

EPHESIANS

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THIS IS WHY WE PRAY

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

Jesus never did anything outside of His Father's will. He lived life perfectly. How was that possible? The Apostle **Paul** accomplished more for his Heavenly Father than any Christian who has ever lived. How was that possible? Well, the answer to both questions is the same. Simply put: they both were **devoted to prayer**. If you read the Gospels, you'll see that Jesus prayed about everything. In fact, Christ only did and said what God the Father showed Him to do and say, in answer to His prayers. Jesus said, *"I don't do anything on My own initiative. I do only what I see My Father doing. And whatever I say is exactly what the Father has told me to say"* (John 5:12; 12:50). Likewise, Paul also prayed about everything in his life and told us to do the same ... **Never stop praying. This is God's will** (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). If prayer was this central to Jesus' and Paul's lives, then obviously it is the most important thing all Christians can do! So today, we're going to study one of the greatest prayers in all the Bible. As we do, I'm praying that the Word will teach us anew ... **this is why we pray** ... and that the Holy Spirit will motivate us to pray like Jesus and Paul did.

PRAY BECAUSE OF WHO GOD IS

(vv. 14-16a)

1. He evokes our ...
2. He is always ...
3. He is our ...
4. He is the ...
5. He delights in ...
6. He is beautiful in ...

PRAY BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD OFFERS

(vv. 16b-19)

1. The strength of ...
2. The kind of faith that creates a ...

3. The love of God from ...

4. The life filled with ...

PRAY BECAUSE OF HOW GOD ANSWERS

(v. 20)

1. A response that is ultimately, infinitely ...
2. The Omnipotent One working through ...

PRAY BECAUSE OF WHY GOD MADE IT ALL

(v. 21)

1. To receive glory ...
2. To reflect glory ...
3. To retrieve glory ...
4. To radiate glory ...

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 3:14-21** from two different translations, preferably one of them being the New Living Translation (NLT). In **verses 14-16**, Paul introduced this particular prayer of his by telling us he got down on his knees to offer it up to God. How did Jews in that time normally pray and what did it indicate when a Jew prayed from a kneeling position? When we pray, how can spending a little bit of time pondering the perfections of our God cause us to pray with more fervor and passion? Looking at the six observations that PJ shared regarding what our God is like, which one or two most stood out to you and why?
2. PJ drew our attention to the fact that the things we most pray for today (more money, better health, rescue from tough circumstances) seem rather shallow compared to the four things Paul was praying about (2000 years ago in **verses 16-19**). Can you see his point? Do you agree with it? Now, talk through each one of Paul's four prayer requests. What makes each one so special and how do they make life better for us as God answers requests such as these?
3. In **verse 20**, Paul makes it plain that when God is answering prayer, we will see two very clear aspects of how He goes about getting things done. What were those two characteristics that are there to be seen (if we choose to) whenever God is answering our prayers? Why is it important for us to always look for those characteristics through eyes of faith, staying true to the belief that God is continuously working from a good "Big Plan" and using His "Big Power" only for our good?
4. In **verse 21**, as Paul wraps up his prayer for believers, the Apostle draws a strong connection between our prayers and God's glory. One of the main reasons we pray is because it brings glory to the Lord. What were the four ways Paul says that praying can glorify God? How does this work? How does God get glorified when we pray? Should we be focusing more on praying prayers that put the spotlight on our glorious God?