

Redemptive Key #4

“Increasing in the Knowledge of God”

This is the concluding lesson in the four-part study, looking into the Redemptive Keys given to us in Paul’s prayer in Colossians, Chapter One.

Colossians 1:9

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” {10a} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him; being fruitful in every good work...”

Colossians 10c (NKJV)

“and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

Let’s look once again into the Passion Translation (TPT) of Colossians 10:b-10c t that we began the third lesson with.

Colossians 1:10b-10c (TPT)

“Then you’ll become fruit-bearing branches, yielding to his [God’s] life, and maturing in the rich experience of knowing God in his fullness.”

Paul described becoming *“fruit bearing branches”* as the way to *“the rich experience of knowing God in his fullness.”* This is the underlying point of Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-10. To properly grasp the meaning of this final part of Verse 10, I have chosen to look into his similar prayer for the Ephesians. It reflects Paul’s heart for all the churches he worked so hard to establish and watch over. Looking into his Ephesian prayer will provide useful insight into understanding the value and necessity of *“Increasing in the knowledge of God.”* Below, is Paul’s prayer to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:15-21

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, {16} do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: {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 {20} which 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 principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”

“the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,” (Ephesians 1:17)

Paul prayed that the Ephesians would gain more than merely humanly sourced or carnal knowledge. Paul’s encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road had previously revealed to him that only a spiritual encounter with God could take a person to such new heights of knowing Him. This wish for a spiritual encounter or the churches was a consistent basis for Paul’s prayers in his epistles. When Paul prayed that the Colossians would increase *“in the knowledge of God”* (Colossians 1:10), he had in mind that the increase would come from a divine spiritual encounter. There was nothing carnal about it. *“Increasing in the knowledge of God”* must come from *“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory”* (Ephesians 1:17).

In Ephesians 1:18, Paul pointed out two gifts, benefits or opportunities we gain from *“Increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

The first is that we would see *“the hope of His calling,”* with enlightened spiritual eyes. In the midst of this fallen, evil world, recognizing this *“hope”* takes us beyond the uncertainties and hopelessness of where we once were (and others are) before we answered the call of God. In this same verse, Paul tied the *“hope”* we have to *“the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* (Ephesians 1:17). As we combine these two, we see that, as children of God, we have an inheritance that provides us with a firm grasp on our eternal future with Christ. Without an increase in knowing God and His plan for us, we will miss the best God has for us. He desires to give us every opportunity for His very best - forever!

Two things are appropriate to understand here. First, there are no limits to how much we can learn about God, as He enlightens our understanding. In Ephesians 1:19-21, Paul further clarified the immense value of our *“hope”* and *“the riches”* of our inheritance as Christians, by explaining what it is that drives and guarantees this immeasurably valuable gift from God. He wrote, it’s *“the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.”* Paul was talking about divine power (the application of God’s omnipotence) that could never be challenged successfully. It stands and cannot be usurped, modified or cancelled. It has been forever established by the resurrection of Christ, who is now *“seated... at His [the Father’s] right hand in the heavenly places”* forever (Verse 20). The *“hope”* of our inheritance, as God’s children, is revealed and fully guaranteed by our knowledge of this immutable, fully sovereign power of God. It cannot be successfully challenged. As God’s adopted, redeemed sons and daughters, we have been given this assurance. This divinely given knowledge is far beyond normal human knowledge. It’s spiritually sourced from the Almighty Himself!

Second, knowing about God is good, but it’s far superseded by the superior experience of knowing Him in a very personal and intimate way. Paul understood the intimacy of such a relationship with God. It formed the continual foundation of his motivation to

become who he was - an unstoppable force for telling the world about Jesus. Therefore, it was not just Christ's power that Paul felt in his encounter on the road to Damascus. It was also the God-given love that the Lord showed him. This is what birthed and then built his relationship with the Lord. It motivated Paul to press on through every difficult and even life-threatening circumstance he faced. He never lost sight of what he called "*the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*" I believe this is a twofold prize. It's, first, our eternal citizenship in heaven; but even more than that, it's our opportunity to experience an ever-increasing love relationship with Jesus! Paul knew this was the real prize. Nothing else could ever be compared to it. Paul consistently expressed his thanksgiving for this prize of God's loving call, throughout his epistles. I have chosen another example to share with you from his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 3:8, 13-14

"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ... {13} Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, {14} I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

All four of redemption's keys you've read about in this series of lessons are divinely sourced, empowered and guaranteed. They have a spiritual quality that transcends everything natural. I'd like to encourage you to do your own Bible study of three more keys we could add to the four you have studied. These put a capstone on the issue of redemption. These three additional keys are given to us in the Book of Revelation to inform us prophetically of what the final outcome will be.

The Key of David

Revelation 3:7

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”

The Key of Hades and Death

Revelation 1:18

“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

The Key to the Bottomless Pit

Revelation 9:1

“Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.”

Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10, 14-15

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. {2} He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; {3} and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while... {7} Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison {8} and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose

number is as the sand of the sea. {9} They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. {10} The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. {14} Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

As this series of four lessons closes, the best invitation I can give you is not mine, but comes from the Holy Spirit. If you haven't made Christ your Lord and Savior... or if you have made Him Savior, but not Lord, here's His invitation. Your eternity hangs in the balance. Please heed the invitation to “Come!”

Revelation 22: 17

“And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

*May the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ always
be with you. Amen.*

Dr. Bob Abramson
