

Moving Beyond Mediocrity | Get Rich #2 (Youth)

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In most areas of our lives, we usually don't want to settle for average. You probably don't aspire to be just an *average* volleyball player, or just *okay* at football or art or music. Yet when it comes to our spiritual life, we often settle for mediocrity. Many people have a genuine belief in God, they go to church, get involved here and there and try to avoid the big sins, but deep down, they long for more. They desire a deeper connection with God, greater joy in their life, a more constant touch of His peace and presence, but they feel a little stuck in a spiritual rut. Well the good news is, God doesn't want us to be stuck there; He desires for us to experience all the fullness and blessing that can come from a rich relationship with Him. And in [Ephesians 2](#), the Apostle Paul offers a prayer for Christians that highlights for us some of the key elements that can help us move beyond good toward great in our pursuit of God.

The baseline of pursuing God

This passage begins with Paul describing a healthy starting point for a pursuit of God. He praises the Ephesian Christians because they are doing well with the basics of pursuing God.

***Ephesians 1:15-16** Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you.*

He thanks God because they are excelling with the foundational elements of faith: loving God and loving others. This is the baseline of what it looks like to follow Jesus, and these fundamentals can't be ignored.

Yet, Paul wants more for these Christians than the basics, so he continues his prayer for them. In the next verses, he offers a 3-part prayer that reveals to us part of the path out of our spiritual rut.

Grow in your knowledge of God

Ephesians 1:16-17 I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

His prayer is for spiritual wisdom and insight that will enable us to move beyond a casual acquaintance knowledge of God, to a deeper, more genuine knowledge. He doesn't want us to know God like we know the guy we say hi to when we bump into him at the gym once a week; he wants us to know God like a best friend. The only way this will happen is for the Spirit to open up our hearts and minds to His truth – and two of the main ways God makes himself known to us is through the Bible and through our conversations with him in prayer.

If we want wisdom, insight and that deeper knowledge of God, he has provided a way. The Bible literally contains the words of God, and when we are familiar with what the Bible says, we start to understand God more and more. We need the words of God in the Bible combined with the power of the Holy Spirit to show us how these words can change us personally. Both are necessary if we want a greater knowledge of God that will move us out of mediocrity. As we start to understand our incredible God, we start to develop a hope of living forever with him in Heaven.

Develop an eternal perspective that is full of hope

***Ephesians 1:18** I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the*

confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

Look at those words at the end of verse 18: “rich and glorious.” Who doesn’t want those words to describe their life with Jesus?! As long as our hearts and minds are fixated on the earthly here and now, it isn’t surprising that God feels so far away. Sometimes, if we want to be close with God, we have to let go of things in the world that we really like for something we want more: a deep connection with God. It’s important that we learn to take our eyes off the things that slowly kill our affection for Jesus and focus more intently on the things that grow our love and excitement for Jesus and our hope of being with him in Heaven. After encouraging believers to set their sights on Heaven, Paul offers one more key to a greater connection with God.

Live a Spirit-empowered life on mission

***Ephesians 1:19-20** I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Jesus came here empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out a mission: to live a perfect life and then sacrifice his own life for ours in order that we might find eternal life. As his followers, our mission is to help others find eternal life in Jesus, and the same Holy Spirit who had enough power to raise Jesus from the dead gives us power as well. Yet too often we live with fear, timidity, and insecurity when it comes to our mission – we’re scared to really intentionally help other people. But we need to remember that the same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead is alive in us, enabling us to live for him! And we will only experience the fullness of pursuing God when we chose to use this power to live out our mission.

Don’t settle for a spiritual life that is good, but not great – God wants so much more for you! As you prayerfully read God’s Word, as you intentionally set your eyes on eternity and as you live on mission with the power of the Holy Spirit, you can move beyond mediocrity to the life in Christ you truly desire.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?*
2. *Read **Ephesians 1:15**. Which one is harder: faith in God or love for people? Why?*
3. *Read **Ephesians 1:16-17**. What does a casual, acquaintance-type knowledge of God look like? What would it look like to have a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God?*
4. *Read **2 Timothy 3:15-17**. What are some of the key ways the Bible can help us grow in our knowledge of God?*
5. *Read **Ephesians 1:18**. What are some of the dangers of a mindset that is primarily focused on the here and now?*
6. *What are some things that slowly kill your love for Jesus? (These aren’t always bad things...maybe sports, concern with your appearance, likes on social media, etc.)*
7. *What are things that grow your affections for Jesus? How can you get around those things more this week?*
8. *Read **Colossians 3:1-3**. How can we practically “set our sights” on Heaven on a daily basis?*
9. *Read **Ephesians 2:19-20**. What causes us to live our lives with timidity and fear? What would a more Spirit-empowered life practically look like?*

