

AN ENLIGHTENED AND EMPOWERED PRAYER LIFE

How should we pray for one another? Ephesians 1:15-23

A Heart of Worship leads to a Heart of Prayer

“For this reason...” (1:15)

- Because of the great redemption the Father planned, the Son purchased, and the Spirit guarantees (Ephesians 1:3-14)
 - Being chosen, predestined, and adopted by the Father
 - Being redeemed, forgiven, and united to the Son
 - Being sealed and guaranteed our inheritance through the Spirit

Testimony leads to a Heart of Prayer

“Because I have heard of...” (1:15)

- Lives transformed by the Gospel
 - Vertical transformation: Your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Horizontal transformation: Your love towards all the saints

Worship and Testimony leads to THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

“I do not cease to give thanks to you, remembering you in my prayers...” (1:16)

- Paul’s pattern of ceaseless prayer and thanksgiving:
 - “...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6
 - “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” Col. 4:2
 - “...pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances” 1 Thess. 5:17-18

WHAT DOES PAUL PRAY FOR?

1. God may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (1:17)

The Spirit of wisdom

- “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:2

Revelation in the knowledge of him

- “Revelation” = “illumination”
 - Communication of knowledge (previously hidden) to man by a divine or supernatural agency; especially proceeding from God or Christ.
- Knowledge = personal recognition
 - Coming to understand something clearly and distinctly as true or valid; often with a personal acquaintance

Intellectually	Experientially	Personally
Mind	Body and Will	Heart
What have you learned of His character, works, plan, power?	What have you seen and experienced in your own life and the life of others?	Do you cry out to Him in your deepest distress? Do you trust Him as a loving Father? Do you find satisfaction in Him alone?

The Role of the Spirit

- “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, **he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**” John 14:26
- “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **he will bear witness about me.**” John 15:26
- “When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and **he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me**, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” John 16:13-14

Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ

- SALVATION:
 - “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” John 17:3
- SANCTIFICATION:
 - “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection...” Philippians 3:8-10
- GLORIFICATION:
 - “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:9-12

WHAT DOES PAUL PRAY FOR?

2. Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened (1:18)

- The Heart: one’s inner self, mind, emotions, conscience, inclination, intention, will, courage, reason, determination, disposition
 - The inability to see is an issue of the heart, not intelligence
 - “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3
 - “For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.” Matthew 13:15

EYES OF THE HEART OPENED TO KNOW:

1. The Hope 2. The Riches 3. The Power

1. To know the hope to which he has called you

- Hope: the confident expectation of obtaining what God has promised; an expectation of what is guaranteed; to wait
- HE WILL RETURN:
 - "...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." Titus 2:13
- HE WILL MAKE US PURE
 - "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." 1 John 3:2-3
- WE WILL HAVE RESURRECTED LIFE IN CHRIST
 - "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2. To know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints

His people are the Lord's inheritance

- "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!" Psalm 33:12
- They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Malachi 3:17

The Lord is His people's inheritance

- "This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession." Ezekiel 44:28 (referencing the Levitical priests)
 - We are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)
- "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26

THE RICHES: Dwelling with the Lord unhindered forever

"...inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34

"...the promised eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:15

"...an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you..." 1 Peter 1:4

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5

"The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."
Revelation 21:7

3. To know the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe

God's power demonstrated in:

- The resurrection of Christ: POWER OVER DEATH
- The exaltation of Christ: REIGNING POWER OVER ALL AUTHORITIES
 - “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20
 - “Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Hebrews 2:8-9
- His power toward us who believe
 - “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:22-23
 - “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor 15:21-22

A PATTERN OF PRAYER

Paul, A Praying Man

“And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, **he is praying...**” Acts 9:11

Prison Prayers: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon

- Always spiritually focused, not materially focused
- Always accompanied with thanksgiving
- Prayed for God to reveal what they already had...not asking for what they didn't have
 - Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:3-14; Philemon 4-7

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him—
these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

4. Knowing the riches we have in Christ is the greatest defense against the allurements of the riches of the world. How does a deeper understanding of our riches in Christ change our relationship to our worldly riches?

Examples:

1. Burning of the magician scrolls (Acts 19:19)
2. Sacrifice of acclaim and prestige (Philippians 3:8)
3. Leaving earthly comfort and relationships (Matthew 19:29)

5. Have you had an experience where your eyes were partially opened to understanding, and then the Lord gave you greater vision and clarity of His power, character, riches, purpose, etc.? How was your perspective changed? How was your way of living changed?

HOMEWORK

These are the 3 paralleled prayers that Paul would have written around the same time as Ephesians while in prison in Rome. Take some time to read through these prayers and highlight or underline:

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Thankfulness | 4. Growing in Knowledge of the Lord |
| 2. Faith in God | 5. The Hope of what is to come |
| 3. Love for the saints | 6. Change in lifestyle |

“⁴I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.” Philemon 4-7

“³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:3-11

“³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. ⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:3-14

1. What stood out to you the most as you read through the prayers?
2. What was most similar to his prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23?
3. How does Paul's focus in prayer change how you seek to pray for other believers?
4. How does greater understanding of the hope, riches, and power we have in Christ change how you live day to day? (Ethics by Eschatology)
5. What might blind the eyes of your heart to know Christ and our riches in Him more clearly?
6. How can you rely on the Spirit of wisdom to enlighten your understanding of God on an everyday basis?