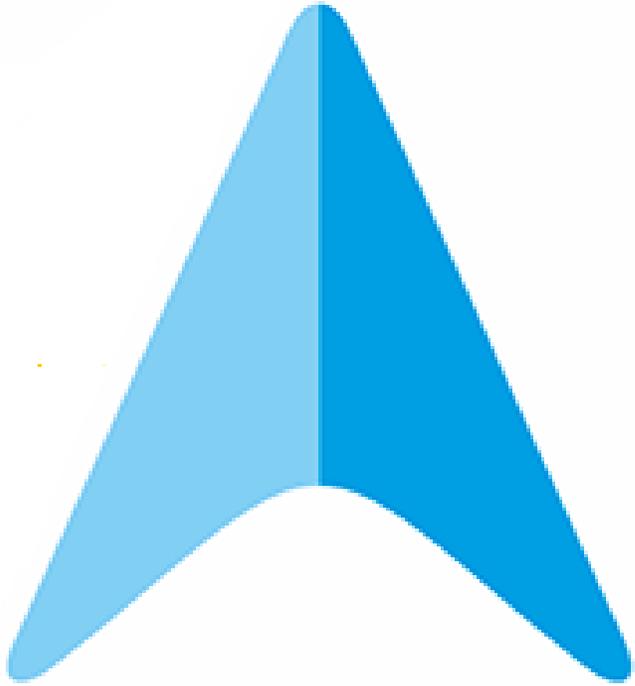

EPHESIANS

BECOME WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST

There are three very important threads that are woven all throughout the Book of Ephesians.





**The first is the
eternal position
of the believer.**



Position

**By 'position' we mean,
the believers holy standing
before God.**



Position

The believers' position is eternal, totally holy & unalterable, and is based on the accomplishment of Christ.



**The second is the
conditional practice
of the believer.**



Condition

**By 'condition' we mean,
the daily practice of the believer in
their thoughts, attitudes & actions.**



Condition

The believers' condition is temporary & may be either sinful or holy, and is based on their momentary actions.



**The third is the
immutable plan
of God.**



The Plan

By 'the plan of God' we mean,

(1) the planning of

our position in eternity past...



The Plan

By 'the plan of God' we mean,

(2) the plan of purposing

to use the Jewish nation and to allow

Gentiles to enter in...



The Plan

By 'the plan of God' we mean,
(3) the plan of purchasing
our position at Calvary through the
death of Christ...



The Plan

By 'the plan of God' we mean,
(4) the plan of placing
everything under Christ's authority.

Paul brings out these various aspects of God's plan at different points in Ephesians.

**Last week, we briefly looked at
the part of the mysterious plan of
God that included God planning
our incredible position from
eternity past.**

**This week, Paul talks more about
the plan of placing everything
under Christ's authority.**



The book of Ephesians is about
becoming who we really are.

**That is, that believers begin to be,
in **their condition**,
what they already are,
in **their position**...and therefore
fulfill **the plan** of God of bringing
everything under Christ's authority.**

Chapter



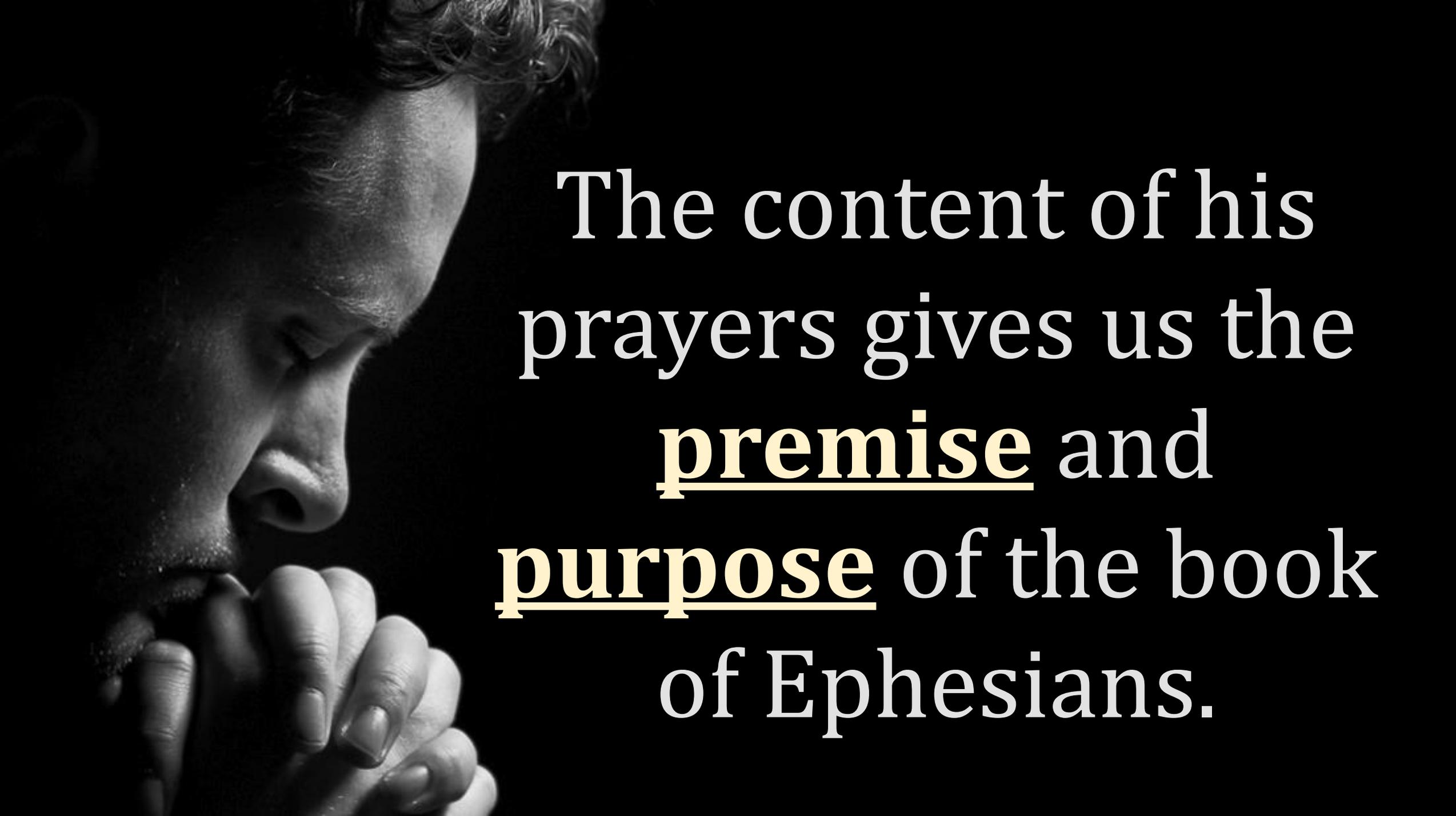
Part 2

(v15-23)

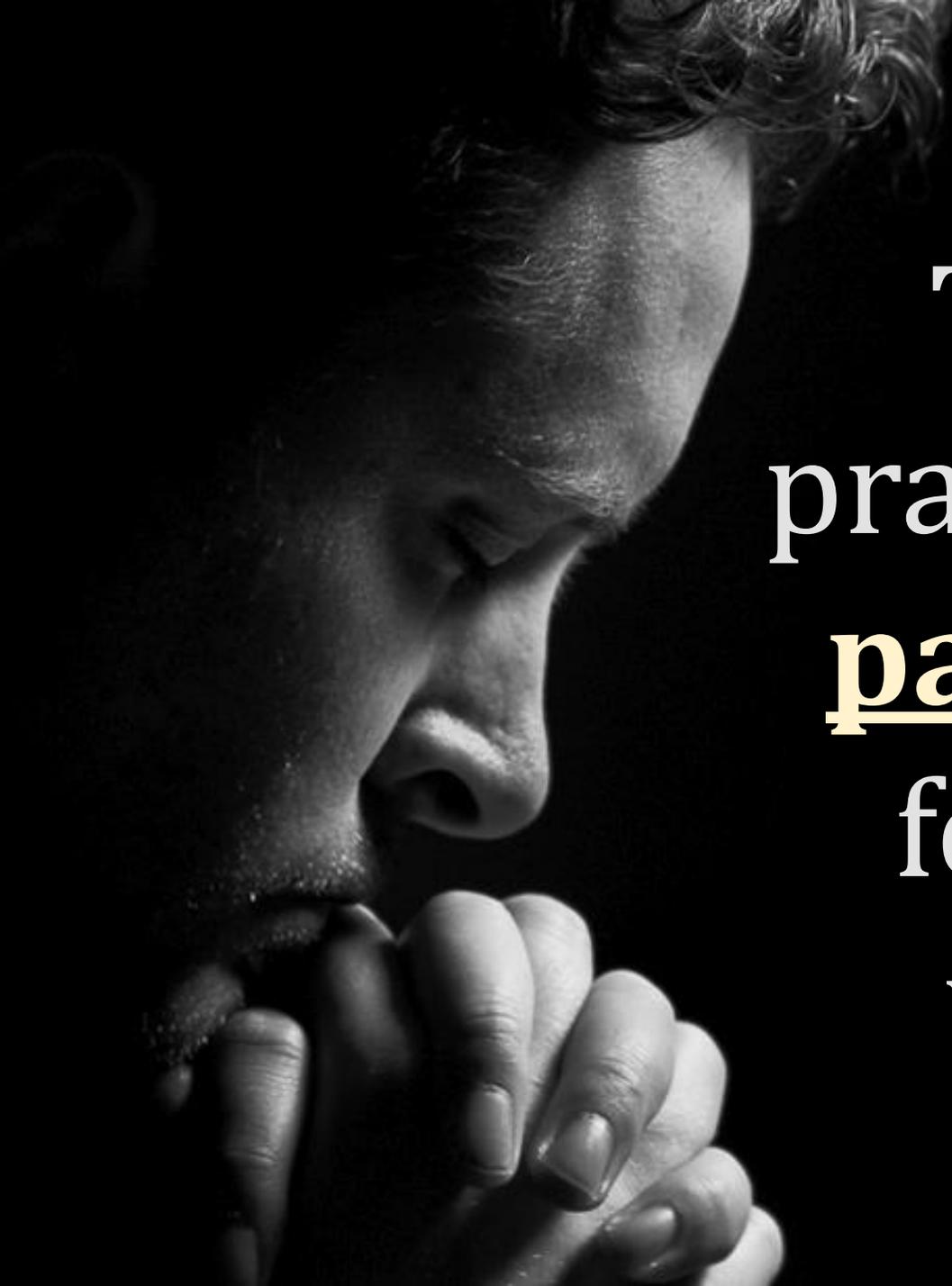
*Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. **I pray for you constantly...**(v15-16)*



Paul says that he is
fervently praying
for the believers
in Ephesus.



The content of his
prayers gives us the
premise and
purpose of the book
of Ephesians.



The content of his
prayers also give us the
path which we are to
follow in becoming
who we truly are.

**Let's carefully
examine this prayer...**



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. (v16-17)

The first thing that
Paul asks for is that
God would give
the believers
spiritual wisdom
and **insight...**



Paul says that the reason he wants them to have this wisdom and insight is so that they may grow in the knowledge of God.

Therefore the very first step in living out more and more in our condition who we really are in our position is a **growing knowledge of God.**

This first step is twofold...

(1) Growing in our knowledge and understanding (2) of who God truly is and what he has done on our behalf.

Summary:

If the believer is to live out their holy position, more faithfully in their fallen condition they must be growing in their knowledge and understanding of who God truly is and what he has done on our behalf.

There must be a continual

Knowing

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. (v18)



The second thing
that Paul asks for is
that God would give
the believers
confident hope in
their inheritance.

Paul prays that God would fill the hearts of the believers with the light of the truth of their new holy position and fill them with the hope of their eternal inheritance.

Therefore the second step in living out more and more in our condition who we really are in our position is a **confident belief in the reality of our position.**

This second step is twofold...

- (1) Having a confident belief and trust in**
- (2) the reality of what God has done for us and what God says is now true of us.**

Summary:

If the believer is to live out their holy position, more faithfully in their fallen condition they must have a confident belief and trust in the reality of what God has done for them and what God says is now true of them.

There must be a continual

Believing

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. (v19-20)

The third thing that Paul asks for is that God would allow the believers to understand his power on their behalf.



Paul prays that God would help the believers understand the incredible power of God and the willingness of God to work mightily on behalf of the believer.

Therefore the third step in living out more and more in our condition who we really are in our position is an **understanding of God's power on our behalf to help us in *action*.**

This third step is twofold...

(1) The understanding of and the walking in reliance of (2) God's enabling power to help us in action.

Summary:

If the believer is to live out their holy position, more faithfully in their fallen condition they must be walking in reliance of God's enabling power to help them in obeying.

There must be a continual

Relying

Paul goes on to close out the chapter by concluding that bringing everything under the authority of Christ in the world, in the church and in our lives is the goal of history.

Paul concludes that as the believers are **knowing, believing** and **relying** ...they will be bringing more and more in their lives under the authority of Christ.

Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and **has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.** And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. (v 21-23)

Paul says that God has put all things under the authority of Christ. We could say that all things are ultimately under Christ's authority...

...however **experientially** in the world around us and in our very lives...there are many things that are not submitted to that authority.

The goal of Ephesians and the entirety of the epistles is that we, as believers, begin to bring everything in our lives under the will and authority of Christ.

This is why Paul says in
1 Corinthians 10:5...

*We demolish arguments and every
pretension that sets itself up against the
knowledge of God, and **we take
captive every thought to make it
obedient to Christ.***

The goal of the life of the believer is to live out this holy position we have before God more and more in our condition and in doing so submit more and more of our lives to the will of Christ.

And again, Paul says that as the believers are **knowing, believing** and **relying**...they will be bringing more and more in their lives under the authority of Christ.

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and **has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.** And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. (v 21-23)

The goal is not only that we begin to
bring everything in our lives under
the will and authority of Christ...
but also that we come to realize that
**in submitting all things to Christ...
we benefit.**

Or put another way,
the more that the believer lives out
in practice (condition) their eternal
holy position (standing) before God
the more they and the corporate
body benefit.

God has put **all things under the authority of Christ** and has made him head over all things **for the benefit of the church...**

(v 21)

The true and lasting motive
for *obeying* God, *serving* God, *studying* the
Word of God...is because those actions are in
your and my *best interest*. They are for our
ultimate good and *eternal joy*.

The true and lasting motive
for *obeying* God, *serving* God,
studying the Word of God...

**is because those actions are for
our great spiritual benefit.**

When we recognize and truly believe that obeying God is in your and my **best interest**. And that following him is for our **ultimate good** and **eternal joy**... we are not only more apt to obey... but we also bring God great glory.

It is very **God honoring,**
God pleasing and God glorifying...
when we believe that obeying God
is for our benefit, because we are
admitting that he is the source
of our highest joy and greatest
self good!!

When we only obey God out of duty,
and only submit to Christ out of
obligation...all the while believing that
the source of our highest joy and
greatest self good is to be found
elsewhere, apart from God
(in sin, in self)...this kind of obedience
doesn't honor or glorify God.

**Our capacity to live according to
our new position (and not our flesh)
rises and falls in direct proportion to our
willingness to believe that what he instructs
in his Word is for our ultimate good
and eternal joy.**

We will be more apt to apply the Bible to our lives and live according to our new position when we believe and embrace the promises and instruction of God within *as more rewarding* and *more satisfying* than the promises of sin & disobedience and the comfort of living for self.

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and **has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church...**

(v 21)

If the church is to benefit,
if the believer is to
benefit...

That is, if the believer is to
experience true joy &
satisfaction...and have real
spiritual benefit...

They will willingly submit more often to him in their condition because they believe that submission to Christ is what is truly fulfilling or truly beneficial to them.

And when the believer truly believes that submission to Christ is the highest joy or highest benefit in all the world (especially in the midst of suffering)...God gets great glory. God looks like the all satisfying, good God that he really is!

Next Week

Chapter



Part 1

(v1-10)