work.

LESSON THIRTEEN

The Task of the Ministry/Gifts

[Ephesians 4:11-16](#)

This study will focus on three words that describe the work God will carry out in us when we expose ourselves to the ministry/gifts provided to the church. We will deal with three words: Equipping, participation and edification.

God wants to fill all things with His presence. He has given His church five gifts in order to accomplish this purpose. Those gifts are as follows:

- a. Apostles
- b. Prophets
- c. Evangelists
- d. Pastors
- e. Teachers

God is going to use these gifts to fill us with His presence. The work of filling the universe begins with us! You may ask, "How do I know if God is filling me." Three things will happen. (vs. 12)

You will be equipped

You will become a participant

You will be built with others and become a builder

Paul moves on to inform his readers that the filling is done so we can in turn perfect the saints, do the work of the ministry, and edify the body of Christ.

Equipped

Verse 12 inform us that the ministry/gifts are suppose to equip us. The word equip was used within the context of someone who had a broken bone. A person who is not equipped is like someone with a broken bone. When God equips us, He restores our ability to be productive and carry out His plan. What happens when someone has a broken bone? Depending upon which bone is broken, often the broken bone diminishes productivity.

Spiritually speaking, we have a need to be equipped. We have some broken bones that need to be repaired so we can in turn carry out God's plan. How can I mend my broken bones? Paul indicates that we must expose ourselves to the ministry of God's Word. We must take advantage of the ministry of God's five-fold gifts. The leaders in the church who possess these gifts are responsible for mending broken bones. I take advantage of these gifts by receiving their ministry. I read their books, I actively listen when I hear them speak on radio or television. The more exposure I get, the more productive I become.

Participation

A closer look at the passage under study reveals that God equips us so we can do something! God never prepares us to become observers. God prepares us so we can transform the world. Let's look at the verses again:

"For the perfecting of the saints, **unto the work of the ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

God wants to equip us in order to make us doers. God would like to see us to put our faith to practice and become His channels of life and power. God calls us to do the work of ministry. (vs. 12) A few years ago, I had the opportunity to spend time with K. H Weigh, a co-worker of Watchman Nee. I asked him "Brother, what ministry do you have? His response was enlightening. He pointed out that in the New Testament there is only ministry of the Holy Spirit and that we are all ministers of that one ministry. The work of the Ministry is done by the Holy Spirit through us. What work is the Holy Spirit doing through us? We have defined the work of the ministry as follows:

To glorify God by enjoying Him forever

To introduce Christ to the nations

To disciple believers

To apply God's Word to every area of life

To prepare human beings to become a channel of life

To often, we expect the leaders in our churches to do all the work of ministry. Church leaders are responsible for equipping us so we can in turn do the work of ministry. The fact is that we make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit to become of channel of blessing to others. The leader or pastor cannot do this. This is the work of the whole church.

Build Up

The process is simple. First, God equips us. Second, God makes us participants. Third, God builds us with others. Listen to the verse again:

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying of the body of Christ**:

Paul indicates that the work of ministry will cause us to become equippers ourselves. We do the work of building others up. Paul moves on to discuss the outcome of edifying the church:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

The passages above reveal the outcome of being perfected. Three things ought to happen. Paul states, We will:

Come to the unity of the faith

Come to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.

Experience the fullness of Christ

Paul points out that the blessings of being equipt are not only subjective but also affect our walk. Paul informs us that God's equipping will keep us from becoming like children tossed by every wind of doctrine. We will cease to become slaves to irrelevant things. God will transform us into builders. We will learn to speak the truth in love. In humility, we will give others the preference.

Conclusion

God has a Plan. He has provided us with five wonderful gifts to carry out that plan. If we take advantage of them, God will equip us, make us participants, and transform us into channels of life and power.

LESSON FOURTEEN

The Marks of a True Believer

[Ephesians 4:17-32](#)

When God equips us, we are changed. We become mature. We move out of the childhood stage and learn to speak the truth in love. We become builders. We put our priorities in order. These things are the evidence of God's work in us.

In this study, we will deal with our new life in Christ. What does a Christian look like? What are some of the marks of a true believer? Paul uses contrast to teach in the remainder of this chapter. He paints a picture of a non-Christian and then moves on to show a portrait of a Christian

Two Portraits:

Before being capture by Christ, Paul reveals our condition as a non-believer. He states, before conversion, we...

Lived in the vanity of our mind (17)

Our understanding was darkened (18)

We were alienated from the life of God

We were ignorant

Our heart was blind

We were past feeling (19)

We gave ourselves over to lasciviousness

We worked all uncleanness with greediness

The non Christian in Paul's world-view was a slave to a base fallen nature. His life was out of control and had lost all sense of direction. He was ignorant regarding the things of God and was a stranger to the life of God. The Word of God had not penetrated his heart because it was hardened. His life-style reflected the world and its trends.

Does this way of life appeal to us? Why do you think Paul wrote like this to Christians? Is it possible there were Christians that were dabbling with sin?

- Christians who were **out of control**
- Christians who had **lost their sense of direction**
- Christians that **looked like pagans**
- Christians who **lived like pagans**
- Christians that **lived empty lives**

God has a better way for us exhorted Paul. We have not learned this from Christ. (20) We have **heard Christ** and have been **taught by Him**. The **truth is in Jesus**. (21) The **character** of a Gentile should **not be present in us**. (22) What is the point? **Stop trying** to be a pagan. They operate according to corrupt and deceitful lusts.

A Portrait of the Christian:

Paul moves on to give us a portrait of the Christian. He outlines the characteristics evident in the life of someone who has submitted Himself to God: A Christian is...

Someone whose mind is being renewed (23)

Someone who is being fashioned (under construction) by God in righteousness and true holiness (24)

Paul outlines those behavior that will be evident in the person who has received a new nature. The believer will speak truth. There is no need to lie to each other because we are now family. (25) We can be angry, but do not have to sin. We do not let the sun go down upon our wrath. (26) nor do we give place to the devil. (27) We work with our hands so we can give to those that have need. There is no need to steal! (28)

Paul states that we speak words that build others up and minister grace to the hearer. There is no need for corrupt words to proceed from our mouth. (29) As believers, we do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. It is sealing us until the day of redemption (30)

Paul also informs us about those practices that Christian have put away. (31) They include bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking and malice.

Paul provides the believers with alternatives.

Be kind

Be tenderhearted

Be forgiving because God has forgiven you. (32)

Paul uses contrast in order to reveal the divine transition that has occurred as a result of God's work.

The unbeliever is described as an old creation in Adam. He is called the old man and is said to possess an old nature that is governed by the desires of the flesh

The believer is described as a new creation in Christ. He is called the new man and is said to possess a new nature that is governed by the Spirit and will of God.

Are we living according to the new nature? If we want to experience God's best, it is necessary that we allow God to rule on the throne of our heart. We must be led by the Holy Spirit and governed by God's word. A woman came to me a few months ago in order to complain about her emptiness. She said, you preach about fullness, but where is it? I asked her to walk me through a typical day. She stated,

1. My day begins with the news and breakfast
2. I go to work
3. I return from work and make supper
4. I watch the news, my novelas and then go to sleep

I asked, “when do you read the Bible or have a quiet time in which you can enjoy God’s presence.” Her answer was, “On Sunday.” I rest my case. The Bible recommends that we be strengthened with might in the inner man and be filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. How can we expect to enjoy fullness when we stand outside the circle of fellowship all week? How can we enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ if we neglect the Word of God. The Christian life is a wonderful adventure when we are in union with Christ. It is only then that we draw strength and power for living. In order to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit, it is necessary to walk and be governed by the Spirit. The woman asked me, “What can I do to enjoy God’s fullness? There are several things I do on a daily basis in order to enjoy fullness:

- I enjoy practicing the presence of God
- I read the Word of God daily
- I sing
- I listen to Christian music
- I fellowship with other believers
- I read good Christian books
- I listen to good preaching on the radio

There are other things we can do as well. There is a need to pray that God would restore our motivation to seek His face. Ask God to restore your hunger and thirst for righteousness. Ask Him to give you new desires.

Conclusion

We have discussed the marks of a true believer. God desires that we experience and enjoy His fullness. In short, there are three things that we need in order to maintain a vibrant relationship with God.

1. We need God’s presence (Prayer, thanksgiving, praise)
2. We need God’s Word (Meditation and study)
3. We need God’s People (Fellowship)

LESSON FIFTEEN

Imitate - Prove - Practice

[Ephesians 5:1-21](#)

We have repeatedly stated that God used the content of this book in order to revive the dead and transform Asia. The writer to the Hebrews writes that the Word of God is:

- Living
- Powerful
- Sharper than any two edged sword
- It discerns thoughts and motives of the heart

The Word **has not lost its ability to transform**. This is why we read and study it. God's word **changes us first** and **then flows through us to change the world**. In this study, we will review chapter five. In his book entitled, Sit, Walk, Stand, Watchman Nee divides this epistle into three parts:

- a. **Part one** deals with our relationships with God. (Chapter 1-3)
- b. **Part two** deals with our walk before men (Chapter 4-5)
- c. **Part three** focuses on our stand against the enemy. (Chapter 6)

Paul begins chapter five by indicating how we should live before others. He exhorts believers to do three things:

- Imitate God
- Prove all things
- Be Wise

Imitate God

The **first thing** Paul exhorts the believer to do is to imitate God.

"Be ye therefore followers/imitators of God, as dear children. (1)

How can we imitate God? On the positive side, according to Paul, we imitate Him by walking in love. We love because Christ loved us. How did Jesus demonstrate His love? He gave Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. We imitate God when we give ourselves for others. When we give ourselves, we become a sweet-smelling odor that is pleasing to God.

On the negative side, we imitate God by pushing away certain things from our life! Paul provides us with a list of those things that we are to shun:

- Fornication (pornography)
- Uncleaness

- Covetousness (unrestrained desire)
- Filthiness (immoral conduct)
- Foolish talking
- Jestng

Paul states, "let not these things be named among you, as becometh saints;" Paul makes clear that these sins are not convenient. Along with the exhortation, Paul provides a list of individuals who have adopted a sinful life-style. According to Paul, they will not inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. They are as follows:

- Whoremongers (related to prostitution)
- Unclean persons
- Covetous/idolatrous men

Paul makes clear that we should not be deceived with vain words regarding sinful practices. In fact, it is these practices that bring God's wrath upon the disobedient. We are again warned in verse 7 not to be partakers with those who practice sin. Paul ends his exhortation by providing the believer with a contrast.

Pre-Christian Condition:

- We were darkness

Post-Christian Condition

- We are light in the Lord
- We walk as children of light (8)
- We possess the fruit of the Spirit (9)

Prove all Things

The **second** thing Paul exhorts the believer to do is to prove what is acceptable to the Lord. (10) Paul explains this passage by firstly pointing out what believers should avoid.

"Have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (11)

What is Paul saying? Stay away from bad influences. Works of darkness are unfruitful. They do not add any benefit to your life. If we do not want the devils fruit, we must stay out of his garden. If you see evidence of them among you, reprove them. Paul states that we are to prove all things. We prove all things by the benefit they bring to our walk with God. We should never yield to any good or bad thing that robs us from our relationship with God. Paul moves on to exhort the Ephesians to "Watch their tongue!" Do not glorify sin. It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by the wicked in seeming secret. (12) The truth of the matter is that there are no secrets before God. Paul states,

"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. (13)

Paul ends his discussion about proving all things by challenging the Christians. Wake up if you are asleep. Rise from the dead and Christ shall give you light. (14)

Be Wise

The **third** thing Paul exhorts the believer to do is to be wise.

"Walk circumspectly (prudently), not as fools, but as wise."

How are we to demonstrate our wisdom as we walk before others? Paul provides the reader with examples of the practice of wisdom. (16-21)

1. A wise person **redeems the time**, because the days are evil.
2. A wise person **understands the will of the Lord** (17)
3. A wise person is continuously **filled with the Spirit**
4. A wise person **utters God's word**:
5. A wise person **speaks to himself** with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
6. A wise person is positive and has a **melody in her/her heart**
7. A wise person is **thankful for all things**
8. A wise person **respects others** in the fear of God.

Conclusion

Chapter five deals with how the Christian should live before men? We are not left to guess. Paul makes clear that as believers, we are to practice three important things.

1. Imitate God by loving like Christ loved us
2. Prove all things
3. Practice wisdom

May God help us to practice our faith before men. God calls us not only to understand, but to act. This is why Paul exhorts the believer to imitate, prove and practice.

LESSON SIXTEEN

Relationships #1

[Ephesians 5:22-33](#)

In this lesson, we continue to review the discipleship program used by the apostle Paul to equip twelve men for ministry. As a result of exposure to Paul's teaching, they were instrumental in bringing about a great revival in Asia.

In chapters 4-5, we have been reviewing the question of how we are to live in the world. Paul repeatedly informs us about the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Listen to the way Kenneth Wuest translates the passage, “Be under the complete control of the Holy Spirit.”

To be filled is to be brought under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who provides us with all the equipment necessary to maintain relationships.

In Galatians 5:22, the apostle Paul points out that the Holy Spirit has much to offer when it comes to relationships. The Holy Spirit offers:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Gentleness
- Goodness
- Faith
- Meekness
- Temperance

These are those qualities necessary for any successful relationship. In this study, we continue with the theme of relationships. Paul specifically deals with husbands, wives, children, employees and employers. If we allow the qualities discussed above to flow through us, we will then have success.

Husbands and Wives

Paul begins with the relationship between husbands and wives. Two exhortations are issued to wives:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (22)

“Respect your Husband” (33)

The key words in the exhortation are submit and respect. What does the word “submit” mean? It does not mean to blindly obey. It means to “respond to” your husband. The passage is asking that we maintain a loving relationship. Respond to your husband with love just like you do to the Lord. Pay attention to him. Stop ignoring him. Give him his place. I heard someone

say, "Behind every great man there is a woman rolling her eyes." I know, sometimes the woman must patiently stand by while the man tells his story about the bigger fish. I do not think this passage is asking the wife to grin and bear while her man deceives himself. Paul gives us an example. Listen to his words:

"The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church and the savior of the body. (23)

As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be in everything. (24)

Paul compares the wife to the church and the husband to Christ. Scripture indicates that Christ loved His church so much that He was willing to sacrifice His life in order to save her. Submission to the husband is tied to receiving blessing. God has established a divine government in the husband/wife relationship. Wives are to allow the husband to take the lead in regard to spiritual direction. The woman is to support him as he attempts to lead the family into a path that honors God. We do not believe that a woman should submit to any man who violates her God-given rights. If a man is abusive or requests that his wife break the law, the woman is to refuse. If your man beats you, call the police. The submission that a wife renders to her husband is a willing submission. Paul also uses the word respect. While women may expect and even demand love and affection, men tend to demand respect. Give men their place as spiritual guides of the family. Do not belittle or discourage them when they attempt to lead.

Paul also exhorts husbands to do several things in relation to their wives. Husbands, you must:

- Protect your wife like Christ protects His church (23)
- Love your wife (25) like Christ loves His church
- Make her happy (25) like Christ makes His church happy
- Make her feel special (26) like Christ has done
- Speak wholesome words to her (26) like Christ has done

Husbands, remember, if you are leading your family to walk with God, she is your disciple. You are responsible for her spiritual growth as the head of the household. (27) To those who fail to understand Paul's spiritual explanation, Paul states, In case you don't understand all this,

"Love her like you love yourself."

- You are both one (28)
- Nourish, cherish your wife (29)
- Treat her like a queen!
- Put her before all other relationships

In the remaining verses, Paul reveals the spiritual component related to the relationship between husbands and wives. Paul states,

“this is a great mystery, but I am speaking about Christ and the church.”

The marriage relationship is a shadow of a deeper reality – It points to the love of Christ for His people. The whole Bible is a love story. It begins with a couple - Adam and Eve and ends with a couple - Christ and His bride. The husband/wife relationship is a shadow that points to the profound love of Christ for us.

Christ is our head and we must be subject to Him in everything. Christ is our savior. Christ loves us. Christ gave Himself for us. Christ has set us apart for divine use. Christ has cleansed us through His Word. Christ will present us without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. Christ is nourishing us. All these things point to the unfailing and undying love of Christ for us. He is the model husband. If husbands loved their wives like Christ loves His church, we would have a lot of very happy wives. Paul makes clear that we should remember God’s love for us when we see our spouse.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

Relationships #2

[Ephesians 6:1-9](#)

The book of Ephesians holds so many wonderful secrets for living. Paul used the content of this book to move 12 men from weakness into strength. The recipients of this letter were not only changed, but also became powerful tools of transformation. In the book of Acts, we read...

“... all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:10)

Two things happened when God’s people understood the content of this book:

- They were transformed!
- They became agents of change!

When God **dispenses His life** into us many things change. Paul tells us that **old things pass away and new things come**. We gain **a new life**, receive **new desires**, develop **new attitudes**, and acquire **new abilities**.

- a. We receive **the dynamite power** of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
- b. We receive **the gifts** of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14; Rom. 12)
- c. We also receive **the fruit** of the Spirit (Gal. 5)

Why do we need all these new abilities? We need them so we can successfully maintain **wonderful relationships! We need them:**

- So we can maintain a happy marriage
- So we can be good sons or daughters (1-3)
- So we can be good fathers or mothers (4)
- So we can be good employers (5-8)
- So we can be good employees (9)

God allows relationships so we can learn how to apply our Christianity. Relationships are the school that trains us to become a:

- Light to the world
- Salt to the earth
- Channels of Blessing

What are we saying? Relationships can only be maintained by divine power. In this lesson, we will focus on children, fathers, employees and employers.

Children

The apostle Paul addresses children in relationship to the family. He states,
“Obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” (1)

Parents are God’s representatives to their children. They represent God’s authority and demonstrate God’s love. It is by watching their parents that children learn about God’s character and nature. As believers, we are not only called to be fruitful and multiply. We are also called to model God to them. Obedience to parents is equated to obedience to God. Paul makes this clear when he writes, “Obey them as unto the Lord.” Paul moves on to a second exhortation,

“Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; (2)

What does the word honor mean? It moves beyond respect and carries a practical meaning. We are responsible for the care of our parents. Paul attaches a promise to this responsibility. If we honor our parents, it will be well with us. In general, we will live a longer life on earth. What is the secret of a long life? Obey and honor our parents. God has promised to bless us if we do so.

Fathers / Parents

Paul also speaks about the responsibility of fathers. Paul states,

“Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Paul states, “Bring them up in the **discipline** of the Lord.” Do not allow your children to be tyrants. Do not allow them to be lawless. Set some rules. Be God’s representative to them. Bring them up in the **instruction** of the Lord. Expose them to the Word of God. Ensure they gather with God’s people. Doing these things would probably save many parents a multitude of heartaches.

Employees

Paul also addresses employees or those who have a responsibility to serve. He states,

“Be obedient to your masters as unto Christ. Do it with fear and trembling.”

Why fear and trembling? Our employers, like our parents, represent God. Paul states that we are to serve with singleness of heart. Do not be two faced. (5) Do not obey with eyeservice or as menpleasers. When we go about the business of making a living, we are to serve our employer as if we are serving Christ. This is the will of God. We must do it from the heart. This would revolutionize business. It would make business more productive. The work climate would dramatically improve and we might even enjoy going to work.

People often ask, “What is God’s will for my life?”

Be a good son, daughter, father, mother, employee or employer. Serve with good will. (7) Serve as unto the Lord. Years ago, I worked for a pharmaceutical company. In 4 years, I

received an unheard number of raises. My Secret? I served my employers as if they were representatives of God. Paul states,

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”

God is in charge of the bonuses. God Himself will reward you. Stop worrying about being overlooked.

Employers

Paul also address employers. Paul exhorts employers to stop threatening those who serve them. He reminds them of the fact that their authority is delegated from above. He reminds them that they have a Master in heaven who is aware of their actions. Employers are not above the law. God cares for both the employee and the employer. He is not a respecter of persons. If an employer is abusive to an employee, there are laws that will resolve these issues. If the law does not resolve the issue, God will intervene to make things right. What a man sows, he will also reap.

Conclusion

We are not alone! We possess the power of His Spirit, the gifts of His Spirit and the fruit of His Spirit. God wants us to be happy. He wants us to life the abundant life. It is within the context of relationships that you can practice walking worthy of the Lord. Class is in session every day. What is the secret to sucessessful relationships? Make yours the power, the gifts and fruit of the Spirit!

LESSON EIGHTEEN

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

The book of Ephesians includes two major divisions. The first three chapters deal primarily with doctrine while the last three focus on our walk. The book has been divided into three parts:

Part one emphasizes the word “**sit**.” This part describes our relationship to God. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Father conceived of a redemptive plan, His Son carried it out and the Holy Spirit is applying it to the believer. What do we contribute to the plan of redemption? NOTHING! All we do when it comes to redemption is **sit before God** while He works it out in our lives.

Part two emphasizes the word “**walk**”. It describes our relationship to the human race. How should we live? We are to be governed by God’s Holy Spirit and directed by His Word. We will succeed in our relationships when we appropriate the Holy Spirit’s power, gifts and fruit.

Part three of this book emphasizes the word “**stand**.” It describes our relationship to God’s enemy. How do we battle God’s enemies? This will be the focus of this study.

It is important to remember that Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this letter. It is believed that he may have been chained to two Roman guards. As he observed the soldiers and their armor, he may have been inspired to write about the importance of wearing armor to fight the enemy. There are several lessons we must learn as we face our enemy.

First, Paul begins by discussing the source of our strength. He states,

“Be strong **in the Lord**”

This passage can be translated as be strong in union with the Lord. Apart from union with Christ, there is no strength or victory. We gain victory over our enemy by maintaining a relationship with Christ. Paul states,

“Be strong in the power of **his might**”

Here, Paul discusses the importance of union and then points out that we are strong only in the **power of His might**. We do not battle the enemy using our own strength. A good example of this lesson is found in Luke 10:17,19

Jesus said to His disciples,

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

The seventy disciples returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us **through thy name**.

The disciples had it right. The devils were subject to them through the name of Jesus. They understood that they had no power of their own. The same applies to us. When we battle God's enemy, the power that flows through us is derived from our relationship with Christ. The implications of this truth are profound.

If we walk in sin, we may not have any power available to us in order to do battle against God's enemy. Our strongest weapon against the enemy is to walk in right relationship with God.

The second lesson we must learn deals with the enemy and his plan. If we want to stand against the schemes of the devil, we must understand his strategies. Why does the Bible say the enemy has schemes and strategies? The enemy has several strategies that he intends to use against us. They are as follows:

- To detach us from union with Christ
- To separate us from the flock of God
- To steal God's Word from our heart

Jesus told His disciples, "the devil has come to kill, steal, and destroy" He is willing to do anything to accomplish his goals. Paul moves on to discuss another strategy. The enemy often uses diversion tactics. Paul states,

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood or human opponents."

Human beings are not the enemy. At best, a human being serve as a puppet. It is silly to fight puppets. Our enemy is the one holding the strings. We must deal directly with the enemy. Paul mentions that the enemy has a chain of command. His army includes:

- Principalities - Generals of nations
- Powers - Demons who possess bodies
- Rulers of the darkness - Demons who aspire earthly control
- Spiritual wickedness in high places - Religious demons

Once he explains a few preliminary things about the enemy, Paul then moves on to the armor we must wear in order to battle God's enemy. He states,

"Put on the whole armour of God. This is the only way you are going to stand "(13)

Paul identifies the equipment worn by a Roman soldier. He begins with the soldier's belt of truth. This piece of equipment focuses on truth. In the first three chapters of this book, Paul discussed the importance of knowledge. We must be grounded in the Word of God. We must allow the Word of Christ to richly indwell us. Paul exhorts the brethren that they are to study to show themselves approved. This will serve us well. It will keep us from being tossed to and from by every wind of doctrine. What is the truth? God has a wonderful plan for the human race. He has demonstrated His love by sending His Son to rescue us from the wrath and curse incurred by our sin. He has good intentions. He wants to regenerate, justify, sanctify and glorify

us. He wants to give us a new beginning. If we come into union with Christ, things will fall into their proper place.

Paul moves on to discuss the **Breastplate of righteousness**. (14) This component of the soldier's armor protected the vital organs of the body. The breastplate speaks of our right standing before God. In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul states that there is none righteous. This causes a dilemma because righteousness is required in order to stand before God. Jesus is called the righteous one because He kept the whole law at every point. He was the only man that obeyed God fully. Paul makes clear that Jesus has become our righteousness. We can now stand before God because of what Jesus accomplished through His perfect obedience. The idea of righteousness also speaks to the importance of living according to God's standard. We must move beyond hearing the Word and become doers of the Word. Practicing the Word of God will serve as a breastplate that protects us from the enemy. If we fail to apply God's Word, we leave ourselves open to the attack of the enemy. The breastplate of righteousness speaks to us about sanctification and the need to express divine reality.

Paul moves on to discuss the shoes worn by the soldier. He states,

"Have your **feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace**. (15)

This piece of equipment focuses on the preparation of the gospel. The soldier's shoes included tacks. It provided the soldier with stability as he battled against an enemy. Paul established the importance of the gospel. If we do not know how to share the gospel, we are like the soldier who does not have shoes. We use to be slaves of Satan, but now, through the gospel, we have become soldiers of Christ. Are we prepared to present the gospel? We should train believers regarding the content of the gospel and assist them to communicate it effectively.

Paul moves on to discuss the **shield of faith**. This piece of equipment focuses on faith. The soldier's shield was the size of a door. It was extremely important because it protected the soldier from the arrows and fiery darts that were hurled by the enemy. Our faith in God will protect us. Without faith, we are like a soldier without a shield. Paul informs us that faith comes by hearing God's Word. The greater our faith, the bigger our shield. Our spiritual diet should include a healthy dose of God's word on a daily basis.

Paul moves to discuss the **the helmet of salvation**. This piece of equipment focuses on salvation. The helmet protects the head. The word salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Our salvation is of the Lord. We are confident in God's provision. Our salvation is secured by God from beginning to end.

Paul moves to discuss **the sword of the Spirit**. This piece of equipment focuses on the Word of God. Paul indicates that the weapon we use to destroy the enemy is God's Word. (17) Jesus taught us how to do this. When he was under attack by the devil, Jesus was able to apply Scripture to each test He faced. He repeatedly stated, "It is written ..." The Bible is not only our rule of faith, but a sword we use to fight off the enemy. We must study to show ourselves approved. We must learn to apply its principles to every area of life and every domain of knowledge.

Paul completes his description of the equipment worn by a soldier by highlighting the importance of **prayer**. (18) Paul mentions that prayer should be made at all times, in the Spirit,

with all perseverance and for all saints. In his book entitled, Let Us Pray, Watchman Nee points out that prayer is like a railroad track. Nee states, "God is like the engine that can move the train 1000 miles a day. Our prayers are like the railroad tracks. We must lay out tracks in the direction we want God to move." We are co-laborers with God. Prayer is not what prepares us for the work. Prayer is the work.

Conclusion:

In this book, we have had the opportunity to review the curriculum Paul used in order to disciple a group of 12 men. God used the content of this program in order to bring about a great revival in Asia. Lives were transformed. What was the content of Paul's curriculum - The book of Ephesians. We believe that what God did 2,000 years ago, He is willing and ready to do today. What caused 12 incomplete and weak Christians to become agents of change? It was none other than the Word of God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

+++

INTRODUCTION #1

Acts 19:1-7

- 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,
- 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
- 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
- 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
- 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
- 7 And all the men were about twelve.

INTRODUCTION #2

Acts 19:8-10

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

LESSON ONE

Ephesians 1:1-3

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

LESSON TWO

Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

LESSON THREE

Ephesians 1:7-12

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

LESSON FOUR

Ephesians 1:13-14

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

LESSON FIVE

Ephesians 1:18-19

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

LESSON SIX

Ephesians 1:20-23

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

LESSON SEVEN

Ephesians 2:1-5

- 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
- 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
- 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

LESSON EIGHT

Ephesians 2:5-10

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

LESSON NINE

Ephesians 3:1-13

- 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
- 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
- 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
- 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
- 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
- 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
- 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
- 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
- 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
- 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
- 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
- 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
- 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

LESSON TEN

Ephesians 3:14-19

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

LESSON ELEVEN

Ephesians 4:1-8

- 1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
- 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
- 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
- 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
- 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
- 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
- 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

LESSON TWELVE

Ephesians 4:7-12

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

LESSON THIRTEEN

Ephesians 4:11-16

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

LESSON FOURTEEN

Ephesians 4:17-32

- 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
- 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
- 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- 20 But ye have not so learned Christ;
- 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
- 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
- 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
- 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
- 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- 27 Neither give place to the devil.
- 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
- 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
- 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
- 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
- 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

LESSON FIFTEEN

Ephesians 5:1-21

- 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
- 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
- 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
- 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
- 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- 13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
- 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
- 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
- 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
- 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

LESSON SIXTEEN

Ephesians 5:22-33

- 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
- 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
- 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
- 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
- 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
- 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
- 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
- 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
- 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
- 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
- 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

Ephesians 6:1-9

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- 2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;
- 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
- 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
- 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;
- 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:
- 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
- 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

LESSON EIGHTEEN

Ephsians 6:10-24

- 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
- 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
- 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
- 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
- 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
- 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:
- 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.
- 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

OTHER BOOKS AND QUICK READS

BOOKS

The Narratives of Christ (Gospel)
Is God Speaking? (Minor Prophets)
God's Life-Changing Curriculum (An Agent of Change)
Worship (In the New Testament)

QUICK-READS

The Authority of the Believer
Transforming Power
Redeemed from the Curse (Entitled to the Blessing)
Emotional Intelligence (Models: A Brief Review)
Why He Came
The Kingdom (13 Parables)
Divine Transition
Divine Expectation
Unclaimed Wealth
Times of Refreshing
Unlocking God's Diary
The House of James
The Will of God (In James)
The Pure Gospel (Galatians)
Paul's Vision of God (Ephesians)
The Journey

For a free book, send me an email:
arrodriguez1new@gmail.com