

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

July 30, 2023

PAUL'S POWERFUL PRAYER

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is one thing you have seen God do this Summer?

➤ EXPLORATION

Prayer is a powerful catalyst for transformation. Throughout the bible we see examples of God's people praying. This week we are focusing on the prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed for the faithful believers in Ephesus.

It is clear that Paul cares deeply for these brothers and sisters in Christ and that he wants to encourage and strengthen them.

Ephesians 1:17-19 (From your bible, read aloud)

What stands out to you from this passage?

The first thing Paul asks is that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. He is referring to the Holy Spirit, who is the revealer of God's wisdom to every believer. Jesus had promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would always be with them.

John 16:13-15 (From your bible, read aloud)

Ephesians 1:13 (From your bible, read aloud)

The Holy Spirit reveals God's wisdom to the believer. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us and show us what God is doing and teach us how to follow him.

"The Holy Spirit is the most accurate and adequate revealer of the spiritual truths which it embodies. It may be seriously questioned whether the spiritual message of the Bible can ever be understood without the aid of the Holy Spirit." WB Commentary

1 Corinthians 1:18 (From your bible, read aloud)

There are people all over the world who read the bible and have no idea what it means – they might view it as a good book or as literature, but it is only when we have faith in Jesus Christ that we receive the Holy Spirit who helps us understand God's word.

What is your understanding or experience of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a gift given to us by God when we invite Jesus to be Lord of our life. It is not something we earn, the gift is given to all who believe in Jesus.

Titus 3:4-6 (From your bible, read aloud)

Jesus made provision for us to be renewed and refreshed by the Holy Spirit. What a gift! But this is not just for our personal enjoyment. This gift is given so that we can know Jesus better.

There is a difference between knowing ABOUT God and KNOWING God. The Holy Spirit doesn't simply give us information, the Holy Spirit gives us access to know God.

The word "know" comes from the Greek word, **ἔπιγνωσις**, *ep-ig'-no-sis* - which means to be enlightened, being joined with you, recognition and full discernment. It is more than a simple "Yeah, I've heard about Jesus." It is a deep in your gut recognition that "I know Jesus." And because I know him, my life is forever changed. This is the kind of "knowing" that Paul prays we will experience.

In his book, *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby says,

"Nowhere does the bible teach that God gives us a life plan and then abandons us to work it out. Rather, the pattern and emphasis in Scripture is a daily walk with Him in which He gives new assignments and then works through us to accomplish them... God is far more interested in a love relationship with you than He is in what you do for him."

What are some ways that you intentionally seek to deepen your relationship with Jesus?

Ephesians 1:18-19 (From your bible, read aloud)

The phrase "the eyes of your heart" is a poetic way to illustrate the idea of your thoughts and your emotions being unified. It's the difference between knowing (head knowledge) and knowing (heart knowledge) a deep and experienced understanding.

Paul is praying that we would have this deep understanding in order that we can know:

- **HOPE - God's calling**
- **CONNECTION - to God's holy people**
- **POWER - God's incomparably great power**

Romans 15:13 (From your bible, read aloud)

Isaiah 40:31 (From your bible, read aloud)

HOPE

The world is full of difficulties, but we have hope.

Through the Holy Spirit we find the hope we need in order to live the life God is calling us to live. Each day we have access to fresh hope as we stay connected to God.

CONNECTION

According to Paul's prayer, connection to God's holy people is part of our glorious inheritance. Look around you – these beautiful people are part of the gift of God for you. And you are part of the gift of God for them. Paul knew that we would need to be reminded that this is a **glorious inheritance**.

Ephesians 1:19-23 (From your bible, read aloud)

POWER

Paul also tells us that through the Holy Spirit we have access to God's **INCOMPARABLY GREAT POWER**. This power strengthens us to do what God has called us to do.

How do you imagine your life might be enhanced by a deeper understanding and reliance on the Holy Spirit?

> TAKE AWAY

Paul's prayer reminds us that this life is a gift from God. A gift that he will help me unwrap every day as I learn to know him more and as I invite the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom and revelation so that I can live a life filled with **HOPE**, **CONNECTION** and **POWER**.

Take some time to pray together, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide you this week.

> 1000 TABLES

There is still time to be part of 1000 Tables. If you haven't had a chance to share a meal with someone new, we encourage you to be bold and invite some people to join you for a time of food, sharing your story and prayer. Be sure to snap a picture and send it to us at communications@hillsidechurches.com

Join the fun! It's not too late!