

Seven Things to Prayer for the Church

Ephesians 1:15-19

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

2020 was one of the most difficult years the world has faced in quite some time. The world was caught off guard by COVID-19, a disease that strikes indiscriminately and shows no partiality to anyone. And despite having to sanitize frequently, wearing a mask that irritates my sinuses and having to dance between orange and yellow ... church closed and open, I cannot help but feel overwhelmed with blessings! Over five years ago I got a text to meet with your pulpit committee that has since led me on a journey to teach and watch you my family grow! At Christmas time you showered me with gifts of sweets, money, and cards of thanks that made my soul just about burst with love! I wondered what I could as your pastor give to show my undying love for all of you and then I stumbled across a prayer of Apostle Paul to the church of Ephesus. By the grace of God, I have modified this prayer so that like Paul I might tell you my family seven things I am asking God to grant to you today and for the rest of your lives!

One: Prayer of Faith

Hebrews 11:1 states, “faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” I praise God that even though you have not physically seen Jesus you believe in Him and are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy (1 Peter 1:8) of having received every



spiritual blessing in our Lord (Ephesians 1:3). Despite many of you going through trials and tribulations I praise God that you continue to chase after your first love, Jesus, so that by your patience you might attain a higher level of spiritual maturity (James 1:2-4). I pray that your faith continues to grow so that you might be like king David and with God’s help slay the Goliath’s in your lives, be like Noah and Lot whose testimony was unshakeable in the midst of worldly unbelief, be like Joseph, Job, Paul and Silas who despite their overwhelming tribulations rejoiced in

the Lord, and be like Abram and Isaiah who despite not knowing the ministry path asked of them were willing to shout out “here I am take me” (Genesis 22:1; Isaiah 6:8). May your faith be greater than a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20) so that when the devil throws mountains of doubt upon your shoulders you will not grow weary (Isaiah 40:31) but with God’s help throw off the shackles of sin that so easily entangles and cast them into the sea (Hebrews 12:1-3)! Since all things are possible with Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13) may you never stop believing that you can do miracles greater than Christ did on earth ... all you need do is ask in

the will of the Father and it shall be given unto you (John 14:12-14)! Above all I pray my dear beloved family, never stop believing that His grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9) and by your faith you are justified (Ephesians 2:8-9) to remain God's very own children forever (John 1:12)!

Two: Prayer of Love

May the whole community continue to hear about your love that is patient, kind, does not envy, is not proud, does not dishonor others, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered and keeps no records of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). With all humility and gentleness, and with patience, may you continue to bear with and even celebrate each other's differences so that the



bond of peace we so richly enjoy might last and be a perpetual witness of our allegiance to He who bought us at a price (Ephesians 4:2-3; 1 Corinthians 6:20)! May you be "kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, for love covers a multitude of sins" (Ephesians 4:32). May God set a seal of love upon your heart so strong that not even the greatest injustices of this world can not provoke you to see them as perpetrators and curse them, but may you see the evilest of this world merely as fallen image bearers whom Christ's arms are still open wide (James 3:9-10; 2 Peter 3:9)! May our

community and the whole world know you are Christians because you love in word and deed (1 John 3:18, John 13:35). For those whom God placed under my care may you know that my love you continues to grow and that I am eager to serve you (1 Peter 5:2-4) by rejoicing when you rejoice, grieving when you grieve (Romans 12:15), feeding you when you are hungry (Matthew 25:35), praying for and listening to your needs and above all may I fearlessly and truthfully proclaiming to you the word of God (Ephesians 6:18-20). No matter how much my love for you, never forget that God's love is infinitely greater for "God so loved this world gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16). May you always know how precious the steadfast love of God is by continually taking refuge and rejoicing under the shadow of His wings (Psalms 36:7)!

Three: Prayer of Thanksgiving

I want you to know that I never stop giving thanks to God for the blessings of "election, sonship, redemption, revelation and the gift of the Holy Spirit"¹ that God has graciously given to our family! Out of the abundance of grace God has given you in Christ Jesus, may the peace of

¹ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 66.

God continue to rule in your hearts (1 Corinthians 1:4; Colossians 3:15)! I am so proud and thankful that you continue to exercise your faith through your love for one another.² May you



not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition make your requests known in accordance with God's perfect will that always comes to pass (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). When the devil throws his fiery darts of destruction may you not be overcome with fear (Psalms 56:4) but instead may your heart rejoice for the Lord is your strength and shield, a solid foundation that cannot be moved by the powers of this dark world (Ephesians 6:12-16) that is not our home (Hebrews 13:14). When you see the heavens declare the glory of God

(Psalms 19:1) and you feel the rivers of living waters flow in your souls (John 7:38), may your weariness turn into joy for in the proper time you will reap a glorious harvest (Galatians 6:9). Above all, may you enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise (Psalms 100:4). May you sing of the Lord's great love forever with your words, thoughts, and deeds so that your faithfulness and the Father's love might be known throughout all generations (Psalms 89:1-2).

Fourth: Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation

Like Paul, I keep asking that God would continue to give you a Spirit of wisdom so that you might not merely let life happen but know and apply His will to your everyday living.³ May you not seek the council of the ungodly (Psalms 1:1) whose opinions are based on the shifting sands of culture⁴ but instead seek truth and guidance from God who is the object of our devotion, adoration, and reverence.⁵ May the twists, tweaks, turns, and dangers of life⁶ not provoke self-reliance but instead a genuine desire to embrace of the Spirit of truth, wisdom and revelation⁷

² R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 37.

³ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 37.

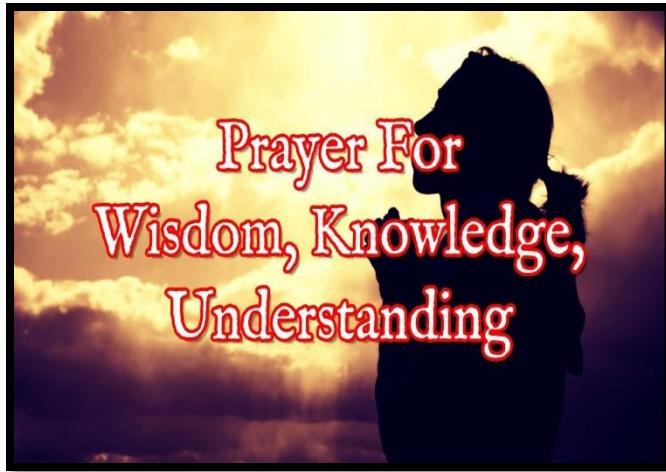
⁴ Anthony T. Evans, [“Experiencing Spiritual Wisdom’ \(Part 2\),”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2010), Eph 1:15–21.

⁵ R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 38.

⁶ Anthony T. Evans, [“Experiencing Spiritual Wisdom’ \(Part 2\),”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2010), Eph 1:15–21.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 34.

who alone (3:3-6)⁸ is able to teach and enable one to stay on the narrow path (Matthew 7:13).⁹ May your ears be opened to wisdom, your heart to understanding, may you cry out for discernment (Proverbs 2)¹⁰ as one who sees being transformed into Christ's likeness as a treasure



and pearl that cannot and will not be cast aside¹¹ to chase after mere trinkets of pleasure that are here today and gone tomorrow (Matthew 6:19-21). May you never be content with merely knowing about God but instead thirst with all your heart, mind, and soul to allow Him to cultivate furrows of love and personal involvement into your heart.¹² With reverence¹³ and with a sense of grace¹⁴ may you never stop approaching the Father's throne to ask and receive divine wisdom that cannot be obtained through human understanding or ingenuity.¹⁵

Through this special revelation from God, which is a "special gift, manifestation, or application of the Holy Spirit,"¹⁶ may you navigate your lives carefully and correctly,¹⁷ and with integrity that is "pure, then peaceable gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy"¹⁸ and with the

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, [*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*](#), vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 40.

⁹ R. C. Sproul, [*The Purpose of God: Ephesians*](#) (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 37.

¹⁰ Anthony T. Evans, ["Experiencing Spiritual Wisdom' \(Part 2\),"](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2010), Eph 1:15–21.

¹¹ Peter Thomas O'Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 133.

¹² James Montgomery Boice, [*Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 35.

¹³ Peter Thomas O'Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 133.

¹⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [*Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 35.

¹⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, [*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*](#), vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 40.

¹⁶ Arthur G. Patzia, [*Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

¹⁷ Anthony T. Evans, ["Experiencing Spiritual Wisdom' \(Part 2\),"](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2010), Eph 1:15–21.

¹⁸ Anthony T. Evans, ["Experiencing Spiritual Wisdom' \(Part 2\),"](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2010), Eph 1:15–21.

hope that though you see dimly now one day you will go home and see clearly! Let me tell you a quick story before we move on.

“Harry Ironside tells of meeting a very godly man early in his ministry. The man was dying of tuberculosis, and Ironside had gone to visit him. His name was Andrew Fraser. He could barely speak above a whisper. His lungs were almost gone. Yet he said, “Young man, you are trying to preach Christ, are you not?” “Yes, I am,” replied Ironside. “Well,” he said, “sit down a little, and let us talk together about the Word of God.” He opened his Bible, and until his strength was gone he opened up one passage after another, teaching truths that Ironside at that time had never seen or appreciated. Before long tears were running down Ironside’s cheeks, and he asked, “Where did you get these things? Can you tell me where I can find a book that will open them up to me? Did you get them in a seminary or college?” Fraser replied, “My dear young man, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in the north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me, I used to kneel for hours at a time and ask the Spirit of God to reveal Christ to my soul and to open the Word to my heart, and he taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I ever could have learned in all the seminaries or colleges in the world.”¹⁹

May you too from on your knees learn of the mysteries of God’s revelation and His blessings for your lives!

Fifth: Prayer to Know the Hope of His Calling

How I pray that God might open the eyes of your heart so that your “whole inner life with all its feelings, emotions and thinking”²⁰ might be focused on the hope in which you were called! May self not be the focus of your calling but may your hope be found in His calling!²¹ Though you had “no apprehension of spiritual things, no discernment and a foolish darkened heart,”²² even before the foundation of the world Christ chose to one day send ones to preach to you and through the illumination (2 Corinthians 4:6) and power of the Holy Spirit and by your faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ you became a new creation, born of the water and Spirit (John 3:5)!²³

¹⁹ James Montgomery Boice, [*Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 38.

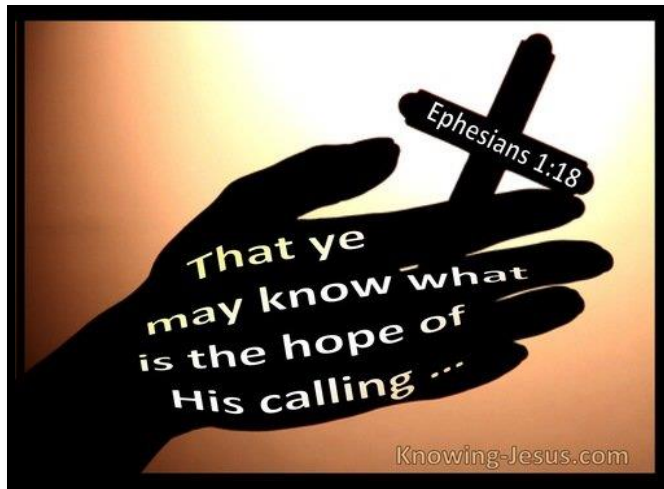
²⁰ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 134.

²¹ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 134.

²² C. H. Spurgeon, [*“The Three Whats,”*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 181.

²³ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 133.

May God continue to enlighten the eyes of your hearts²⁴ so that you might “grasp how wide and



long and high and deep is the love of Christ” and fully grasp the implications of having received every spiritual blessing in your Lord (Ephesians 1:3, 3:18)!²⁵ May you come to know that God’s grace, power, and glory are truly unlimited²⁶ and as such never stop praying for knowledge, wisdom, hope, glory, and power that comes from above.²⁷ Though you will walk through many dark valleys of tribulations may you consider them rubbish (Philippians 3:7-10) because this is not your home, you are going to Zion²⁸ as redeemed masterpieces of God’s grace into His

divine presence.²⁹ May God grant you “spiritual eyesight”³⁰ to know that the living (1 Peter 1:3), blessed hope (Titus 2:13) of His calling is certain (Hebrews 6:11) and irrevocable;³¹ for it has been sealed by none other than the Spirit of God Himself!³² So while you continue your pilgrim journey may you respond to His gracious calling³³ by living your lives entirely by faith³⁴

²⁴ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [The Letter to the Ephesians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 133–134.

²⁵ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [The Letter to the Ephesians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 129.

²⁶ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [The Letter to the Ephesians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 130–131.

²⁷ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [The Letter to the Ephesians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 131.

²⁸ James Montgomery Boice, [Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 36.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 184.

³⁰ F. F. Bruce, [The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 270.

³¹ James Montgomery Boice, [Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 36–37.

³² F. F. Bruce, [The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 270.

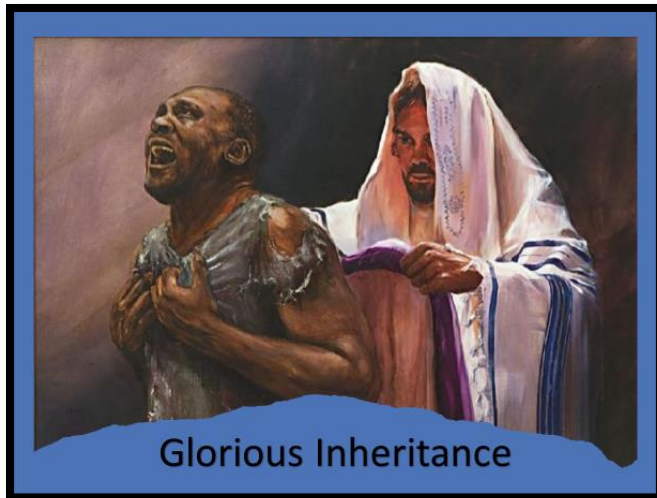
³³ F. F. Bruce, [The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 271.

³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 183.

that being called from out of darkness to light was just the beginning of knowing and becoming more like Him!³⁵

Sixth: Prayer to Know the Riches of His Glorious Inheritance

How I pray that God would grant all of you a deeper understanding of what it means to be God's possession (1 Peter 2:9)!³⁶ Though our sinful depravity is ever before us (Romans 3:9-18)



as brothers and sisters of a worm (Job 25:6), may we never forget that as partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)³⁷ we need not fear death (1 Corinthians 15:55) for there is no condemnation for those found in Christ (John 3:18) who has atoned and provided for our perfect justification before our Father (Romans 8:30).³⁸ Though you enjoy every spiritual blessing in Christ such as prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship, meaningful work, and the sacraments,³⁹ may you never stop looking up for the Lord who is our shepherd (Psalms 23)⁴⁰ who will one day

return to bring His treasured possession⁴¹ home to share in the glorious inheritance of the saints (Colossians 1:12)!⁴² Praise be to God on that day we will obtain absolute perfection, for what was sown perishable, in dishonor, in weakness and natural will be raised imperishable, glorified, and spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:42-43)!⁴³ On that glorious day God will forever change not only

³⁵ Arthur G. Patzia, [Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

³⁶ Arthur G. Patzia, [Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 167.

³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, ["The Three Whats,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 189.

³⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, ["The Three Whats,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 184.

³⁹ James Montgomery Boice, [Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 37.

⁴⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, ["The Three Whats,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 184.

⁴¹ Peter Thomas O'Brien, [The Letter to the Ephesians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 135.

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⁴³ C. H. Spurgeon, ["The Three Whats,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 185.

our bodies but will drive out every sin from our very hearts⁴⁴ so that we might feel our indebtedness to grace so intensely that upon arrival in heaven our fervent love for our Redeemer will inspire us to cast our crowns at His feet, and we shall ascribe our joy to Him alone who chose us to be His treasured possession.⁴⁵ Look forward to that the day when there will be no more aches, pains, weariness or death (Revelation 21:4).⁴⁶ In light of these glorious truths let us be in awe that there are more blessings to come that no eye has seen, nor ear has yet heard what God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9)!⁴⁷ So, never stop looking onward and upward, running the race as to win the prize (Philippians 3:14)!

Seventh: Prayer to Know His Incomparably Great Power

And finally, I pray that you might live your lives in full knowledge of the greatness of



God's power living within those who believe in the Son.⁴⁸ I know it is not easy to live holy lives amongst people whose depraved minds refuse to acknowledge God's existence and sovereignty (Romans 1:28).⁴⁹ It is especially difficult to feel joy when they persecute you because the Light within you exposes their evil deeds (John 3:20)! While this persecution seems very personal never forget its source is not flesh and blood but comes from the powers of this dark world (Ephesians 6:12). Then there are the tribulations that one must persevere (James 1:2-4) and the constant struggle to become living sacrifices that push

aside sinful ways⁵⁰ and embrace God's will in their lives (Romans 12:1-2). When you feel hard

⁴⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Three Whats,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 185.

⁴⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Three Whats,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 189.

⁴⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Three Whats,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 185.

⁴⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Three Whats,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 186.

⁴⁸ Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 167.

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⁵⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Three Whats,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 190.

pressed on every side, perplexed and persecuted (2 Corinthians 4:9) then please remember you have access to God’s incomparably great power that can free you from hostile spiritual powers⁵¹ that keep you in the “tombs of sin by evil habit.”⁵² Know that the sin that used to reign in your mortal bodies it is easily defeated by the power that lives in you,⁵³ i.e., the Holy Spirit, that raised Christ from the dead!⁵⁴ By the same power that you have known in conversion you will not only have your mind protected in Christ (Philippians 4:7) but will also have an impenetrable barrier⁵⁵ that not even the strongest of fiery darts of the devil can penetrate! Let me finish my prayer for you with this one final quote from Charles Spurgeon: “be willing to let go the sin which ruins you, be willing to learn the truth which will renew you; be willing to sit at Jesus’ feet, be willing to accept a finished salvation at His hands; and all the power that is wanted to lift you from this place to the starry gates of heaven is waiting to be shed upon you.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 138.

⁵² C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 190.

⁵³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 190.

⁵⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 190–191.

⁵⁵ Peter Thomas O’Brien, [*The Letter to the Ephesians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 136.

⁵⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Three Whats,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 25 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1879), 191.