

Ephesians: Fullness – Pray Until You See

Dr. John Carmichael

[Eph 1:15-23 NASB95] 15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which [exists] among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention [of you] in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. [These are] in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly [places,] 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- In the video, Kenneth Hagin told Mark Hankins to pray this prayer to activate the blessing of God mentioned in the first part of the chapter.
- Sunday, we celebrated what God has already accomplished for us in Christ. Paul declared that we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, given an inheritance, and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3–14).
- It is striking that when Paul finishes describing these incredible blessings, he does not pray for more blessings. Instead, he prays that believers would actually see, understand, and experience the blessings they already possess.
- Many Christians live like spiritual millionaires who have never opened the inheritance left to them. They possess riches they never enjoy, authority they never exercise, and power they never appropriate.
- Paul teaches that the greatest need of the church is not necessarily more from God, but greater revelation of what God has already given.
- As one commentary observes, Ephesians 1:15–23 moves intentionally from praise to prayer. After celebrating God's blessings, Paul immediately prays that believers would experience the fullness of those blessings through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit open our eyes so we can experience everything God has already provided in Christ?

Paul answers this question by showing us four realities that every Spirit-filled believer must pursue if they are going to live in the fullness of Christ.

I. Pray for the Revelation of God's Person (vv. 15–17)

- a. Paul begins with thanksgiving. He thanks God for two evidences of genuine Christianity: Their faith in Christ. Their love for all the saints
- b. Notice that maturity did not eliminate Paul's prayers for them.
- c. Paul's priority
 - i. He does not pray: for easier circumstances, greater finances, fewer persecutions, or even more spiritual gifts.
 - ii. He prays they would know God better.
- d. The Greek word for "knowledge" (epignōsis) speaks of deep, personal, experiential knowledge, not merely information. One commentary emphasizes that Paul is praying

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not for facts about God but for intimate knowledge of God Himself through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- e. The Holy Spirit is more than the One who brings us to salvation.
- f. He is also: the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of revelation, the Spirit who continually unveils Christ.
- g. The same Spirit who inspired Scripture now illuminates Scripture. Revelation never replaces the Bible. The Holy Spirit reveals what has already been revealed in God's Word.
- h. Application: Many believers know doctrines. Far fewer know God deeply. The goal of Pentecost is not merely powerful experiences. It is intimate fellowship with Jesus.

II. Pray for the Illumination of God's Promises (v. 18)

- a. Paul uses an unusual phrase. The heart has eyes.
- b. You can have: perfect physical vision, excellent education, theological knowledge, and still be spiritually blind.
- c. Only the Holy Spirit can enlighten the inner person.
- d. Paul specifically prays they understand three realities.
 - i. The Hope of His Calling - Hope is not wishful thinking. It is confident expectation.
 - 1. We remember: where God found us, what He is making us, where we are going.
 - 2. Our calling began in election, continues in sanctification, and will culminate in glorification.
 - ii. The Riches of His Inheritance - Paul says His inheritance in the saints. Remarkably, Paul is not simply saying we receive an inheritance.
 - 1. He is saying we are God's treasured inheritance.
 - 2. The redeemed Church is God's prized possession.
 - 3. Imagine what this meant for Gentile believers who once felt like outsiders.
 - 4. God delights in His people.
 - iii. The Greatness of His Power - Paul stacks word upon word describing God's power.
 - 1. One commentary notes that he uses multiple Greek terms (dynamis, energeia, kratos, and ischys) to emphasize the immeasurable greatness of God's power available to believers.
 - 2. This is not weak religion. This is resurrection power.
- e. Application: We should never settle for merely believing biblical truths. We should pray until those truths become living realities. The baptism and continual fullness of the Holy Spirit awaken spiritual vision.

III. Trust the Demonstration of God's Power (vv. 19–21)

- a. Paul now gives the proof of God's power. He points to Jesus.
- b. God's power: raised Christ, exalted Christ, enthroned Christ.
- c. The resurrection is God's greatest demonstration of power.
- d. If God's power can conquer death... it can conquer: addiction, fear, bitterness, shame, hopelessness, spiritual oppression.
- e. Notice the progression: God did not merely raise Jesus. He seated Him. The resurrection proves His life. The ascension proves His Lordship.
- f. Christ is Above Every Power
- g. Paul lists: rule, authority, power, dominion
- h. This language would have spoken directly to believers living in Ephesus, a city known for magic, occult practices, and fear of spiritual powers. Paul reminds them—and us—that every spiritual force is beneath Christ's authority.

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- i. Application: Because Christ reigns above every principality: we do not minister from fear, we minister from victory. We engage spiritual warfare from Christ's authority, not our own strength.

IV. Live Under Christ's Authority (vv. 22–23)

- a. Paul concludes with an astonishing truth.
 - b. Christ is: Head over everything for the Church.
 - c. The Church is not powerless. The Church is connected to the Head. The authority of the Head flows to His Body.
 - d. One commentary beautifully summarizes Paul's point: the same power that raised Christ, exalted Him, and seated Him above all things is now active in His Church because believers are united with Him.
 - e. The Church is His Body. We are: His hands, His feet, His voice, His visible presence in the earth.
 - f. Christ fills everything. Yet Paul says His fullness is displayed through His Church. This is not because the Church is perfect. It is because Christ lives within His people.
 - g. Application: The world should not merely hear that Jesus is alive. They should encounter His life through His Church. The gifts of the Spirit, supernatural prayer, healing, deliverance, prophetic ministry, evangelism, compassion, holiness, and unity all reveal the living Christ.
- **The Christian life reaches its fullness when the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to know God's Person, God's promises, God's power, and Christ's supreme authority through prayer.**
 - Paul never tells the Ephesians to seek another blessing before learning to enjoy the ones they already possess.
 - Instead he prays: "Lord... Open their eyes."
 - Open their eyes to: their hope, their inheritance, their power, and Christ's authority.