

# The Benefits of Really Knowing God

*Ephesians 1:15-23*

Intro:

1. Most of us, when we come to the Lord, start attending church. That's good - but there's more.
  - a. **v15** - The Ephesians had developed a faith & love for one another - that's good.
  - b. **v17** - God wants you to know Him better. **Matt 7:7** - "**Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**"
2. **ILL: Walking with God in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8)**. God created you to have fellowship with Him!
3. But - why bother developing a personal relationship with your Creator? **ANSWER: an enlightened heart! (v18)**

## I. v18a - You Will Know the Hope to Which God Called You

A. The hope is salvation. So what is salvation all about?

1. It takes care of your past - a forgiven life. **Eph 1:7-8** - **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.**
2. It takes care of your present - an abundant life. **Jn 10:10 (NKJV)** - **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**
3. It takes care of your future - an eternal life. **Jn 3:16** - **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

B. **v17** - What comes along with the hope? The Spirit of wisdom & revelation.

1. You have the Holy Spirit to help you understand the word of God & implement it in your life!
2. **I Cor 2:14-16** tells us that the world can't understand spiritual things - but you can because you have the mind of Christ!

## II. v18b - You Will Know the Riches of His Inheritance

A. What are the riches of His inheritance? What it probably is not!

1. It's probably not an abundance of material possessions.
  - a. Have you ever heard that if you tithe the Lord will bless you & you will get rich quick. Not so!
  - b. But how about **Mal 3:9-10** - "**You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,**" says the LORD Almighty, "**and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it**". Doesn't that sound like the Lord is waiting to shower tithers with wealth?
  - c. Notice the context.
    1. This is the Old Testament where focus is God's blessing in this earthly life.
    2. They had a very foggy idea of life after death. Hades or **Sheol** (שְׁאוֹל) = the place where dead people stayed.
    3. In the New Testament you give to please your redeemer, not out of fear of robbing Him.
    4. Tithing, then, becomes just the minimum! Your offerings are the expression of your gratitude to Him for the cross.
  - d. Some tithers are well off & do genuinely give God the credit for that. That's exception, not the rule! Most of the rest of us live in a bit humbler circumstances.
2. So - what's the message here? God wants you to be content with what He provides you! **I Tim 6:6-8** - **But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.** It's a slap in the face to God when you complain about His gifts!

## B. What are some of the elements of God's inheritance?

1. The Divine principles by which we live. **Ps 119:111-112** - Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.
2. Salvation from your sins. **Eph 1:13-14** - And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.
3. Eternal life in heaven with God. **Matt 19:29** - And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.
4. Being included in God's Kingdom. **Col 1:12-13** - . . . giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves . . .
  1. The church is the earthly part of that kingdom.
  2. The church is designed to be God's divine support group from which you can grow.

## III. v19 - You Will Know His Incomparably Great Power in Your Life

### A. What the power probably is not!

1. The power to perform supernatural wonders routinely.
  - a. The Lord does perform miraculous wonders through prayer today - but not routinely!
  - b. The definition of a miracle is an event which is not usual or normal.
  - c. So - if miracles were performed routinely they would cease to be miracles!
2. The power to have consistent faith! Even the strongest in faith has weak times.
  - a. Moses.
    1. Didn't want to go to Egypt at first (**Ex 3:10-11**).
    2. Struck the rock at Meribah (**Num 20:13**).
  - b. Abraham.
    1. Let Pharaoh take Sarah home with him as his wife (**Gen 12:14-16**).
    2. Let Abimelech take Sarah home with him as his wife (**Gen 20:2**).
  - c. Peter.
    1. Denies the Lord (**Matt 26:74-75**).
    2. Buckles under pressure in Antioch (**Gal 2:11-12**).

### B. How was this power demonstrated?

1. **v20** - Through the Lord's resurrection & His majesty in heavenly places.
2. **v22-23** - Through the Lord's authority over us in His church.

### C. How does this power affect you & me?

1. It's the power to live a potentially victorious life (**Jn 10:10** in NKJV).
2. It's the power to produce spiritual fruit (**Gal 5:22-23**), God's character in your life.
3. It's the power to develop the mind of Christ (**I Cor 2:16**) - to see things the way the Lord sees them.

God doesn't want you to be a dormant pew sitter. He wants you to know Him better. He wants you to be involved in His ministry. He wants you to produce spiritual fruit in your life. He wants you to grow!