

Ephesians. The Identity of the Church that Overcomes.

Part 14: Knowing God with Our Hearts

Houses of Light Church • October 27, 2024 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

Focus: Ephesians 1:17

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him..." **Ephesians**

1:16-17

I. Our God and Father

- A. Paul is praying to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." If God were not the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, He would be our enemy (Romans 5:10). Through His sacrifice, Jesus Christ made a way for sinners to receive forgiveness and now God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our God and Father.
John 20:17 — *Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*
- B. Paul rightfully calls him "the Father of glory," because the Father has shown us His glory in verses 1:3-14. Paul is hoping we **see and respond to this glory!** The Father is full of glory and the source of all glory, but the big question today is: **do you see the glory?**
- C. The Father wants us to see His glory in the three areas Paul prays for in Ephesians 1:18-19: (1) The hope to which we have been called; (2) the riches of His inheritance in us, and (3) immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe. Glory is the essence of both our hope and the power that raised Christ from the dead.
Romans 5:2 — *"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*
Titus 2:13 — *"...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."*
- D. There is none better than the Father of Glory to grant us the spirit of wisdom and revelation and enlighten the eyes of our hearts to see all of the riches of His glory.

II. Receiving revelation to know God

Ephesians 1:17 — *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him..."*

- A. Paul is praying for this and when he says "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" he is referring to the Holy Spirit. He is the one who makes space in our hearts and allows us to be receptive to divine revelation and the ability to be filled with the knowledge of God. This is not just head knowledge, because even demons had knowledge of the truth (beyond what even the Pharisees and Sadducees knew) but they did not worship Christ.
Luke 4:33-34 — *And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God."*
- B. **Knowledge of God that does not turn into worship and obedience is just information.** Paul states that there were people who had known God but their minds had become vain:
Romans 1:21 — *"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*
- C. "Knowing" in the Bible sometimes refers to a kind of relationship with a person that is similar to having the kind sexual intimacy that occurs in marriage. This kind "knowing" only comes from **a deep relationship filled with love, covenant, affection, and delight.**
Genesis 4:1 — *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord."*
- D. This kind of intimate knowledge can be applied to God in His relationship with us as His people.

Hosea 2:19-20 — “*And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. 20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.*”

- E. What God is saying is that **there is a deep way to know Him** as a husband knows his wife, in a union that is intimate, pleasing, significant, and beautiful. Eternal life is this kind of knowledge of God and that’s how we know it starts now not just when we die.

John 17:3 — “*And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*”

III. Experiencing the true Knowledge of God

- A. We need *revelation* in order to move beyond ignorance and into truly knowing God. This is why we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation! The Holy Spirit makes our spirit sensitive to embrace divine revelation just like God promised His people:

Jeremiah 24:7 — “*I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.*”

- B. This has to happen in every human heart. If God does not do it through Jesus and the Holy Spirit is not poured out, we will not know the glory of God and if we do not see and perceive and enjoy the beauty and greatness of who God is, we will not be able to praise His glory. This is very important because everything in the Christian life comes to us through the knowledge of God.

2 Peter 1:3 — “*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...”*

- C. If we don’t have knowledge we will not be able to live a Christian life. If we are going to know God we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened.

Ephesians 1:18 — “*...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..”*

- D. Our physical eyes are for seeing reality and not stumbling. We need eyes to see what is in front of us. In this passage Paul does not say ‘eyes of the head’ but of the heart. The heart is more than thoughts, it also refers to affections, preferences and feelings. The heart includes our souls, it is what is at the center of our being.

Ephesians 5:19 — “*...addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart...”*

- E. The eyes of the heart see the reality of God’s worth, beauty, and greatness and then respond to the glorious divine reality with praise. This is the kind of sight that the demons and the Pharisees did not have because they saw Him physically but did not realize who He really was. If the heart is not enlightened it is because we are in darkness regarding the knowledge of God and do not know who He really is.

IV. Overcoming the hardness of the heart

Ephesians 4:17-18 — “*Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*”

- A. What lies underneath this darkness and ignorance is a hardness of the heart. We can hear about God all day long and even write an essay about who God is but still not know His worth, beauty or greatness because we are in darkness. So if there is to be understanding—true knowledge of God, this hardness of heart must be overcome.

Romans 1:28 — “*And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*”

- B. **Hardness is an inflexible preference.** It is choosing not to know God for who He really is. What happens is that we have decided not to see Him as glorious, nor beautiful, nor full of authority. We made up our minds about who He is and choose to stay there instead of receiving a revelation of the truth (even if it contradicts what we thought or were comfortable with).

Romans 1:21-23 — “*For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise,*

they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”

- C. Throughout history, human beings have wanted and desired to have images before them, and they have rejoiced in having them. This did not happen because of ignorance, humanity has always wanted what we want and what we think will make us happy.
Matthew 13:14-15 — *Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ““You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” 15 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.”*
- D. What is the solution? How are the eyes of our hearts enlightened? How is it that the light of the value, beauty, and greatness of knowing God will really overflow in our hearts to make us new people, excited to know God? The answer is God shining in our hearts: *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6*
- E. By His grace, God enlightens the eyes of our hearts and then He can shine forth in the knowledge of His beauty, value, and greatness. This is something we need time and time again because our hearts tend to stray constantly. This is why Paul “did not cease” to pray for this important issue, and why we also ought to pray this over ourselves and those around us.

Wandering is not the problem, it is when we choose to remain in what we think we know that we get lost. This is why Paul’s prayer ought also to be our prayer consistently. It takes God to love God, to know Him, and remain in Him.

*“... Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
... Prone to wander, Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
... Here's my heart Lord, take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above”*
- “Come Thou Fount” by Robert Robinson

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Are you excited to grow in the knowledge of God? explain why or why not?**
- 2. What’s in the way of you choosing to grow in the knowledge of God? Ask for prayer in your friendship group, pray for one another.**

Announcements:

1. This Thursday, October 31st, we have our family festival, Hallelujah Night! See you there at 4:30 PM!
2. We have baptism preparation class Monday, November 11 at 7:00 p.m. in Building 2. For more information, or to sign up, email us at hello@housesoflight.org.
3. Log on to housesoflight.church to access teaching notes, videos, sign up for friendship groups, and get updates on all our upcoming events!