



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

One – Studies in Ephesians

Small Group Discussion Resource

Message 3, A model prayer

Today we are examining Paul's prayer for the Christians at Ephesus (and us). There is a lot of confusion and mystery about how to pray for others, but today's passage might give us some alternative things to pray for. But before you jump in to this passage, have some fun watching this video again that we watched in the service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26sdgKEJ46E>

As usual, read this passage together and share the concepts that seem to jump off the page to you. Then pray that the Holy Spirit would illuminate your minds and hearts as you reflect on God's word.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit¹⁷ of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:15-23

1. Paul begins this section with the phrase "For this reason" (vs. 15). What reason is he referring to?
Hint: take a look at 1:11-14.
2. In verse 15, Paul refers to what he has heard about these Christians at Ephesus. What are those two things and why are they so important for a Jesus follower? (For bonus points, read Acts 19 and reflect on a bit of the account of Paul's past experience in Ephesus).
3. Read John 13:35. "Love" is said to be the calling card of the Christian. Why is that so?
4. Note that Paul said - I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. (Vs. 16). Why is it important to continue in prayer for others? Why is it difficult to keep praying for people?
5. If someone said to you; *if God is sovereign and if he has predestined us, why do we even need to pray*, how would you answer them?
6. Reflect on this statement: *When someone says "prayer works" it indicates that they have missed the point of prayer. Those people get very disillusioned when they don't get a "yes" answer from God. If someone prays and they don't get the answer they want, would they conclude prayer doesn't work? Jesus invites us to ask him for things, but prayer is not so much about getting things from God. Rather it is about aligning our will with His will.*

7. The big idea of Paul's prayer was knowledge of God. Why is that important? What is the relationship between knowledge, wisdom and revelation?
8. Proverbs 9:10 tells us - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Proverbs 9:10). How has this been true in your life?
9. Wisdom is the practical application of God's truth. But note that wisdom and knowledge are both dependent upon revelation. When we use the theological term "revelation", we are talking about what God has revealed about himself to us. Review the 4 types of revelation.

4 Types of Revelation

General or Natural – Psalm 119 says, the heavens declare the glory of God.

Scriptural – What has been revealed about God in the Bible.

Incarnational – What do we learn about God through his Son, Jesus. Hebrews 1 tells us Jesus is the exact representation of God.

Illumination of the Holy Spirit – What truths about God does the Holy Spirit reveal or make clear to us? John 16 says he will guide us into all truth. But note that all illumination of the Holy Spirit will always be in harmony with the other 3 types of revelation.

10. In verse 18 Paul prays - *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know*. Share a time when God enlightened the eyes of your heart.
11. In this passage Paul prays for three things. The first is for us to know the hope of our calling. Read the verses below and identify the correlation between calling and hope.

²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:29-32

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:9-10

12. Paul then prays that we might grab hold of the riches of our inheritance through Jesus. Why is it so easy for us to forget that we are rich in Christ?

Reflect on what Max Lucado says of this:

Think what this means. Jesus cashed checks out of a boundless account. Grudges didn't corrode him. Despair didn't control him. Mood swings couldn't touch his joy. His conviction was bullet proof. He was the Fort Knox of faith. And when we give our hearts to him, he hands us the check book. Max Lucado

13. How does understanding our richness in Christ affect the following?
 - Self-image
 - Security
 - Stress
 - Physical illness

14. Some Bible teachers align these ideas from Ephesians with the OT book of Joshua. In the book of Joshua, we see God had given his people the promised land, but they had to go in and claim the land and grab hold of it. Some people wandered in the wilderness and never took hold of what God promised them. Others understood God's promises and boldly walked in and took possession of all God wanted for them. How does this relate to these truths in Ephesians?
15. Paul then prays that we would know the greatness of God's power. Read aloud this passage: *¹⁹ his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,*
16. How would you describe "resurrection power" and "reigning power"? How does this play out in the life of a Christian? As a believer in Christ, we have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.
17. React to this statement: *When we think of the power to raise Jesus from the dead we may be inclined to think about the big stone being rolled away and the Roman legion being overpowered. A scene filled with fireworks. But those things were after the resurrection took place. Jesus was already resurrected before those things happened. Although immensely significant, it was in actuality, a quiet resurrection accomplished through the obedience of Jesus Christ. There were no bells or whistles, no explosions. But nevertheless, the result was that Jesus walked out of that grave. As Jesus was obedient to the Father, the miracles began. And the same is true for us. The power God gives us is an inner quiet strength to live the way He wants us to live.*
18. How have you experienced God's power (empowerment) in giving you the strength you need to accomplish something out of your comfort zone?
19. React to this thought: *Many people never experience God's power in their lives because they never step out in faith. There is nothing in their life requiring God's power. They wait for a feeling of God's power before they step out when in fact, God's pattern is the reverse. God's power is experienced as we need it and not before we need it.*
20. How have you experienced the truth of this verse? *I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13*
21. Spend some time right now praying for those in your group and others God has placed in your life. Pray these three things for them. That they would...
 - Know the hope of their calling.
 - Know the riches of their inheritance in Christ, through the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.
 - Know the resurrection and reigning power of God in their life.

Going Deeper

Read through 2 Peter 1. Reflect on the synergy between God's calling and our responsibility.