

PRAY FIRST

The Transformative Power Of A Life Built On Prayer

LESSON 5 – MY PRAYER FOR YOU

*“Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” **Ephesians 1:16-18 (NKJV)***

How often have you told someone you would pray for them and then struggled to know exactly *what* to pray? Beyond a specific request or need of which you are aware, it can be difficult to know to pray outside of using vague and general terms. The challenge can be even greater when you feel led to pray for those whom you do not know well.

Fortunately, the apostle Paul gives us a great model for praying for others (as well as ourselves) in a letter he wrote to the believers in the early church at Ephesus. While most of these letters-or epistles, as they’re often called-proved instruction, doctrine, and encouragement, the one we now call the book of Ephesians contains a model prayer that Paul prayed for all these new believers.

The Picture That God Has For Our Lives

- A. God doesn’t want us just to *survive* but to **flourish**.
*“Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God.”
Psalms 92:13 (NKJV)*
- B. Like Death Valley, there are **seeds** of potential within all of us that are just waiting to be watered. These seeds will grow when we take the steps that God wants us to take.
- C. When we follow the path of **life** that God sets for us, it leads to fullness and joy.
*“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” **Psalms 16:11 (NKJV)***

The Pathway Of Life In Paul’s Prayer For His Churches

- A. Pray that you may **know** God better.
*“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” **Ephesians 1:17 (NIV)***

- 1. The word that Paul uses for know in the Greek refers not to mental knowledge but to **intimate knowledge**.

Quote ~ "When we pray GOD hears more than what we say, HE answers more than what we ask; HE gives more than what we imagine; but.... in his own time in his own way according to his wisdom SO....Keep on Praying." ~Unknown

- 2. Jesus was never looking for some type of religious following. He was always looking for a

relationship. He wants to have an intimate relationship with us.

3. Once we are in a close relationship with God, it empowers the next three steps in the spiritual journey. In fact, we can't do the next steps without this one.

B. Pray to overcome the issues that hold you back.

1. We all look through the eyes of our heart. We look at everything through the lens of what has happened to us in the past, so we all see things differently based on what has happened to us in our lives.
"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." Ephesians 1:18a (NIV)
2. All of us have something that holds us back from being the better version of ourselves—from moving to the next place in our spiritual journey that God desires for us. God's plan is for us to deal with these issues.
3. We go to God for forgiveness, but we go to God's people for healing. Power is found in confession and honesty and transparency. *God wants us to be free.*

C. Pray for God to reveal your real purpose in life.

1. We pray that God will help us to live in such a way that we discover our true life's purpose.
"In order that you may know the hope to which he has called you." Ephesians 1:18b (NIV)
2. Much of the New Testament is about the spiritual gifts, calling, and purpose that we have in the body of Christ as members of the family of God.
3. We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us.
The Greek word for grace in this verse is *charis*, and it refers to a divine enablement.
"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: Romans 12:6a",

D. Pray for God to use you to make a difference.

Quote ~ ***"God wants to use you to make a difference in His world. He wants to work through you. What matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of it. Not how long you lived, but how you lived."***— Rick Warren

1. Our real purpose in life isn't our careers, paying bills and surviving, or even just enjoying life. Our whole purpose in life is to make an eternal difference in the lives of others.
"The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people." Ephesians 1:18c (NIV)
2. Serving others helps us by providing joy and fulfillment in our lives.
Jesus said, *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*
John 15:11 (NIV)
3. If we want to find our purpose, we are going to need to get involved in our local church. We find our purpose when we are around the other members of the body of Christ.