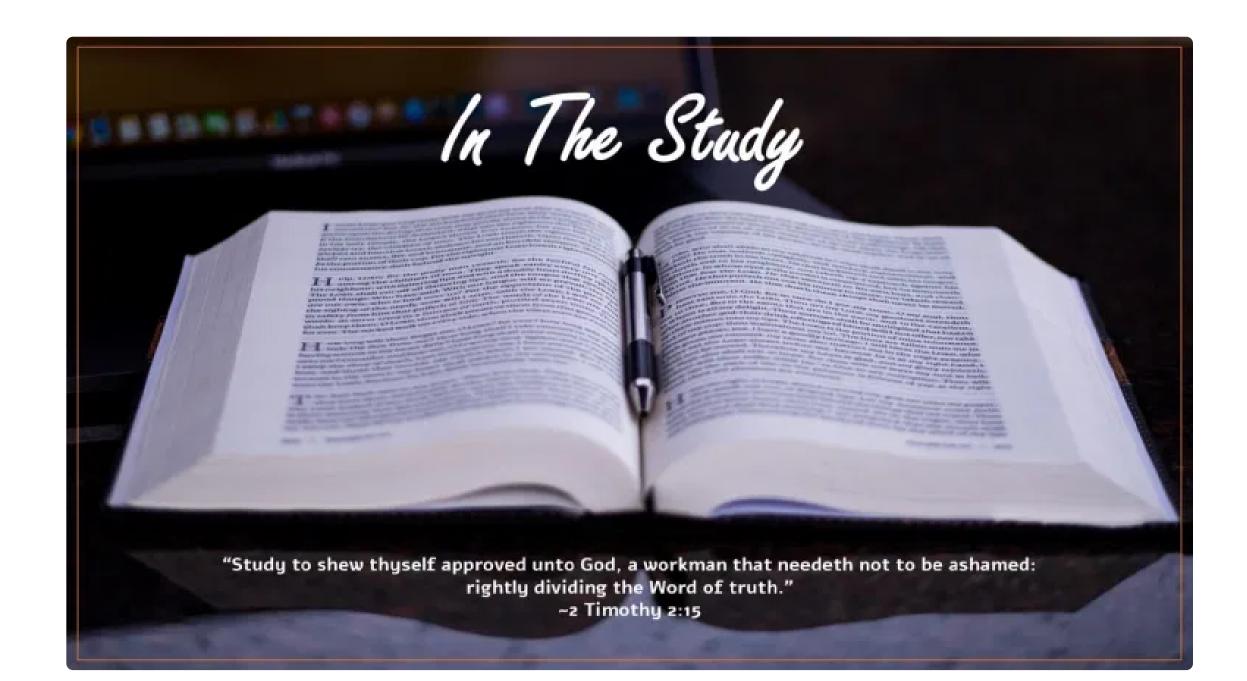
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In the Study: The Character of the Blesser

SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 / RICHARD PARKER III

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

- EPHESIANS 1:1-3

The main theme of this first chapter of Ephesians opens with a short, yet poignant statement, "**Blessed** be the **God** and **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who** hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings..." Upon first glance at this passage, it is easy to bypass the words Blessed, God, and Father, and move to the phrase "all spiritual blessings." Yet, the very meaning of the next several verses hinges upon this very phrase. It is the blessed God and Father **who** hath blessed us. Thus, the nature and character of our Blesser-the eternal God and Father-warrants special study and investigation.

Important Word Study

The word "blessed" comes from the Greek *eulogetos*, which literally means "a good word." This word appears eight times in the New Testament and is translated in each of these eight instances in our King James Bible as "blessed." In this particular context, the word blessed means to be worthy of praise or commendation; to be extolled. Thus, the main message the Scripture is trying to convey is that God is worthy of our praise and reverence. The next question we must investigate, then, is why is God worthy of our praise? Of course we know the short answer–because He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and infinitely holy. But let's dig a little deeper to investigate why the Bible would make this statement in the context of our passage here in Ephesians.

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Cross-Reference Analysis

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

- 1 PETER 1:3

This particular reference is worded extremely similar to our text in Ephesians. Notice the parallels between the two passages:

1 Peter 1:3

Ephesians 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy <u>hath begotten us</u> again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who <u>hath blessed us</u> with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

In both of these passages, the phrase "blessed...Christ" is closely followed by "hath...us." We see from this parallel that God is to be praised for what he has done; He is to be praised for His works. This is a truth that parallels with other passages in Scripture.

"Praise him for his mighty acts: Praise him according to his excellent greatness."

- PSALM 150:2

"Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, Talk ye of all his wondrous works."

- 1 CHRONICLES 16:9

"That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all thy wondrous works."

— PSALM 26:7

"I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, And of thy wondrous works."

— PSALM 145:5

It is also understood from the context of Scripture that the works of God are glorious and honorable because God's character is honorable and glorious.

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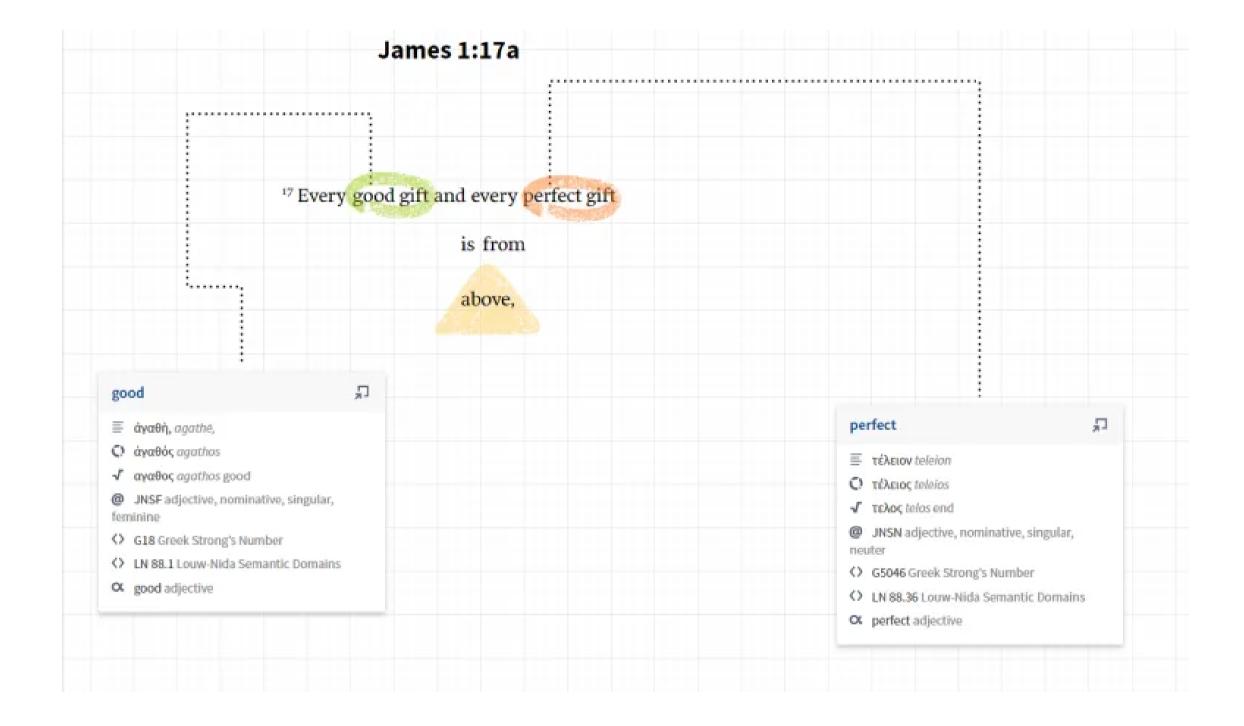
"Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: For that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."

— PSALM 75:1

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

— JAMES 1:17

James 1:17 seems to best sum up the fact that God's works and gifts extend out of His character. James reveals two things about God's gifts and two things about God's character that indicate how God's character unites with the nature of His blessings.



James tells us that God's gifts are:

- Good
- Perfect

The word good comes from a Greek word which has the idea of something that is naturally good in and of itself. The word perfect comes from a Greek word meaning to make complete or to finish. Thus, what James is saying is that the gifts that come from above (i.e., from God) are naturally good and complete in every way. In the next half of the verse, James parallels this with two attributes of God's character–His holiness and His immutability (inability to change).

"...and cometh down from the **Father of lights**, with whom is no **variableness**, neither shadow of turning."

— JAMES 1:17B

James describes God as "the Father of lights." The Apostle John tells us that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." This phrase, then, emphasizes God's holiness. Because God is holy, the gifts which he gives us do not reflect any wickedness, inconsistency, or confusion. God's gifts are given in accordance with His character as the Holy Light; they are innately good because they come from Him.

Not only that, but there is no change with God. The word "variableness" simply means a change or variation. Because God is immutable and is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the nature of God's gifts are such that they always reflect the consistency of His character. There will never be a gift which comes from God that violates His command or purposes. We may, at times, misuse the gifts which God chooses to give us, but in and of themselves these gifts are not meant to violate the nature and character of God.

Final Interpretation & Application to Text

Now, back to the book of Ephesians. We understand from this study that God is worthy to be praised because...

- He has done great things
- He is infinite holiness and impeccable Light
- He is completely unchangeable and abides forever and ever

It is the holy, unchangeable, and great God **who** has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. These spiritual blessings, as we will come to study in future articles, extend from these three principles of God's character that we have studied today.

May our hearts be warmed to intense gratitude for the fact that every gift, whether great or small, that God has given us reflects His holiness, greatness, and eternality. Any gift that comes short of these three character qualities of our God is not from above, but rather is of this world and is to be shunned and avoided at all costs.

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