

**God's People Part 1: Who We Are  
Illuminated  
Ephesians 1:15-23**

**Introduction:** A lightbulb illuminates its surroundings because it is itself illuminated. For that to happen, the bulb must be built and in working order so it can be illuminated, but it must also receive the energy required for illumination. Without the addition of the required energy, the bulb can't do what it's made to do.

For instance, if I were to shape a lump of clay into a perfectly round bulb, place it in a lamp, and turn the lamp on, it wouldn't illuminate. No matter how much electricity the lamp puts into that clay, the clay is physically incapable of responding to electricity in that way. It doesn't matter how much the clay may look like a lightbulb; the clay can't illuminate.

However, the same outcome would occur if I placed a broken lightbulb in a lamp and turned it on. The most expensive, highly engineered lightbulb in the world cannot be illuminated if it's broken. To illuminate, the bulb must be designed to do so and be in working order.

Furthermore, some light bulbs are designed to provide a single level of illumination. They are basically either on or off. There is a minimum amount of electricity required for it to illuminate, but anything more than what is required has no effect, because it's not designed to do anything with more than the required amount of electricity. In fact, if the electricity exceeds what is required to turn it on, the bulb will likely break!

On the other hand, some lights are dimmable, meaning they can be adjusted to different brightness levels. A minimal current is needed to illuminate it at its lowest level, but unlike a standard bulb, its minimum illumination is not equal to its maximum. As you increase the current to a dimmable bulb, its illumination increases until it reaches its maximum.

With that in mind, listen to what Paul prays for the church in Ephesus.

**15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 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 a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 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, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked 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 above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things 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.**

There are all kinds of fun things in that prayer, but the thing I want you to see today is how this prayer directs us to who we are. As God's People, we are those who have been made to be ILLUMINATED by the TRUTH of who God is, what He has done, is doing, and will do. You and I have literally been made to be lights in the darkness. Seeing this reality among those in the church of Ephesus, Paul prays for what He knows God wants to do with all who are in Him: to be illuminated to an even greater level so that they might shine God's light even brighter to one another and into a dark world!

Let's break this passage down.

**Proposition: There are three key observations we can make from Ephesians 1:15-23 about being spiritually illuminated.**

**The first observation is that ...**

**(1) Two of the unmistakable testimonies of spiritual illumination are persevering faith in Christ and unconditional love for one another. (1:15-16)**

**A. 15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,**

**B.** We are NOT capable of the kind of "faith" and "love" that Paul writes about in verse 15 until God makes us capable of them! Therefore, in hearing about these coming from the believers in Ephesus, Paul is hearing about an unambiguous testimony that the Holy Spirit has energized them, that is, illuminated them with God's life! They are not dead, spiritually useless light bulbs, but rather ones that have been made and energized to shine God's life all around them.

**C.** Let's look a little closer at the two operative words in verse 15—faith and love.

**1. "Faith"**

- a.** The faith Paul is speaking of is a continually present and obvious faith. He's not speaking of the faith they "had" when they converted, but the faith they had at their conversion and still have right now.

Note: "Paul referred to the faith existent among the Ephesian saints, not the initial act of appropriating faith when they were saved, but the day by day faith exercised in the Lord Jesus for daily living."<sup>1</sup>

- b.** Also, faith is not simply believing something to be true, but believing in something so deeply that you surrender to it and obey it. Because of my

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 4, p. 51). Eerdmans.

faith in gravity, there are things that I do and things that I don't do because of it. It's not simply a fact I believe to be true, but something I believe is true that causes me to live by it. This is the kind of faith in God that Ezekiel prophesied would testify to the New Covenant in Christ.

**Note: 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)**

- c. Jesus told a parable concerning this kind of faith when he spoke about seeds being sown into four different soils (Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23). One of the soils showed no response at all from the seed, and two initially responded in faith but later showed none. Only one of the soils, the fourth one, was capable of receiving the seed and producing a healthy plant that continually bore fruit, no matter what, because it was the only one that had continual faith. God promises that His people will have a faith that lasts. That doesn't mean the faith of his people will never waver or at times dissipate, but rather that it will never disappear.
- d. This is the kind of faith that Paul assured the believers in Philippi came from God, would endure, grow, and be completed at the coming of Christ!

**Note: 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)**

- e. In short, this is the kind of faith that only God's people can have because it can only happen if God produces it in us! It is the testimony of being illuminated by God! Similarly,

## 2. "Love"

- a. "Throughout the ages, the church has understood that the most significant manifestation of true faith is love. Faith without love is not faith, only speculation or knowledge or mere intellectual assent. The fruit of authentic faith is always love. Paul is expressing his joy and delight that this kind of love is flowing from the faith of these people."<sup>2</sup>
- b. "The rosebud of *faith*, moreover, had burst forth into the flower of *love*, for of this, too, Paul had received cheerful tidings."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (p. 37). Christian Focus Publications.

<sup>3</sup> Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Ephesians* (Vol. 7, p. 96). Baker Book House.

- c. "The word "love" here is *agapē* (ἀγάπη), referring to that love produced in the heart of the yielded believer by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23)."<sup>4</sup>
- d. Everybody is capable of love, just not to the measure of God's love. However, both the expectation Jesus has for us and the work Jesus does in us are for us to love as He loves! Jesus said,
- e. **34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)**
- f. In both Ephesians and John, the root of the word translated as "love" is "agape." Agape is an unconditional love of choice. This is the kind of love that chooses to love no matter the circumstances or emotions. This is the kind of love that puts the good of others ahead of yourself, not as a method of approval or manipulation, but out of the sincere commitment and desire for the good of others!
- g. It is the kind of love that exists for all eternity (1 Corinthians 13:8) because it is the very nature of God. Therefore, everywhere we see love in this world, even the scarred version of God's love, we are still seeing a testimony of God's existence and work; of His fingerprint on creation. But the love we see in this world, as good as it might be, is still bound by the curse of sin. Apart from God's work to set us free from the slave master of sin, the love that God made us to live in and be is bound up and limited.
- h. And this brings us back to why Paul is so excited about what's going on in the church of Ephesus. He's hearing about God's kind of love coming out of them, which means God has done and is doing a work in them! Their spiritual illumination is being made obvious because of their persistent faith and unwavering love!

**The second observation we can make from Ephesians 1:15-23 about being spiritually illuminated is that ...**

**(2) A necessary component for spiritual illumination is a disposition that can rightly handle the knowledge of God. (1:17-18a)**

**A.** Paul specifically prays,

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<sup>4</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 4, p. 51). Eerdmans.

B. 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him**, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

C. The word translated as “**spirit**” is in the accusative case, meaning it’s the direct object of the sentence. In this sentence, it means that Paul is praying for the subject of the sentence (“**God**,” in the nominative case) to give the believers in Ephesus a specific kind of “**spirit**,” “**mindset**,” or “**disposition**.”

**Note:** “The word *pneuma* (πνεῦμα) has among its various uses the meaning, “a disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of anyone.” What Paul is praying for is that God might so work in the lives of the Ephesian saints that they will have the spiritual wisdom and a revelation from Him that is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work of energizing their human spirit.”<sup>5</sup>

D. The specific kind of disposition or mindset he is praying for them to continually have is one of “**wisdom**” and “**revelation**”. “**Wisdom**” concerns our ability to act on or use the right information properly, while the word “**revelation**” concerns our ability to properly understand information.

E. The specific context or location of that disposition has to do with “**the knowledge of him**” (more on the details of this in our third observation). He wants the believers in Ephesus to be eager and capable of rightly understanding the knowledge of God and His Gospel (**revelation**). They also need a spirit of **wisdom** that is eager and capable of applying it properly!

F. Also notice that Paul equates having the “**spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him**” as “**18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.**” If a person doesn’t both understand something properly and use it properly, they are not at all enlightened. Without **revelation** and **wisdom**, they are a light bulb that is still very much not lit or of any use! It’s why K.S. Wuest wrote,

G. “**The words [‘having the eyes of your hearts enlightened’] ... are explanatory of the act of God giving the saints a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the sphere of a full knowledge of Him.**”<sup>6</sup>

H. Imagine you were given a hammer and you used it to smash the power button on your TV to turn it on; or you after being given a life jacket, you took it home and wore it every time you took a shower; or after being given an A5 Wagyu Beef Ribeye Steak you used it as a paper weight instead of cooking it with a Sous Vide to a perfect 130 degrees and finishing it off with a crisp sear in a super-hot cast

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<sup>5</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 4, p. 52). Eerdmans.

<sup>6</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 4, p. 53). Eerdmans.

iron skillet before eating it! In each of these examples, we see a lack of understanding or wisdom, or a combination of the two, but either way, you wouldn't apply the word enlightened to any of them!

- I. Also, notice that Paul is praying for the “**eyes**” of their hearts to be enlightened. The “**eyes**” are the window of understanding. Illumination is known through our eyes, but Paul adds that he's not praying this simply for the sake of our intellect, but rather, when we have an eager and capable spirit of wisdom and revelation in the context of the knowledge of God, it opens the door for our hearts to be brought out of darkness and ignorance and into light and life!
- J. In the ancient mind, the “**heart**” isn't just a reference to a person's emotional state, but it is the summation of who a person is. The heart of a person is inseparably who they are, so much so that no matter how hard they try, it will eventually prove itself to everybody.
- K. This means the ability of your heart, the summation of who you are, to see God and His life as they really are, to the point that you can't unsee it and as such are forever changed by it (illuminated), is synonymous with having a disposition or mindset of wisdom and revelation in the context of the proper knowledge of God.
- L. Now, again, this is not something we ourselves can produce, which is why Paul is asking GOD to do this work in the lives of the believers in Ephesus! This certainly happened at some level for us to even repent and believe in Jesus. But we, unlike a standard light bulb that is simply illuminated or not, are more like a dimmable light bulb that can get brighter and brighter! Therefore, Paul, seeing the evidence that they have been illuminated, is praying for God to do more of that work within them so that they will become brighter and brighter lights of God and His life!
- M. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Paul isn't praying for God to make them reflectors of light, but to be that light! God didn't make us to be mirrors; He's made us to be illuminated light bulbs that grow in brightness as we grow in the wisdom and revelation of His Word. This takes us right to the third observation.

**The third observation we can make from Ephesians 1:15-23 about being spiritually illuminated is that ...**

- (3) **The fuel that spiritually illuminates us is the Gospel—the right information about who God is, and all He has done, is doing, and will do through Christ! (1:18b-23)**

- A. **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**,<sup>19</sup> and what is **the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us** who believe, **according to**

**the working of his great might 20 that he worked 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 above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things 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.**

**B.** Paul prays, “**that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,**” so that they can truly know stuff. But it’s not just any stuff, nor even general stuff about God, but specifically three subject matters about God and His work. Paul says, “**that you may know what is**”:

**1. “the hope to which he has called you,”**

- a. “Hope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19), because it gives stability to the Christian life. But hope is not simply a ‘wish’ (I wish that such-and-such would take place); rather, it is that which latches on to the certainty of the promises of the future that God has made.”<sup>7</sup>
- b. “This hope is firmly grounded in God’s infallible promises. It is the soul’s anchor, moored to the very throne of God; hence, to the very heart of Christ (Heb. 6:18–20). It is therefore a fervent yearning, confident expectation, and patient waiting for the fulfilment of God’s promises, a full *Christ-centered* (cf. Col. 1:27) assurance that these promises will indeed be realized. It is a living and sanctifying force (1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:3).”<sup>8</sup>
- c. Paul’s prayer is that they will know the hope that God has called them into through Christ, a very different kind of hope than what can be found and latched onto in this world. The hope we have from God is not of this world nor attainable by anything in this world. The hope we have is entirely of God and entirely by God. Therefore, when this hope takes hold of our souls, this hope that He has called us into, it changes us in a way that can’t be undone or ignored!
- d. There is a powerful effect on our lives when we know that the glory of what we are laboring for is immeasurable and guaranteed! Imagine if I told you there was a safe containing 1,000 pounds of pure, solid gold buried in your backyard, and you had absolutely no reason to believe otherwise. You would dig with more vigor than you’ve ever dug before!

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<sup>7</sup> Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (p. 40). Christian Focus Publications.

<sup>8</sup> Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Ephesians* (Vol. 7, p. 99). Baker Book House.

You wouldn't bother going to work or taking any vacation time. You would work around the clock until you dug up that safe!

- e. Much more important and impactful is the hope we have in Christ. All the gold in the world can't buy it, and when it's properly understood and applied, it is a fuel that illuminates us in a way that is unlike any other hope we can cling to! It's why Paul wrote this to Timothy,
- f. **"For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God," (1 Timothy 4:10)**
- g. Paul says we can do really hard and heavy things (the nature of "toil" and "strive") BECAUSE of the HOPE we have! There is an unmistakable, powerful effect on our lives when we truly begin to know the hope we have been given in Christ.
- h. However, for your hope to motivate you, it's got to be bigger than the suffering of your toil; if not, your toil isn't worth what you're hoping for, and you will quit! Therefore, the second subject Paul prays they understand is:

2. **"the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,"**

- a. **"Riches"** – **"78.15 πλοῦτος<sup>b</sup>, ου m and n; πλουσίως<sup>b</sup>:** a high point on any scale and having the implication of value as well as abundance—'great, abundant, abundantly, greatly, extremely.'"<sup>9</sup>
- b. "The Greek expression, like the English, could mean either God's inheritance or ours, that is, either the inheritance he receives or the inheritance he bestows. Some commentators take it in the former sense and understand it to refer to the inheritance which God possesses among his people. Certainly the Old Testament authors taught consistently that God's people were his 'inheritance' or 'possession', and in the last chapter we found a reference to this truth in verses 12 and 14. But the parallel passage in Colossians 1:12 strongly suggests the other interpretation here, namely that 'God's inheritance' refers to what he will give us, for we are to give thanks to the Father, 'who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [\*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains\*](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 685). United Bible Societies.

<sup>10</sup> Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [\*God's new society: the message of Ephesians\*](#) (p. 56). InterVarsity Press.



- c. “Paul is speaking about the glorious riches, the marvelous magnitude, of all the blessings of salvation, particularly those still to be bestowed in the great consummation of all things.”<sup>11</sup>
  - d. Paul is praying that the believers in Ephesus truly know the measure of all we have in Christ! In rescuing us to be a people for God’s own possession, we have become sons and daughters of God and, as such, heirs to all God is and has! No dollar value could even begin to be put on that, but God still wants us to understand just how rich this inheritance is that we have been made a part of! Why? Well, let’s go back to my gold in your backyard illustration.
  - e. Imagine if I told you that there was 1,000 pounds of gold buried in your backyard, but you had no idea how much gold was worth. If you thought gold was only worth a penny a pound, you would be crazy to go through the time and effort to dig up and sell 1,000 pounds of something that would only provide you \$100. By the time you paid for all the expenses of digging it up, finding a buyer, transporting it to the buyer, and repairing the mess you made in your yard to dig it up, you might actually end up losing money! If you didn’t know the “riches” of that gold, you could very likely just pass over the information that 1,000 pounds of it was buried in your backyard and go on about your life as if it had never been said to you.
  - f. But what if you found out the gold was worth \$100,000 a pound, meaning it could be sold for \$100,000,000! Once again, you wouldn’t take one day off until you got that gold dug up and sold!
  - g. When we truly understand what we have in Christ, it ignites our souls like nothing else! It illuminates us in a way nothing on this earth can! It increases the brightness of our lives to entirely new heights!
  - h. The third subject matter takes this even deeper. Paul adds,
3. **“19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might”**
- a. Paul wants the believers in Ephesus, and consequently us as well, not only to understand just how immeasurably powerful God is, but more specifically, **“the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.”** The subject of this section is the word “greatness.” It is the word with the nominative case in the phrase. Paul wants us to understand just how uniquely BIG and MASSIVE God’s power is toward us who believe.

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<sup>11</sup> Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [\*Exposition of Ephesians\*](#) (Vol. 7, p. 99). Baker Book House.

- b. Sam Storms notes, “This declaration would have had special significance for the people living in southwest Asia Minor who “lived in a milieu characterized by flourishing magical practices, the renowned Artemis cult, and a variety of other Phrygian mysteries and astrological beliefs” (Arnold, 167). In the midst of this religious diversity there was a common fear of hostile religious (i.e., demonic) powers. Paul’s prayer, notes O’Brien, ‘presupposes and emphasizes the supremacy of God’s power, which was shown particularly in Christ’s resurrection and exaltation to a position of authority over all things. In the light of this superior power of God, who works all things in accordance with the purpose of his will, there is no longer any reason for the readers to fear tyrannical evil powers.’”<sup>12</sup>
- c. This is why Paul then goes on to pray that they would know the specifics of the greatness of God’s power that he flexed for us when He saved us! The demonstration of the greatness of God’s power and might is seen no more clearly than in who Christ is and what God accomplished in Christ.
- d. **20 that he worked 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 above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things 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.**
- e. The greatness of Christ’s authority and power is **FAR ABOVE** any other law, authority, force, or kingdom. There is no king, no military, no company, no judge, no set of rules, nor any other force in all the universe that even comes close to his authority and power. He is FAR ABOVE them all.
- f. In a day when the name of the Roman Emperor was above every name, Paul says Christ’s name, that is, the value and majesty of his name, is **ABOVE** every name. There is no Caesar, no king, no president, nor celebrity that is even close, nor will there ever be.
- g. There is literally nothing or nobody that is not under his rule! **ALL THINGS** are under Him!
- h. And here’s where it gets cool: in God the Father putting God the Son in this position, we are in and under Him as the church, as His adopted brothers and sisters, so at one with Him that we are considered His

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<sup>12</sup> Storms, S. (2016). [\*Biblical Studies: Ephesians\*](#) (Eph 1:19–23). Sam Storms.

body, with Him in HIS greatness!! This is why the New Testament states, “12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Timothy 2:12).

- i. Bringing this full circle: understanding the greatness of His power illuminates us in a way that no other revelation can! Given that it's all in Christ, if properly understood and applied, it doesn't lead to pride and arrogance, but rather illuminates a humble confidence in us, unlike anything else in this world! If I'm in Christ and Christ's greatness is above all things in this manner, then what or who am I going to fear? In Christ, not even death itself should cause me hesitation!
- j. For those wanting to do further research, the following are comments from three scholars on the difficult Greek phrase at the end of the passage, translated, **“the fullness of him who fills all in all.”**
  - 1) “The statement **the fullness of him who fills everything in every way** is very difficult to understand and it has occasioned tremendous discussion by New Testament scholars. To be honest with you, I don't know anybody who can say with absolute certainty what Paul means here in this verse. He uses a loaded term and even adds a pun. He uses a term, a form of *pleroma*, which refers to the fullness of things. Some interpret Paul as saying that Christ's fullness is completed by the addition of the church to himself. As the body is given to the head, as the bridegroom receives the bride, so the church then fills up part of the plenitude of the very essence of Christ. The other important view of this is simply to say that Christ fills the universe because he himself is the *pleroma*, the fullness of God. The fullness of God dwells in Jesus and, since Jesus permeates the whole scope of his dominions, out of that fullness, he draws to himself the church. And so in a secondary sense, the church participates in the blessing of being linked to the one in whom resides all fullness. Either way, fullness is a loaded term with respect to spiritual reality. Elsewhere, Scripture makes it very clear that the fullness of divine things dwells in Christ (Colossians 2:9) and that the church is his mystical body (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12). And the Spirit in us is the benefit which we receive by being mystically united with Jesus in whom the fullness of all things dwells.”<sup>13</sup>
  - 2) “The argument with respect to the exact meaning of *fulness* in this particular case covers many pages in scores of commentaries. With due respect for the reasoning of those who defend other theories, and whose pleas in corroboration of their views have

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<sup>13</sup> Sproul, R. C. (1994). [\*The Purpose of God: Ephesians\*](#) (p. 42). Christian Focus Publications.

been examined in detail, I have, after lengthy study reached the conclusion that the following is the correct interpretation: *the church is Christ's complement*. In other words: "This is the highest honor of the church, that, until he is united to us, the Son of God reckons himself in some measure imperfect. What consolation it is for us to learn that, not until we are in his presence, does he possess all his parts, or does he wish to be regarded as complete." ... With variations as to detail, this view, namely, that the church is, indeed, represented here as *filling* or *completing* him who fills all in all, is also defended by Abbott, Barry, Bruce, Grosheide, Hodge, Lenski, Simpson, and many others. This interpretation to which I, along with all of those just mentioned, cling does not in any degree or manner detract from the absolute majesty or self-sufficiency of Christ. As to his divine essence Christ is in no sense whatever dependent on or capable of being completed by the church. But as *bridegroom* he is incomplete without the *bride*; as *vine* he cannot be thought of without *the branches*; as *shepherd* he is not seen without *his sheep*; and so also as *head* he finds his full expression in *his body*, the church."<sup>14</sup>

- 3) "The word "fulness" is *plērōma* (πληρωμα). Thayer gives the following: "that which is or has been filled; used of a ship inasmuch as it is filled (i.e., manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers; in the N.T., the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ." Alford says, "the meaning being, that the Church, being the Body of Christ, is dwelt in and filled with God: it is His *plērōma* (πληρωμα) (fulness) in an especial manner—His fulness abides in it and is exemplified by it." Expositors comments: "The idea is that the Church is not only Christ's body but that which is *filled by Him*. In Col 1:19, 2:9, the whole *plērōma* (πληρωμα) or every plenitude of the Godhead, the very fulness of the Godhead, the totality of the divine powers and qualities, is said to be recognized as Framer and Governor of the world, and there is neither need nor place for any intermediate beings as agents in those works of creating, upholding and administering. Here the conception is that this plenitude of the divine powers and qualities which is in Christ is imparted by Him to His Church, so that the latter is pervaded by His presence, animated by His life, filled with His gifts and energies and graces. He is the sole Head of the universe, which is supplied by Him with all that is needed for its being and order. He is also the sole Head of the Church, which receives from Him what He Himself possesses, and is endowed by Him with all that it requires

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<sup>14</sup> Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [\*Exposition of Ephesians\*](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 103–104). Baker Book House.

for the realization of its vocation.” “The all things” is “the whole system of things, made by Christ, and having in Him the ground of its being, its continuance, its order (Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:16, 17, I Cor. 8:6), ‘with all things,’ ... the universe itself and all the things that make its fulness” (Expositors).”<sup>15</sup>

**Challenge: Are you a dead bulb, a barely lit bulb, or one that is an ever-increasing illumination of how you and others can experience God and His life in this world?**

John Calvin wrote, “... nothing is more dangerous than to be satisfied with that measure of spiritual benefits which has been already obtained. Whatever, then, may be the height of our attainments, let them be always accompanied by the desire of something higher.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 57–58). Eerdmans.

<sup>16</sup> Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [\*Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians\*](#) (p. 211). Logos Bible Software.