

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

How to live the Christian life

EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 2
“Blessed, We Bless” - Ephesians 1:1-14 (focus v.3)

“¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹²that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” – Ephesians 1:1-14 (NKJV)

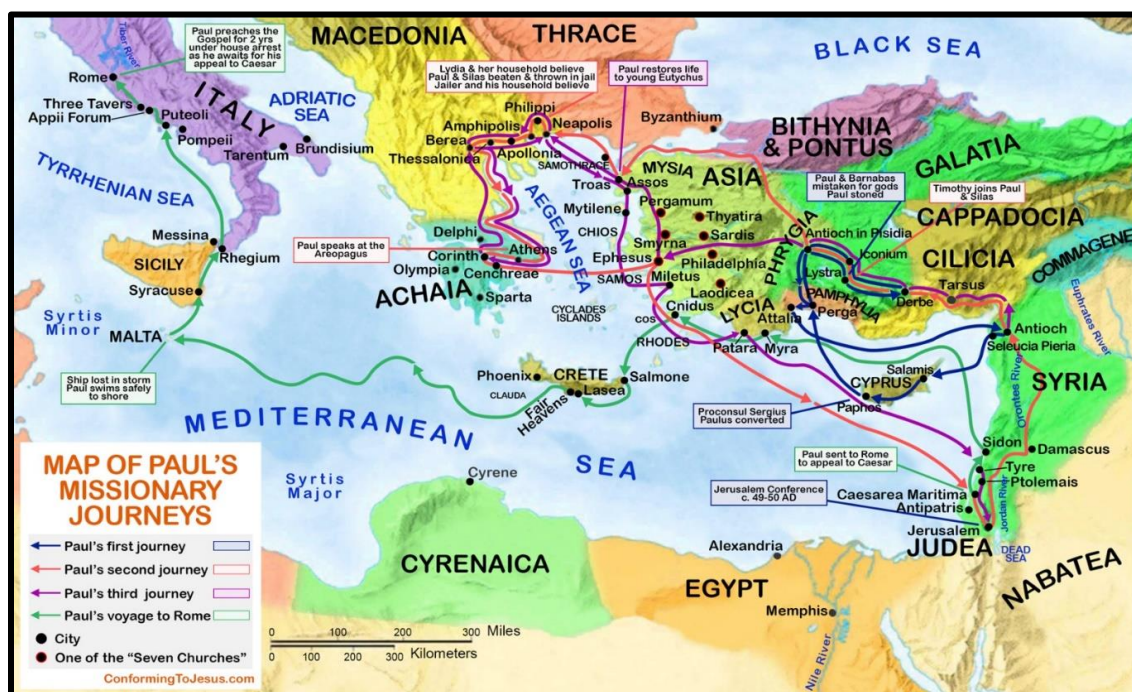
If you could buy a book that contained a concentration of a lifetime of thinking and experience on spiritual matters by one of the greatest Christian leaders of all time, would you do it? Would you read it and study it and try to plumb the depths of its wisdom? What

about if you could read aloud all six chapters of the book in only 19 minutes? I'm speaking about Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

- Even though Ephesians is so short, **Martyn Lloyd-Jones'** exposition of it takes eight volumes! He has 37 messages on chapter 1 alone!
- **John Calvin's** 48 sermons on Ephesians take up 705 pages.
- The **Puritan William Gurnall** in *The Christian in Complete Armor* takes almost 1,200 pages to expound on Ephesians 6:10-20!

So there is far more depth in this short epistle than I can begin to understand or apply to my own life, much less to expound on. So as we come to it, we must pray with the apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:17-19), ... *"¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may 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 exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."*

- The English poet, **Samuel Coleridge**, said that *"Ephesians is the divinest composition of man."*
- Another writer refers to it as, *"Ephesians is the Grand Canyon of Scripture, because it is breathtakingly beautiful and apparently inexhaustible to the one who wants to take it in"* (cited by, James Boice, *Ephesians* [Baker], p. 1).
- **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** calls Ephesians *"Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of the gospel."* (*God's Ultimate Purpose* [Baker], p. 12).



KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EPHESIANS

To gain a better understanding of the Book of Ephesians, consider the following background information:

1. **Authorship: The Apostle Paul** - Traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul.
2. **Date of Writing: A.D. 60-63** - Likely written around A.D. 60-63 during Paul's Roman imprisonment.
3. **Place of writing: Rome** – Paul wrote the book/letter of Ephesians from a Roman prison
4. **Audience: Ephesian Christians at Ephesus and surrounding area** Addressed to the Christian community in Ephesus, a major city in Asia Minor. Ephesians is considered a “circular letter” meant to be circulated to church in the area of Ephesus... possibly the same 7 churches
5. **Purpose: How to live the Christian life** To strengthen the faith of believers and address issues of unity and spiritual maturity.
6. **Themes: Grace, the church, and holy living** - Key themes include grace, the church as the body of Christ, and the importance of living a holy life.
7. **Structure: Ephesus is divided into two main sections** - Divided into two main sections: doctrinal teachings (chapters 1-3) and practical applications (chapters 4-6).
8. **Cultural Context: Ephesus was center of commerce and religion** - Ephesus was a center of commerce and religion, known for the Temple of Artemis.
9. **Significance: Mystery of the gospel and inclusion of Gentiles** - Emphasizes the mystery of the Gospel and the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan.
10. **Spiritual Warfare: Ephesians’ emphasis on the spiritual battle** Concludes with a call to spiritual readiness and the armor of God (chapter 6).

Ephesians has had a lasting impact on Christian theology and ecclesiology.

Share your favorite verse/passage from Ephesians: Take a few minutes and look through the book of Ephesians and share your favorite Bible verse from Ephesians and share why that verse/passage is your favorite.

- **Ephesians 1:3**, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."*
- **Ephesians 2:8-10**, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*
- **Ephesians 3:20-21**, *“²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”*
- **Ephesians 4:4-6**, *"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

- **Ephesians 6:10-11**, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

"¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." – Ephesians 1:1-3 (NKJV)

I read recently of a treasure-hunting company that found a sunken galleon (ship) with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of coins. Of course, no sooner had they announced their find than some government claimed that the treasure really belonged to them, not to the finders. But, I've often thought that searching for lost treasures would be a fun job.

The Christian life is really a treasure hunt as you progressively discover the vast wealth that already is yours because you are now in Christ. From the moment He saves you, God gives you, as Paul puts it, *"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."* Verse 3 is the opening topic phrase of a long sentence (in Greek) that runs down through verse 14. Some Greek scholars have called it one of the most complex Greek sentences in the entire Bible to sort out, as Paul piles phrase upon phrase to explain what some of those spiritual blessings are.

Throughout eternity we will go on discovering the riches of God's grace, which He lavished upon us (1:7-8). We are spiritually rich in Christ beyond our capacity to imagine. One of the most important things for your spiritual growth is to ask God to open the eyes of your heart so that you will know "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (1:18).

But, why does God lavish His blessings upon us? Is it all about us or is it about Him? One of the most important truths in Scripture to grasp is that God is passionate about His glory. John Piper explains this in many of his books, but especially in *God's Passion for His Glory* [Crossway Books], half of which is a reproduction of Jonathan Edwards' treatise, "The End for Which God Created the World." It is *not* an easy book to read (I have read it twice now), but it is worth grappling with! Edwards argues that "Because God is infinitely perfect, He *must* seek His own glory, because to seek the glory of any being or thing less perfect than God would be sin." For any creature, self-glorification is sin. But, because God is infinitely perfect, He would be unrighteous if He did *not* glory in that which is perfect, namely, in Himself.

➤ John Piper says, "The deepest longing of the human heart is to know and enjoy the glory of God. We were made for this." ... for His glory

So, why does God bless us with every spiritual blessing in Christ? It is so that we may in turn bless and glorify Him, the giver of every good and perfect gift. Blessed by God, we bless God.

KEY THOUGHT: *Because God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, we should bless God.*

To bless God as we should, we need to understand how He has blessed us.

GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

Paul will unpack that idea in Ephesians 1:4-14, but today we will just seek to understand and apply **verse 3**. Notice **verse 3**, “³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*”

Ephesians 1:3 says that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. What are these spiritual blessings, and what do they do for us? Contrary to some beliefs, they are not some mysterious power or cosmic connection reserved for a select few. They are the key benefits of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

What are the spiritual blessings of a Christian? *Take a few moments and write in space below what you believe is greatest spiritual blessing of Christian and why you believe that is the greatest spiritual blessing of a Christian. Be prepared to defend/explain you answer.*

READ: Romans 5:1-5

“¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” – Romans 5:1-5 (NKJV)

Spiritual Blessings of a Believers in Romans 5:1-5:

- (1) **Peace**
- (2) **Access**
- (3) **Grace**
- (4) **Joy**
- (5) **Hope**
- (6) **Perseverance**

(7) Love**(8) Holy Spirit**

The word “*blessing*” in Ephesians 1:3 is a translation of the Greek word “*eulogy*,” and it means “to speak well of.” Since God is the one acting in this verse, we can say that God has spoken good things about us, or pronounced good things for our benefit. The good things that God has decreed for us are probably beyond our ability to number, but we can outline a few by looking at the verses that follow the statement (Ephesians 1:4–14). This study is focusing primarily on verse 3, and next week we will get into verses 4-14, but let's take just a brief glance at the spiritual blessing that are mentioned in verses 4-14 and next time we will explore these a little deeper...

READ: Ephesians 1:3-14**Spiritual Blessing of Believers in Ephesians 1:3-14:**

- (1) **Election** - The first blessing listed is the election as saints. Ephesians 1:4 says that He has “*chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*” God has chosen to make us holy and blameless, and all because of His love, His good pleasure, and His grace (verses 5–6). What a blessing, that “*even when we were dead in sins*” (Ephesians 2:5), God chose to extend His grace to us and offer us salvation. This is even more amazing when we realize that He made that decision before sin even entered into the world.
- (2) **Adoption** - The second blessing listed is found in **verse 5**—our adoption as His children. Not only has God chosen us to be made holy, but He grants us full status as His children, with all the benefits thereof. John 1:12 says, “*As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*” When we believe the gospel, we receive full access to the Father, able to call out to Him as His children.
- (3) **Acceptance** - The third spiritual blessing is in **verse 6**, where we are made “*accepted in the beloved.*” The word is related to grace and gives the idea of making us graceful or favorable through Christ, the beloved of God. When we put on Christ, the Father sees His loveliness when He looks at us. The blood of Christ has taken away the guilt of our sins, and we stand before the Father as perfectly accepted.
- (4) **Redemption** - This leads us right into the fourth blessing (Ephesians 1:7), the redemption through His blood. Redemption speaks of buying one’s freedom, paying a ransom. The price for our sins, the payment to buy us out of eternal condemnation, was fully paid by the blood of Christ. In Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin, but we become slaves to God. Since we are bought and paid for by His blood, we have an obligation to glorify God in our body and spirit (1 Corinthians 6:20).
- (5) **Forgiveness** - Verse 7 also describes the fifth blessing, the forgiveness of sins. It is closely related to redemption, but looks at the other side of the coin. In paying the ransom

for our sins, the debt of sin was canceled, and we were forgiven. We no longer have the burden of guilt for violating God's holy laws.

- (6) **Knowledge** - The sixth spiritual blessing listed is knowing the mystery of His will (Ephesians 1:8–10). **God has given us wisdom and insight through His Word and has shown us His desire to bring all things together to glorify Christ.** Since all of creation was made by Him and is for His good pleasure (Revelation 4:11), the consummation of His plan is when everything and everyone is brought in line to glorify Him. By aligning ourselves with Him by faith, we become part of His perfect plan and purpose.
- (7) **Inheritance** - Verse 11 says that another blessing is the inheritance that is given to us through Christ. What is included in that inheritance? ***“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”*** (1 Corinthians 2:9). The riches of glory, the presence of God, the eternal home – these don't even scratch the surface of all the blessings that belong to our inheritance.
- (8) **Sealing** - Another blessing is found in Ephesians 1:13, which is the sealing of the Holy Spirit. When we become God's children, He places His mark of ownership on us, guaranteeing our eternal security. This is spoken of as the down-payment of our full redemption, to hold us until the day Christ brings us to Him.

The list could go on and on speaking of the privileges that are ours in Christ.

- We are laborers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
- We are ambassadors bringing the message of reconciliation to a foreign land (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- We are the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2).
- We have available to us the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7)
- We the assurance that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).

How do we access all of these blessings? They are readily accessible to everyone who is in Christ Jesus. The way to be in Christ is to repent, or turn away from our sins (Acts 17:30), confessing to God that we are sinners (Proverbs 28:13; Romans 10:9). When we believe that Christ died to take our punishment and now lives to give us new life (1 Corinthians 15:3–4), He grants us forgiveness of sins and all the blessings that accompany that salvation.

Some Things to Remember About God's Blessing:

- (1) **The gospel begins with God, not with us** - From cover to cover, the Bible is a book that reveals to us who God is. It begins (Gen. 1:1), ***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*** It ends with the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the supreme manifestation of God to us. As He told His disciples (John 14:9), ***“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”*** Because God is a spirit, invisible in the brightness of His glory from our fallen human eyes, we cannot know Him through human philosophy or intuition. If we are to know Him, He must reveal Himself to us, which He has done in Christ. The Bible

shows that we must be radically God-centered.

As Paul exclaims (Rom. 11:36), *“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”* And so Paul begins this magnificent unfolding of the gospel by being radically God-centered. Note the repetition of God and Jesus Christ in these opening verses: *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God”*; *“in Christ Jesus: (1:1). “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2). “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (1:3). He continues (1:4), “He chose us,” (1:5) “He predestined us,” “through Christ Jesus to Himself,” “His will,” (1:6) “to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”* Work your way through the rest of this long sentence and notice how radically God-centered it is.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones observes (*God’s Ultimate Purpose* [Baker], p. 13), *“Much of the trouble in the Church today is due to the fact that we are so subjective, so interested in ourselves, so egocentric. That is the peculiar error of this present century.”* He goes on to argue that the message of the Bible is to bring us back to God, to humble us before Him, so that we can see our true relationship to Him in all of His glory. He argues (*ibid.*), *“We must not start by examining ourselves and our needs microscopically; we must start with God, and forget ourselves.”*

When God opens your eyes to get a glimpse of Him in His glory, majesty, holiness, power, and wisdom, like Isaiah, you are instantly humbled in the dust to cry out (Isa. 6:5), *“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”* That glimpse of God shows you why you need the Savior. So we must begin by some understanding of who God is.

- (2) **The gospel begins with God blessing us – *“You do not understand the gospel if you think that you can bring anything or contribute anything to God in order to gain salvation.”***

Why or why don’t you? What do you think this quote is saying? Do you agree or disagree with that quote? _____

Here it is again... *“You do not understand the gospel if you think that you can bring anything or contribute anything to God in order to gain salvation.”* This is one of the greatest errors that keeps people from receiving God’s blessing of salvation: they think that they must be a good person or do some sort of good works in order to earn a place in heaven. But the good news is that you come to God just as you are and receive *everything* from Him as His gift.

That is the meaning of the word, “*grace.*” If you do anything to deserve it or earn it, it is not grace.

- God’s grace means that He justifies the *ungodly*, on the basis of faith alone, not works (Rom. 4:4-5).
- This goes back to the matter of God’s glory. If we could contribute anything toward our salvation, then we could share in the glory. But, if it all comes from God on the basis of His grace, then He gets all the glory. The giver gets the glory.
- So we can only come to God empty-handed, deserving His judgment, but pleading for grace through the merits of Jesus Christ.
- God is pleased to pour out the blessings of salvation on those who acknowledge that they do not deserve it. Then He gets all the glory. So we must come to God as those who are needy, asking Him to bless us.

(3) The God who blesses us with salvation is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - Why does Paul use this designation of God in this context? (He uses a similar phrase in 2 Cor. 1:3; see, also, 1 Pet. 1:3.) I’m sure that there is much more here than I understand, but in part, **Paul uses this designation to focus on the fact that while He was on this earth, the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, depended on the Father for His every need.** In His humanity, Jesus knew the Father and leaned upon His all-sufficiency for every need to show us how we should live in dependence on the Father. Also, Jesus is the one and only mediator between the Father and us (1 Tim. 2:5). All that we receive from God, we must receive through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ becomes our heavenly Father when we come to Him through His Son. The Son of God is eternally God, but He laid aside His glory and took on Himself the form of a servant, becoming obedient to death on the cross to secure our salvation (Phil. 2:5-11). Thus all spiritual blessings come to us through the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the obedience of the Son of God to His God and Father. This means that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ. If good people can earn their salvation by their good deeds, then the Son of God did not need to leave His glory in heaven and come in obedience to the Father to die on the cross. Any system of salvation apart from Christ and the cross is false. It diminishes what Jesus Christ did for us, shedding His blood to secure all the blessings of heaven for us, even while we were yet sinners.

(4) God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, not necessarily with every physical or material blessing on earth - A modern heresy teaches that it is God’s will for all of His children to be healthy and wealthy in this life. The false prophets of this cult live in huge mansions, drive expensive cars, and indulge themselves in every flagrant luxury that they can, luring their gullible followers with promises of the same. It is completely anti-Christian! While God promises to meet our basic physical needs, He knows that our deepest need is spiritual, to be rightly related to Him. So He blesses us with every *spiritual* blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Our

lives on this earth are short and uncertain, at best. But, we will spend eternity either with God in heaven or in hell under His judgment. As the story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates (Luke 16:19-31), it is far better to live in dire poverty and suffering in this life and have eternal riches in heaven than to live in luxury in this life and spend eternity in the agonizing flames of hell. Or, as the apostle John puts it after telling us not to love the world or the things in the world (1 John 2:17), *“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”* You may be thinking, “But isn’t this impractical? What good are spiritual blessings to me if I can’t live comfortably in this life? Isn’t this just ‘pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die’? Aren’t those who focus on heavenly blessings not much earthly good?” Hardly! In fact, precisely the opposite is true. C. S. Lewis saw this when he wrote, *“The Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have begun thinking less of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you get neither.”* Or, as Paul commands (Col. 3:1-2), *“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”*

Our treasures or blessings are all in Christ, in the heavenly places. Our greatest need is spiritual and we have every spiritual blessing in Him. If you’re still thinking, “But this is so impractical,” keep in mind that when Paul wrote this, he was in prison. Every time he moved he could hear and feel the heavy chains clanking around his wrist and his ankle. He could have been depressed and complaining about his circumstances. He could have said, “I don’t need *spiritual* blessings right now! I need to get out of this stinking cell and have my *physical* needs met!” But, instead, he breaks into this doxology, praising God for giving him every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. If understanding those blessings could sustain Paul in a Roman prison and give him the buoyant hope that he exudes in all of his letters, then this stuff is about as practical as you can get! It will sustain you in whatever difficulties you face.

- (5) **God’s blessing us with every spiritual blessing in Christ shows us the all-sufficiency of Christ for our every need** - All blessings come to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5), but in Him we have every spiritual blessing. In Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and “in Him you have been made complete” (Col. 2:3, 10). God’s “divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Pet. 1:3). Either these promises are pious platitudes that are of no practical value (as “Christian psychology” often insinuates), or these and many other Scriptures show us that God has given us in the person and work of Jesus Christ all that we need to face life’s problems. He has given us His Holy Spirit to indwell us and to produce in us the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). These qualities

describe an emotionally or psychologically whole person. Most of those qualities have a relational aspect, so that the person with these qualities will be able to get along harmoniously with others. These qualities are promised to every person who walks by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16). In other words, God does not say, “My Spirit will produce love in all of you, except for those who have never been loved and who have an anger problem. You’ll need therapy to work through your anger.” Or, “I will give joy to everyone except those who are clinically depressed. They may need Prozac if they want My joy.” He does not say, “Every Christian can experience My peace, except for those with an anxiety disorder. They’re going to need the insights of Carl Rogers to get through this thing!” I’m not saying that counseling is wrong or that the use of psychotropic drugs is always wrong (although they should not be the first resort). I am saying that psychology has infiltrated the church and its effect has not been to direct hurting people to their spiritual blessings in Christ, but rather to human wisdom on how to cope with trials apart from reliance on God and repentance from sin. I have heard supposedly Christian psychologists say that to give Bible verses to a hurting person or to tell him to trust in God is worthless and even cruel advice! A Christian counselor should direct you to the all-sufficient Lord Jesus Christ and your spiritual riches in Him. And I’m saying that before you take a drug to get over your problem, make sure that you have allowed your problem to drive you to greater dependence on Christ as your all in all. I read last week the story of a Christian woman suffering from severe anxiety and depression. Without even probing for the causes of her problems, her pastor told her to go to a doctor and get an anti-depressant. She followed his advice and felt better within a few weeks. But she did not confront the sin in her life that was at the root of her troubles. It was only years later when she started attending a church where sin is called sin and people are held accountable that she saw her own sin, confessed it, and began to be truly healed in Christ. (For more on Christians and psychology, I have two articles on the church web site.) God directs trials into our lives so that we will learn not to trust in ourselves, but in God and His mighty power (2 Cor. 1:8-9). He uses trials to make us examine ourselves in a deeper way, so that we will root out any selfishness, pride, or sin. If we try to solve our problems without digging deeper into the treasure house of our riches in Christ, we have missed God’s purpose in sending those trials. So make it your lifelong quest to understand and be satisfied with Jesus Christ and all that God has made Him for your soul.

- (6) These blessings are for everyone that personally knows the Lord Jesus Christ -** Note the emphasis in these verses on “us”: He has blessed *us* in Christ (1:3). He chose *us* in Him (1:4). He predestined *us* to adoption as sons (1:5). He freely bestowed His grace on *us* in the Beloved (1:6). In Him, *we* have redemption and forgiveness according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on *us* (1:7-8). He made known to *us* the mystery of His will (1:9). Who is “the us”? It is all of us who have come to know God’s abundant grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, these blessings are not just for some super-saints. Rather, they are God’s gracious gift to every child whom He adopts into His family. While some of His children do not know and enjoy the blessings of their

inheritance in Christ, they are just as much heirs as those that do enjoy these riches. So every Christian should diligently seek to discover, enjoy, and apply these vast riches in Christ Jesus. To the extent that you understand and enjoy these riches, you will bless God for them.

BECAUSE GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY BLESSING IN CHRIST, WE SHOULD BLESS GOD

“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” – Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

Paul uses the word **“blessed”** in two senses in this verse.

2 Senses of Blessing: (in Ephesians 1:3)

- (1) **God’s blessing on us** - When he says that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, he means that God has freely bestowed His good gifts on us in the person and work of His Son on our behalf.
- (2) **Our blessing of God** - But when we bless God, we cannot give Him anything that He lacks, because He has no lack. So our blessing God means to speak well of Him, or to praise Him for His glorious attributes and for His gracious actions toward us in Christ (Ps. 103:1-5). We thank Him for all that He is to us and for all that He has done for us and for all that He promises yet to do for us throughout eternity. We bless Him by joyfully giving back to Him what He has first given to us, namely, our time, our talent, and our treasure.

When my children were little, they liked to bless me with some sort of gift on my birthday or at Christmas. Where did they get the money to buy me a gift? They got it from dear old dad! I gave them what they needed and they took my gift and returned it to me as their gift or blessing. I blessed them, but they also blessed me by their gifts.

So we bless God by offering up “a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” We bless God when we “do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb. 13:15-16). We bless God when our hearts overflow with joy in Him because of His abundant grace towards us in Christ.

How do we bless God?

We are familiar with God’s blessings upon us, but what does it mean for us to bless the Lord? The phrases **‘bless the Lord’** and **‘bless God’** are found primarily in the Old Testament. The Psalms, especially, are filled with the psalmists’ blessings upon God. The King James Version uses **‘bless the Lord’** many times, but the more modern translations render it **‘praise the Lord.’** The Hebrew word translated ‘bless’ or ‘praise’ means literally ‘to kneel’, the implication being to kneel in worship.

Therefore, to bless the Lord means to praise Him, exalt Him, and worship Him.

Examples in Psalms: What We Bless God For?

The Psalms are filled with blessings upon God

- (1) Christians bless God for His counsel (Psalm 16:7)
- (2) Christians bless God for His holiness (Psalm 103:1)
- (3) Christians bless God for His dominion over all things (Psalm 103:22)
- (4) Christians bless God for His honor and majesty (Psalm 104:1)

We offer Him our praise and blessings because He deserves them. Unlike God's blessings upon us, which are wholly undeserved and by His mercy and grace, our blessing God is done out of an understanding that He is the true praiseworthy Creator and our heavenly Father.

God is glorified when we bless and praise and acknowledge Him. That acknowledgement comes in the form of praise, adoration, thanksgiving and love. That is what we were originally created for. However, no man can bless God in this way unless He is right with God for we read in Proverbs 28:9: 'If anyone turns a deaf ear to the Law, even his prayers are detestable.' It is only once we have been truly blessed by God in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3) that we can bless God in return, in a manner that pleases Him.

CONCLUSION

Do you want to be blessed by God? I'm sure you do. I mean, who does not want to receive God's blessings? The question you may want to ask now is, "How do I receive the blessings of God?"

"¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ²But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." – Psalm 1:1-3 (NKJV)

Psalm 1:1-3 gives us three things we must do in order to receive blessings from God.

Charles Spurgeon said, "This blessedness is attainable by the poor, the obscure and the forgotten, as by those whose names figure in history, and are trumpeted by fame"

How to be Blessed by God: Here are some of the things Christians need to live by if they want to receive God's blessings based on our Scripture passage.

- (1) **Do not listen to ungodly counsel (Psalm 1:1a)** - To be blessed or happy, we should not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. With all the advice that comes to us from different

sources, we must know how to stay away from the counsel of the ungodly. But first, we need to be able to recognize and discern them. Who are the ungodly? Murderers, robbers, and the like generally come to mind first. However, the Bible tells us that the ungodly are moral people who live their lives without God. These may be very nice people in our communities who have “*fine*” reputations, but they do not have God. Whenever we need counseling or advice, we need to remember not to seek it from the unsaved world. The ungodly man thinks and behaves differently from the righteous man so when we go to him for advice, we will surely be led astray. Instead, we must approach our church pastors and leaders because godly counselors will always bring the truth of God’s Word to help someone who needs counseling. We can also go immediately to the Word of God, the only place to find godly counsel (Psalm 119:24). This is why we need to know God’s word because God’s Word is always the best counselor.

Godly Counselors:

- **God/The Holy Spirit in prayer**
- **The Word of God**
- **Godly Christian leaders (Pastors, respected Christian voices, etc)**
- **Godly solidly Christians family and friends**

(2) **Do not stand in the path of sinners (Psalm 1:1b)** - To “stand” means to take their position and openly accept their sinful lifestyle. We live in such a permissive society where nothing seems to be considered wrong anymore. Adultery is free love, a liar is an extrovert with a big imagination, a thief is a creative financier, and sin is not what I say it is. But sin is not what the media says it is. Sin is what God says it is, and His labels do not change. God’s covenant with Israel made it clear that He would bless their obedience and judge their disobedience. Israel was a unique and separate people; they were among the other nations but not to be contaminated by them (Exodus 19:5-6, Numbers 23:9; Deuteronomy 32:8-10; 33:28). So it is with the people of God today. We are in the world but not of the world (John 17:11-17). We must beware of friendship with the world (James 4:4) that leads to being corrupted by the world (James 1:27) and even loving the world (1 John 2:15-17). Christians need to have different habits than unbelievers. Do your habits show Christ in you or do they appear worldly? Don’t fellowship with those who mock or scorn the Bible or God. They will bring you down just by discouragement. It is always difficult to talk about God when someone is mocking Him. Are you making good friends that encourage and support your Christian walk?

(3) **Delight in God’s law and meditate on it (Psalm 1:2)** - Delighting in the Word and meditating on the Word must go together (Psalm 119:15-16, 23-24, 47-48, 77-78), for whatever we enjoy, we think about and pursue. They say that if a person delights in something, no one has to beg them to do it or to like it. They will do it by themselves. “Meditate” in Hebrew means “to mutter, to ponder or to read in an undertone,” for orthodox Jews speak aloud as they read the Scriptures, meditate and pray. God’s word is on their lips (Deuteronomy 30:14). While meditation in the eastern culture means emptying the mind, the goal of Christian meditation is to fill your mind with the Word of God. This is done by carefully thinking about each word and phrase and applying it in

our daily lives. A blessed man enjoys reading, studying, and pondering on God's word all the time. He does not hear it and forgets it, he thinks about it. He is blessed because he cannot get enough of God's word. Doesn't that sound excellent? If you knew there was a hidden treasure buried at a certain location, wouldn't you want to dig and uncover it as quickly as possible? Well, that is what is located throughout the Bible; you just need to find it. Why aren't you digging more?

(4) Be like a tree planted by the rivers of water (Psalm 1:3) - Like a tree, the godly person is alive, beautiful, fruitful, useful, and enduring. The most important part of a tree is the hidden root system that draws up water and nourishment, and the most important part of the believer's life is the "spiritual root system" that draws on the hidden resources we have in Christ (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 2:7). This is known as abiding or remaining in Christ (John 15:1-9). It's a tragedy when a believer ignores the "root system" and begins to wither. We must remember that the tree doesn't eat the fruit; others eat it. We must also remember that fruit isn't the same as "results" because fruit has in it the seed for more fruit. God plants every godly tree in fertile soil. You have a choice to be like a tree planted by a stream of living water lush with green leaves and full of fruit or you can be a handful of worthless chaff driven by the wind (Psalm 1:4). What choice will you make?