

Small Group Discussion Guide — January 12, 2020

- Series: “I Pray That” - Prayers of the Apostle Paul
 - Sermon: Life at a Different Level
 - Scripture: Ephesians 1: 15-21
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Consider printing the [12 Life-changing realities of the gospel](#) that David listed for us and keep it in your Bible as a powerful reminder of everything we have at our disposal through Christ.

CONNECT:

A new family moves in across the street from you. What’s the best way to “get to know them”?

- A. Take them out for coffee
- B. Play a round of golf / take them shopping
- C. Google

ENGAGE:

1. Read Ephesians 1: 15-21.
 - Paul’s audience is believers. What does this suggest about the fact that he assumes we will need to “know more” about Christ than we did when we first came to him?
 - He could have prayed for any number of things...prosperity, freedom from persecution, etc. Why do you think he prayed that we would “know him better”?
 - How would thanking God for people in our lives change our relationship with them?
 - What is this power that Paul speaks of in verse 19? What is its purpose? Do you feel powerful as a Christian? If not, why not?

APPLY:

1. Are we really willing to do what is necessary to “know Jesus better,” or are we comfortable with our current relationship with him? What evidence of your answer do you see in your life?
2. Although this question is usually asked from the opposite direction, is it possible for us to believe in Jesus intellectually, while our hearts are far from him? What does it look like to have a heart open to Christ?
3. How did you feel about David’s question, “Does prayer work?” Why is it so easy for our prayers to become transactional? How do you reconcile the idea that we’re supposed to pray about our circumstances (Philippians 4: 6), but also lift our prayers above our immediate situation?
4. David mentioned how discouragement can be devastating to our souls. How would raising our prayers to a higher level help to fend off discouragement? Meditate on 2 Timothy 1: 7 and discuss how the Spirit helps us in this regard.

PRAY:

Lord, as we go about our daily lives this week may we endeavor to know you better than we did the week before. May our time in your word be purposeful, may our prayers be genuine and without selfishness and the bad habit of blandness. Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

1. At the beginning of the service, David asked us to write down three things about which we've been praying. Since hearing this sermon and considering Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1: 15-21, how do you feel about your prayer list? Write a new list of three things you want to pray about this week, with the goal of real intimacy with God and knowing Him better.
2. One of the ways you gain understanding about historical figures is to read multiple biographies of them. Each new effort turns over fresh rocks that yield new information. In our desire to "know Jesus better" perhaps we should find biographies of great men and women of the faith who have walked with Christ through deep valleys and come through stronger on the other side. A ten-minute Google search would yield many such biographies from C.S. Lewis, to Martin Luther, to Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

References:

Romans 8:1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

Jude 1: 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you unblemished in His glorious presence, with great joy...

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

Exodus 3:10-12 Therefore, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses asked God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 "I will surely be with you..."

Excerpt from Lesson's from the Apostle Paul's Prayers, by Charles Spurgeon:

"Our main possession lies in hope. We carry a bag of spending money in our hands, but the bulk of our wealth is deposited in the Bank of Hope. And this hope means that the Christian expects a stormy voyage, but because Christ is at the helm they hope to come to the fair havens at the last. Christians expect to be tempted but hope to be upheld. Expect to be slandered but hope to be cleared. Expect to be tried, but hope to triumph. Sustained by this hope, they dread no labors and fear no difficulties."

"Hope takes into her consideration the most dreaded of all events, and weaves it into her song. The end of all things is not the end of hope. Is not this brave hoping? The hope of a person who sings on forever - living in the circle of divine love, dying beneath the protection of divine power, and abiding in the judgment justified by the divine justice: accepted in the beloved Christ, and beloved of the Father."

[Order "Lessons from the Apostle Paul's Prayers," by Charles Spurgeon from Amazon.](#)