

EPHESIANS

PRAYING FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST (EPHESIANS 1:15-19)

What do Christians most need to be praying about? A lot of us would simply say we should pray for whatever we want, anything that matters **to us**. After all, our wonderfully patient God is happy to listen to us talk about “all our stuff,” *ad infinitum*. But the truth is, the majority of Christians need to go to a much deeper level in our thinking when it comes to what matters most in our prayer lives. To prove the point, consider the top four prayer requests of most believers. We almost always ask God for ... (1) *Health* – O Lord, make me well. (2) *Circumstances* – O Lord, get me out of this mess. (3) *Finances* – O Lord, give me more money. (4) *Work* – O Lord, find me a (new, better) job. Hmm, give those requests some honest reflection and I think you’ll admit (if this is indeed what we spend most of our time praying about), that we’re working from a rather shallow perspective spiritually. So, let me propose something better and more aligned with what the Bible says supremely matters when we talk to the Lord. ***Our prayer list needs to reflect what most matters to God.*** Here, in the second half of Ephesians chapter one, the Apostle Paul supplies us with his own example of just such a list. Today we’ll see what the Holy Spirit wants us praying about as our top priorities by seeing what the Holy Spirit had Paul praying about as his top priorities. Discovering what God wants us to pray about is key to experiencing His answers.

1. (v.15) Pray for the ...
2. (v.15) Pray for the ...
3. (v.16) Pray for the ...
4. (v.17) Pray for the ...
5. (v.17) Pray for the ...

6. (v.17) Pray for the ...

7. (v.18) Pray for the ...

8. (v.18) Pray for the ...

9. (v.18) Pray for the ...

10. (v.19) Pray for the ...

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of this week’s message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don’t have to cover them all.

1. Read aloud **Ephesians 1:15-23** from two different versions like the NASB and the NLT. How important is prayer to the spiritual growth of God’s children? Are there some struggles you have encountered in building a prayer life of your own? What makes this prayer of Paul’s such a beautiful, profound, and instructive prayer for us to learn from?
2. Would you agree with Pastor John that many (if not most) Christians pretty much limit their prayers to the categories of health, finances, circumstances and jobs? Why is it okay to pray for these things? And at the same time, why is it a big mistake to make these sorts of things our priority requests? In other words, the requests we most want God to answer. Can you see how focusing on these things as our top prayer priorities reveals a shallowness to our walk with Jesus. When it comes to building really strong prayer lives, why is it important that ***our prayer lists reflect, as our top priorities, that which most matters to God.***
3. In the list of ten things that Paul prayed for in Ephesians 1:15-23, why does it make good sense that his requests would begin with praying for an increase in **faithfulness** to Christ and an expansion of **love** for all other Christians? If the Holy Spirit answers your prayer for greater faithfulness, how would He change you? If the Holy Spirit expands your love for other believers, especially those that irritate you, how would you be different? How would being more faithful and more loving make you **“mo betta?”** 😊
4. Paul prayed for greater **wisdom** (“big picture” perspective), **revelation** (epiphany, beatific vision), and **knowledge** (learning through experience). How can each one of these requests shape the way we see God, the way we discern right and wrong, the way we interact with the world and the way we share Jesus with others? Can you share a time when you had the Lord give you a special dose of wisdom, a special “glimpse” of Jesus or an experience with the Lord that taught you a lesson you’ll never forget?
5. Were there any other thoughts from Paul’s prayer that you wanted to share or questions about his prayer that you wanted to ask? As you close your group, with everyone joining in, pray aloud these ten prayer requests for yourself, one another and NCFE as a whole.