

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

C0428 -- July 21, 2004 -- Eph 1:15-18a -- Commendation and Prayer Requests

This is the third major section of Paul's epistle to the believers in Ephesus. The first section was the Prologue where Paul announced the author, recipients, destination and a greeting (Eph. 1:1-2). The second section was the Praise, where Paul announced the reason the Trinity of God is blessed, namely because of all the spiritual blessings God has given us. These include election, predestination, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, insight, the mystery of His will, and sealing with the Holy Spirit. This was the longest sentence in the Greek NT. The third section begins another long Greek sentence. It extends from 1:15 to the end of the chapter. This section is Paul's Prayer. It is very normal for Praise to God and Prayers to God to be long sentences. So, we have the Prologue (1:1-2), the Praise (1:3-14), and now the Prayer (1:15-23).

1. Prologue (1:1-2)
2. Praise (1:3-14)
3. Prayer (1:15-23)

As I mentioned early in our study this sequence is rare in Paul's writings. Paul always begins with a Prologue. In eight of Paul's 13 epistles, he includes the same greeting in that Prologue ("grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:2; Philemon 1:3). Usually, he follows the Prologue with a Prayer for the recipients of the letter (exceptions are 2 Corinthians 1:3-14 and Peter's first epistle, 1:3-12). However, in Ephesians he departs from that order and interjects with Praise to God and follows it with a Prayer (1:15-23). The Prayer begins with a Commendation (1:15-16a) and moves to Supplication for His readers in (1:16b-23). In light of the previous context this might be called "*the prayer for those who already have everything*". Why do we usually pray? John Stott says,

"For a healthy Christian life today, it is of the utmost importance to follow Paul's example and keep Christian praise and Christian prayer together. Yet many do not

manage to preserve this balance. Some Christians seem to do little but pray for new spiritual blessings, apparently oblivious of the fact that God has already blessed them in Christ with every spiritual blessing. Others lay such emphasis on the undoubted truth that everything is already theirs in Christ, that they become complacent and appear to have no appetite to know or experience their Christian privileges more deeply.”

C. PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND REVELATION (1:15-23)

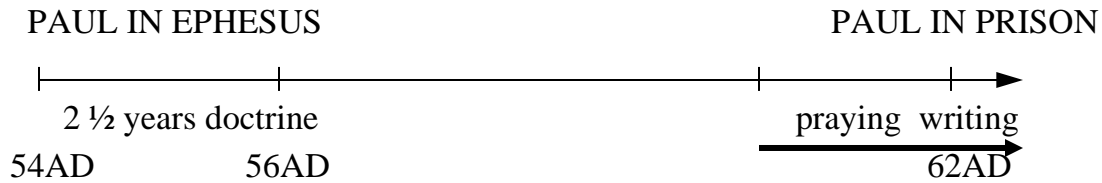
1. Commendation (1:15-16a)

Greek Text: 1:15-16a *Dia. tou/to kavgw. avkou,saj th.n kaqV u`ma/j pi,stin evn tw/| kuri,w| VIhsou/ kai. th.n avga,phn th.n eivj pa,ntaj tou.j a`gi,ouj ¹⁶ ouv pau,omai euvcaristw/n u`pe.r u`mw/n*

Translation: 1:15-16a *For this reason, I also, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and the love toward all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you*

Dia. tou/to kavgw., “**For this reason, I also**”. *Dia touto* means *for this reason* or *therefore*. Paul is saying, in light of all the spiritual benefits that God has given to you (1:3-14), and particularly God’s sealing you with the Holy Spirit in 1:13-14 Paul has reason to give thanks and to make requests to God for you. Paul is saying that because of all that has been given to the believers in Ephesus he now has something to say. Just because believers have every spiritual blessing does not mean that we do not need prayer. First, Paul commends them by noting their spiritual advancement since he left Ephesus 5-6 years ago. Paul had taught them Bible doctrine 5-6 hours a day for 2 ½ years. But he left Ephesus around 56AD and he is writing this letter in 62AD from Prison in Rome. So, 5-6 years had passed since Paul had been with them. However, Paul had received a report about their spiritual condition over the last 5-6 years. We know this because Paul says...

avkou,saj th.n kaqV u`ma/j pi,stin evn tw/| kuri,w| VIhsou,/ having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus. The two things Paul had heard about were their *faith* and their *love*. *Having heard* is an aorist active participle. The aorist participle “refers to that time between the report about them and the writing of the epistle.”ⁱ

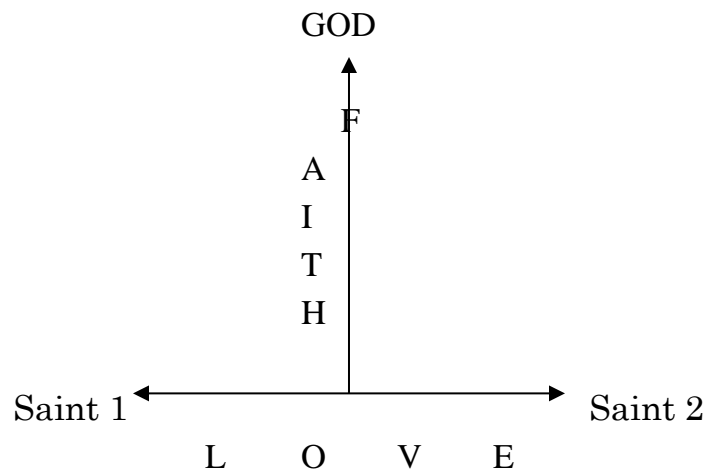


So, here's Paul, he's stuck in prison, he knows many of these people but he hasn't seen them in several years. Several reports have come to him about the *faith* and *love* of the believers in Ephesus and so all he can do from prison is pray for them and write to them. Paul never left an opportunity wanting. It would encourage them greatly to know that their first Bible teacher was praying for them. Notice that the letter is very doctrinal. Paul never let an opportunity pass by without instructing. This is the mark of a Bible teacher. It's not that he's a "Jesus Freak". It's simply that God has laid a special task and burden on the heart of the Bible teacher. He wants to impart truth because he knows how practical doctrine really is. So, the fact of his hearing of their faith and love is what motivated Paul to continually pray for them and write this letter.

However, many commentators cite this verse as proof that Paul did not really write this letter, that the letter is pseudepigraphal (i.e., that whoever wrote the epistle wrote it under a false name, not their true name). However, there are several reasons this is absurd. *First*, Paul had not been in Ephesus for 5-6 years. Doubtless there were many new believers that Paul did not personally know. *Second*, Paul knew so many people from his extended visit there that he would not want to mention some without mentioning others. Thus, he leaves off all names. Interestingly, in Paul's letters to places where he spent very little time, he does mention names in the closing of the letters. Probably because he did not know many people in those places.

Faith here seems to refer to more than the faith the exercised when they became Christians. The contexts indicates that the faith Paul had heard of concerns not only salvation but also sanctification, their faith was growing. This is evidenced by the fact that Paul had received many reports of their faith and the love which they show to one another, which Paul mentions next. As we know from 1 John "loving one another" was the *old commandment* given freshly by Christ in John 13:34 and to which we are called to make afresh day by day as we "love one another" as Christ loved the apostles. It is the mark of a disciple of Christ, a believer who is in the advanced stages of fellowship with God. This is new for the Ephesians, for they had previously placed their trust in Artemis and now their faith is in the *Lord Jesus*. *Lord* refers to the "authority" of Jesus. They had put themselves under Jesus' authority. *Jesus* is the human name that the angel told Mary to name her child (Matt.

1:21). *Jesus* means “YHWH saves”. When put together *Lord Jesus* means “the authority of YHWH saves”. They were having faith in the authority of YHWH and not in their own authority.



Next Paul commends them for their *love toward all the saints*.

kai. th.n avga,phn th.n eivj pa,ntaj tou.j a`gi,ouj, “*and the love toward all the saints*”. Paul had not only heard of their vertical relationship with God, but he had also heard of their horizontal relationship with one another. We looked at the 4 Greek words for *love* in 1:4 (*agape, eros, storge, phileo*). Here Paul uses the same word again, *agape*. *Agape* love is a love which seeks the highest good for another person. It seeks to give rather than to possess. It seeks to provide security. It is an affectionate love. Notice that the preposition *eis* following *agape* denotes the direction of the *love*. Their love is not directed to the world, but *toward all the saints*. Notice, they are not just loving *saints* that are lovable, but *all the saints*. We are to love other believers even when they are not easy to love. *Saints* refers to believers as in 1:1 and the plural pronouns in 1:4, 13. These believers are showing the true mark of Christ, they are showing that they have come to know Him in a very intimate way. They are following Christ’s command of John 13:34 to “love one another”. When they do this, they show the world that they are disciples of Christ (John 13:35).

ouv pau,omai euvcaristw/n u`pe.r u`mw/n, “*do not cease giving thanks for you*”. When Paul heard of their faith and love he began giving thanks for them. Paul not only began to pray for them because of all the spiritual blessings they had been given and which he wants them to enjoy but also because of their *faith and love*. Their continued *faith* in the Lord Jesus and their *love for all the saints* become additional reasons Paul gives thanks for them. Paul says his thanks *do not cease*. *Ou pauomai*. The *not* is emphatic for emphasis. Literally,

“NOT I myself cease giving thanks for you”. The Greek verb for *cease* is *pauo*. We get the English word “pause” from this verb. It is a present middle indicative verb meaning that as the saints in Ephesus continued to have faith and to love he continued to give thanks for them. Obviously, this is hyperbole. Paul did not sit up 24 hours a day 365 days a year praying for them. This was a common style in ancient letters and it “simply means that Paul did not forget the believers at his regular time of prayer.”ⁱⁱ The word for *give thanks* is surrounded by controversy that we don’t need to get into. The conclusion of the matter is that the word during NT times meant “an outward expression of gratitude for a favor received.” Paul is giving thanks by letter because it is a favor for him to hear of their continued *faith* and *love*. This is all too often overlooked in the Christian life. We ought to continually give thanks for those who are growing in their faith in the Lord Jesus and, like Paul, to pray for them. Just because we have every spiritual blessing does not mean that we are not to thank God for the growth in faith and love or to pray for their even deeper and greater appropriation of the spiritual blessings that we all possess. Now that Paul has finished commending the saints in Ephesus, he proceeds to offer requests to God for them in vv. 16b-18a.

a. The Request for Wisdom and Revelation (1:16b-18a)

Greek Text: 1:16b-18a mnei,an poiou,menoj evpi. tw/n proseucw/n mou(¹⁷ i[na o` qeo.j tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vhlsou/ Cristou/(o` path.r th/j do,xhj(dw,h| u`mi/n pneu/ma sofi,aj kai. avpokalu,yewj evn evpignw,sei aurtou/(¹⁸ pefwtisme,nouj tou.j ovfqalmou.j th/j kardi,aj Iu`mw/nÐ

Translation: 1:16b-18a *making mention of you in my prayers, in order that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in precise knowledge of Him, since the eyes of your heart having been enlightened,*

mnei,an poiou,menoj evpi. tw/n proseucw/n mou(“*making mention of you in my prayers*”. The word for *mention* is the Greek word *mneia*. It’s the word from which we get the English word “mnemonic”, as in a mnemonic device. Mnemonic devices are simple ways to remember things. It is some device or rhyme that helps you remember things. For example, SRJLOOOIE. This helps us remember the attributes of God so we can call on them when we get into trouble. Well, Paul here is telling the Ephesians that he is remembering them in his prayers. *Epi* used with the genitive indicates “at the time of” which means that the time Paul remembers them is when he is praying. *Prayers* is in the plural indicating that Paul mentions them in all his prayers continually.

i[na o` qeo.j tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n Vihsou/ Cristou/, “*in order that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*” refers to the purpose and/or content of the prayer. Prayer is addressed to *the God* of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. In early church history some argued from this verse that Jesus Christ was not the same substance as God but was the created Son of God who prayed to and worshipped his Creator. These people were called the Arians because they followed the teachings of a man named Arius. This teaching failed to distinguish the subordination of the Son to the Father from the singular essence of both the Son and the Father. Arians taught that the Son was of similar substance but not identical substance. This view reduces the Son to a creature and renders salvation impossible. When the word **God** is used in the Bible it refers to either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. It does not refer to some fourth person. **God** refers to essence. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all have a unity of essence. Here it makes most sense that this refers to God the Father (just like in Eph. 1:3). Like Paul, our prayers are to be directed toward the Father. This is why we begin our prayers by saying something like, “Dear Heavenly Father”. While modern Christians often begin praying by saying something like “Oh Jesus” this has no Scriptural backing. We always pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the consistent testimony of Scripture. *Lord Jesus Christ* refers to four things: 1) *our Lord* refers to their personal relationship with Him, He is *ours*, 2) *Lord* refers to His authority, 3) *Jesus* is His human name, and 4) *Christ* is His title and refers to Him as the promised Messiah who would bring salvation.

o` path.r th/j do,xhj, “*the Father of glory*”...further clarifies that **God** in the previous phrase refers to the *Father*. We’ve talked a lot about *glory* in the past weeks. Do you remember what the *glory* of God is? How did we define *glory*? Glory is the sum of all of God’s perfections or attributes. It is the reflection of the essence of one’s being. Glory is a simple way to sum up who and what God is. All that He is, is reflected by the word “glory”. Paul brings his request for the Ephesians to the kind of God who is able to answer his prayer.

dw,h| u`mi/n, “*may give to you*”. Is *doe* an optative or subjunctive? Very few optatives in the NT though it’s not unknown. This is probably a subjunctive. Paul is praying that God *may* give the following requests to the Ephesians.

pneu/ma sofi,aj kai. avpokalu,yewj, “*a spirit of wisdom and revelation*”. Lots of debate surrounds this use of *spirit* (Gk. *pneuma*), from which we get “pneumonia”, inflammation of the lungs). Does it refer to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit?ⁱⁱⁱ If it refers to the Holy Spirit being given to them then how do we reconcile that with the fact that all saints already

have the Holy Spirit? If it refers to the human spirit then how does the human spirit receive wisdom and revelation? There are great men on both sides of this question. It is my particular conclusion that this reference to *spirit* refers to the human spirit. At the very base the human spirit is that which animates the body. It is life-giving (Gen. 2:7). James says, “The body without the spirit is dead” (James 2:26). The body is that through which the human spirit acts upon physical substance. Without a body your human spirit can’t interact with the material world around you. It is through the human spirit that we commune with God (John 4:24).

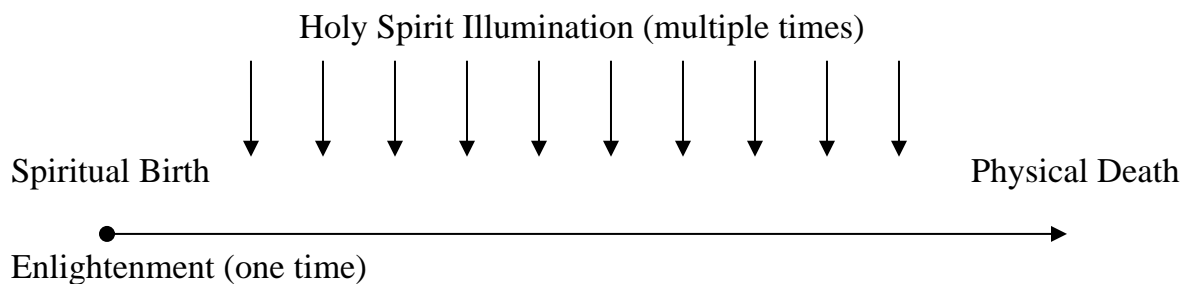


It seems too problematic to try to answer why Paul would be praying that God give us the Holy Spirit if we already have the Holy Spirit. Thus, the best answer seems to be that Paul is praying that God would give to us a certain kind of human spirit. The human spirit, once regenerated, is weak and needs to be strengthened. Turn over to Ephesians 3:16. Here Paul, in another prayer (cf. 3:14), prays that we would be strengthened in our “inner man” by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who does the strengthening as we request it from the Father but it is the inner man, the human spirit, that needs strengthening. Paul contrasts the “inner man” and the “outer man” in 2 Cor. 4:16. Turn there briefly, I want you to see how the almost constant testimony of Scripture is that man is a dichotomy^{iv}. How man is material and immaterial.^v Notice that the “outer man” is decaying. What does that refer too? Obviously, it refers to the human body. What then does the “inner man” refer too? Obviously, it refers to the human spirit. It is the human spirit that is to be renewed. So, it looks like Paul sees man as a dichotomous being (material + immaterial) rather than a trichotomous being (body + spirit + soul). Sure, there are passages used to support trichotomy (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:23^{vi} body, soul, spirit), but there are also verses to support several different quadrotomies (e.g., Heb. 4:12^{vii} soul, spirit, joints, marrow and Matt. 10:27 heart, soul, strength and mind). After 4 years of having a very difficult time coming down on this issue and originally being a trichotomist myself I have decided presently that man is a dichotomy. It is the abundant testimony of Scripture that man is a dichotomy. It is the body + spirit that equals a soul (Genesis 2:7; Heb. = *nephesh*). It is the most widely held view in Church History. And the few passages that seem to say otherwise have easy explanations. So, Paul is here referring to the human spirit. The human spirit is weak so it needs strengthening and he prays that God might give saints a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Also notice Paul’s statement in Ephesians 4:23. There he prays that we be renewed in the spirit of your mind, also a reference to the human spirit. So, although this

is a difficult decision to make, it seems best to see this as a reference to the human spirit. It is the human spirit that Paul prays will be given *wisdom and revelation* in the knowledge of Christ. *Wisdom* is the same word we looked at in Eph. 1:8. We have *wisdom* available to us but we have to appropriate the spiritual blessings by faith in order to enjoy them. *Wisdom* is from the Greek word *sophia* and it refers to a knowledge that gives one the ability to pierce through a problem and behold the best course of action. “Wisdom is the true insight of known facts or insight into the nature of things.”^{viii} This kind of wisdom finds its source in the Holy Spirit. *Revelation* is the Greek word *apokolupsis*. It is the first word in the Book of Revelation and that is why the book is named Revelation. The word means “uncovering, unveiling”. Certainly, God is the one who reveals things so it is very fitting that Paul would request of God that He give us revelation concerning Himself. So, in what areas is Paul requesting that we have *wisdom and revelation*?

evn evpignw,sei autou, “in precise knowledge of Him”. The Greek word for *knowledge* here is really more than that. It’s not mere *gnosis* but *epignosis*. The prefix *epi* gives us a little help. It’s a directional preposition. *Epignosis* therefore is knowledge with direction toward a particular object. It is a very thorough knowledge; knowledge that has breadth and that one appropriates by faith. It is full, precise, exact knowledge of someone or something. *Epignosis* therefore refers to a deep knowledge of God that one appropriates by faith. Paul has given us the facts of our spiritual blessings in 1:3-14 but now he wishes that we would move beyond mere intellectual apprehension of these facts and put them into use. Paul wants us to come to an intimate relationship with God. *Of Him* gives us the object of this knowledge. The object of this full knowledge is God. The wisdom and revelation of the human spirit are to be in connection with God. This can happen only if God does it. That is why Paul is requesting this of God. He is the source of strengthening our human spirits by giving us wisdom and revelation regarding Himself. This comes through His word and never apart from it. If you want to talk to God then pray. If you want to listen to God then read the Bible. Many Christians talk to God but very few listen to God. It’s impossible to interpret life’s circumstances apart from the word of God. You may think God is opening a door and that you should go in that door but if you aren’t spending time in the word then basically that’s just you trying to interpret your circumstances without God’s guidance. In the physical world everyone knows that just because a door is open does not necessarily mean “go in”. Why does it surprise us that the same is true for spiritual matters? I have seen kids graduate from college and have multiple offers for jobs...lots of doors opening. Which one are they supposed to go in? To make that decision one needs to spend a lot of time in the word, get away from all the offers, put them on the back burner and focus on studying and knowing God precisely. Then I can assure you that you will walk the right path.

pefwisme,nouj tou.j ovfqalmou.j th/j kardi,aj Îu`mw/nÐ “*since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened*” ...is another difficult phrase. The NASB doesn’t do justice to the Greek text. The NASB says “*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*”. This makes it sound like this is one of Paul’s requests for believers and that believers need ongoing enlightenment. That is not what the Greek says. The Greek word for *enlightened* is *photizo* and is a perfect passive. The perfect tense means a past completed action having present results. All believers *have been enlightened* already. You were *enlightened* at the moment you believed. Enlightenment has to do with the ability to perceive spiritual truths. You were given the ability to perceive spiritual truths the moment you believed. Enlightenment is a once for all act. It is because we *have been enlightened* that Paul prays that we be given a spirit of *wisdom and revelation* in the *full knowledge of Him*. In other words, at the moment you believed God the Holy Spirit gave you the ability to perceive and understand spiritual truths. So, the perfect tense of *photizo* indicates that enlightenment happened at the moment you believe and it has ongoing results into the present. This enlightenment is the basis of Paul’s requests for the believers. If one has not been enlightened then there is no way for them to perceive spiritual truths. The “natural man”, Paul tells us, “does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14). But “we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Cor. 2:12). Paul here is talking about divine enlightenment and divine illumination. These are distinct ministries. Enlightenment is a once for all act of God at the moment one believes giving them the ability to understand spiritual truths. Illumination is a ministry of the Holy Spirit that presupposes enlightenment and by which the Holy Spirit teaches the believer who can understand.



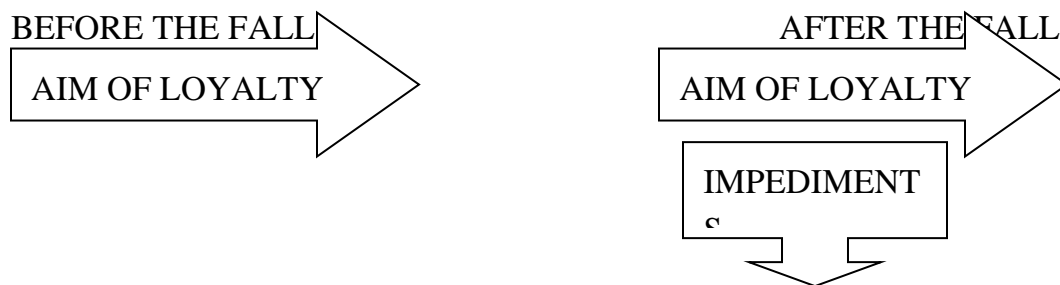
Illumination takes place as a believer studies the word of God while in fellowship with God and in proportion to one’s knowledge of God. Studying involves using all materials available to come to the proper understanding of God’s word. This is all a part of sanctification (Phase 2: which is a process).

DEFINITION OF SANCTIFICATION

First of all, what is sanctification? *Sanctification is the time between one's spiritual birth and physical death or the rapture where he is set apart unto God* (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

THE AIM OF SANCTIFICATION

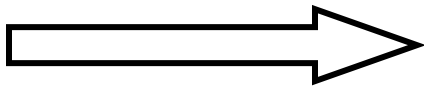
The aim of sanctification is often missed. It is often thought that sanctification is ridding oneself of all sin (perfectionism). Those who think of sanctification this way focus in on the sin in their lives and trying to eradicate it. The whole focus of their Christian life is on their sin rather than God's word. They directly attack their sin like Paul tried to do in Romans 7. This is not the aim of sanctification. *The aim of sanctification is to learn loyalty to God through His word.* How do we know this? Two examples of sinless individuals are given, both had to be sanctified. First, even Adam and Eve before the Fall had to be sanctified (TURN to Gen. 2:7-15, particularly v. 15). If sanctification has to do with removal of sin then that wasn't possible for Adam and Eve who had no personal sin or sin nature. But they still had to obey God. They still had to learn to be loyal to God. God put Adam and Eve in the garden to keep and cultivate the garden. That was a command of God to follow. They had to learn obedience or loyalty to God. Now, after the Fall there are impediments to learning loyalty to God. Now we have the weight of the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:16), but the aim of sanctification is the same, to learn loyalty to God through His word.



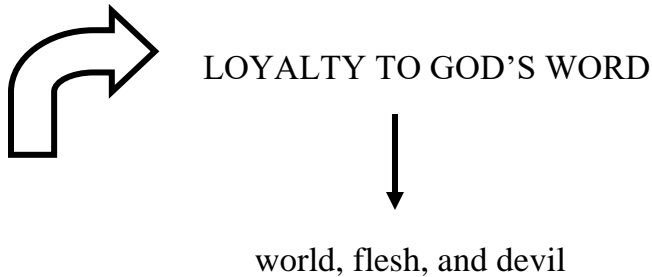
ENEMIES OF SANCTIFICATION

However, as anyone who's been a Christian for 5 minutes can tell you there are enemies of sanctification. Particularly these enemies cause resistance by one of three means; the world, the flesh, or the devil. These are your enemies. You can't fight against the forces of the world, flesh, and devil. Many Christians try to be sanctified by getting rid of the world, the flesh, and the devil. By directly attacking them.

World, Flesh, Devil



This approach does not work. Remember, the aim of sanctification is not to destroy your enemies. Instead, the aim of sanctification is learning loyalty to God through His word. Thus, we have to take an indirect approach to defeating our enemies.



Once we learn loyalty to God's Word, we can put the word to work by means of faith. Living a life of faith. But no one can live by faith apart from knowing God's word. First you must hear the word and then you can apply the word by faith. Faith is the means of sanctification. It is the word of God that fights off our enemies and so one must learn loyalty to God's word as an indirect means.

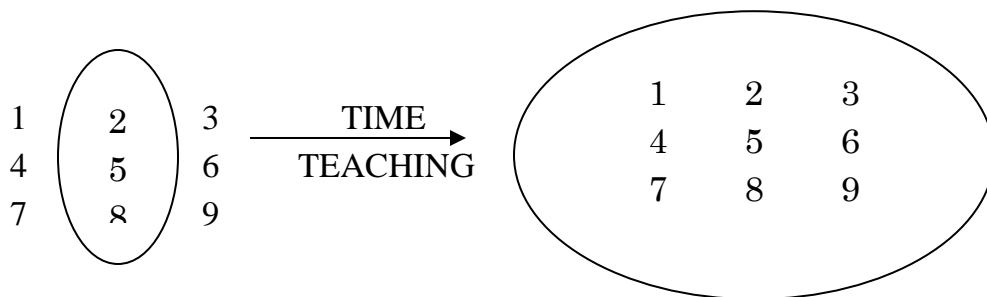
Test Case: Jesus Christ. A second example besides Adam and Eve that sanctification is not about getting rid of sin in one's life but about learning loyalty to God is Jesus Christ. The fact is that Christ Himself had to be sanctified. TURN to Hebrews 5:8-9. Notice that Christ, in His humanity, had to learn obedience. Just like you and I have to learn obedience. Now, He didn't have all the same impediments, he didn't have the flesh, but he did have the world and the devil. What did Jesus turn to when tempted by Satan? The WORD. He never faltered because he used the indirect approach, He learned obedience to the commands of God. We know that Jesus grew according to Luke 2:52 ***“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men”***. The humanity of Christ had to be sanctified. The humanity of Christ was perfected according to verse 9. So, as you can see, sanctification is about learning loyalty to God, not getting rid of sin in your life and not defeating your enemies. These are by-products of the true aim of sanctification: learning loyalty to God. Neither Adam and Eve before the Fall nor Jesus Christ had to get rid of sin in their lives. Yet all three of them had to be sanctified, they had to learn obedience to the Father. I used the word loyalty rather than love sometimes because loyalty expresses the biblical concept of love. Loyalty incorporates “obedience”. Who knows what the word “love” communicates in today's society; usually some kind of mushy, emotional outburst. This has nothing to do with sanctification. Jesus said, “He who loves me keeps my

commandments.” So, sanctification is not getting rid of all sin in one’s life but rather it is learning loyalty to God through His word. There are two dimensions to sanctification.

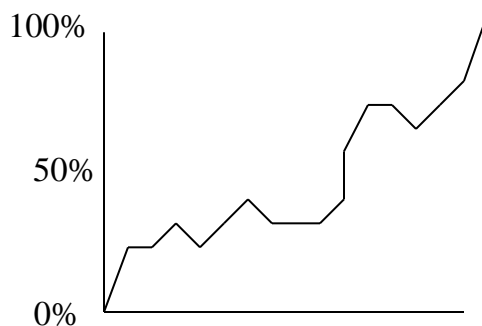
2 DIMENSIONS OF SANCTIFICATION

Another aspect of sanctification that is often misunderstood is the two dimensions of sanctification: The Existential Present and Long-Term Growth. Chafer taught that a man in fellowship with God was spiritual; that we were either in or out of fellowship and therefore either spiritual or carnal at any given moment. This is the first dimension of sanctification, the Existential Present. You are either in or out of fellowship at any given moment. You are either thinking God’s thoughts or your own thoughts. DVP or HVP. (TOP AND BOTTOM CIRCLES).

However, what is often missed is the second dimension of sanctification: Long-Term Growth. Long-Term Growth looks at sanctification from the perspective of overall growth...and therefore refers to maturity.



Of course, these two dimensions are related. As one stays in fellowship in the Existential Present his knowledge of the general will of God for his life increases as he studies the Bible so that he matures. Conversely, the longer one stays out of fellowship, the more likely he will encounter what is sometimes called “compound carnality.” So, the two dimensions of sanctification look something like a good stock if one is continually in fellowship and maturing.



years of spiritual growth

CONCLUSION

Paul, in light of their spiritual blessings still knows that these believers need prayer. Prayer and Praise always go together. After Paul left the Ephesians in 56AD several years later he heard reports of their faith and love. So, Paul begins by commending them for their faith toward God and their love toward fellow believers. Second, Paul prays the prayer for those who have everything. His request is that God would strengthen their human spirits by giving them the ability to appropriate wisdom and revelation in the precise or full knowledge of God. Paul wants the truths of Eph. 1:3-14 to be more than mere intellectual facts. He wants these facts to affect their lives, to deepen their relationship with God. This is possible because the eyes of their heart, their mentality, has been enlightened. I've already seen this in many of you here tonight.

ⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 248.

ⁱⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 250.

ⁱⁱⁱ A third option is that **wisdom and revelation** are attributed genitives meaning that it should be understood qualitatively as **spiritual wisdom and revelation**. Paul would then be praying that God would give us **spiritual wisdom and revelation**. This option is usually not discussed in this verse but grammatically it is possible.

^{iv} The predominant view of scholars in Church History is that man is a dichotomy.

^v References used to research this issue include Arthur Custance, ***A Fresh Look at the Meaning of the Word "Soul"***; Robert Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology*; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*; Henry Thiessen, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*; Augustus Strong; *Complete Systematic Theology*; Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*; Christian Medical Society, *Birth Control and the Christian*; Robert Thieme, *The Origin of Human Life*; others...

^{vi} While 1 Thess. 5:23 is more difficult to reconcile with a dichotomous view there are far more Scriptures that assert a dichotomy than a trichotomy. It seems best here to understand Paul as merely speaking of the whole man, material being the body and immaterial being composed of spirit and soul.

^{vii} Heb. 4:12 actually fits nicely in a dichotomous view because two divided parts are material and the other two divided parts are immaterial. The very fact that they are divided by the sharpest object existing (the word of God) indicates that man is a dichotomy and not a trichotomy or quadrotomy.

^{viii} Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 211.

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