

Ephesians

Lesson 3 Ephesians 1:15-23

Participant Guide

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Lesson 3

Ephesians 1:15-23

Intercessory Prayer

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*

Prayers

Introduction

In his book, *How to Pray*, Pete Grieg describes the act of praying for someone as an unspeakable honor - standing between heaven and earth before the very throne of God, beseeching His favor as he makes decisions on the affairs of His kingdom. Intercessory prayer is a Christ-like way of loving others. We often wonder if our little prayers make a difference in facing seemingly insurmountable problems. Still, the Bible teaches that prayer is vastly powerful for our daily needs, others, our leaders and our nation, and especially against the spiritual struggles we face in this dark world. In this lesson, Paul models the act of intercessory prayer for the Ephesians. Paul prays for the extraordinary. He asks for the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom and revelation so they would know God better, have hope, know their eternal inheritance, and know God's incomparably great power.

Read Ephesians 1:15-23, Thanksgiving and Prayer.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Discuss

1. What prompted Paul to pray for the Ephesians?

2. In verse 15, Paul writes that the Ephesians had love for all the saints. Refer to the following verses and discuss some attributes of love for others.
 - a. Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- b. Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.
- b. James 2:14-16 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?
- c. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
3. Have you ever had a difficult time knowing how to pray for others? What were some things Paul included in his prayers for the Ephesians in verses 16-19?
- a. Verse 16
- b. Verse 17
- c. Verse 18
- d. Verse 19
4. In verse 18, Paul refers to the hope to which God called the Ephesians. In the scriptures, hope does not mean wishful thinking or by chance. It is the assurance of God's unseen promises. What are some of the things we can hope for in Christ?
- a. Colossians 1:24-29 **Hope of** _____
Col 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- b. Mt 11:28-30 **Hope for** _____
Mt 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

c. 1 Peter 1:3 **Hope for**

^{1Pe 1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
^{1Pe 1:4} and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade —kept in heaven for you

d. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 **Hope for**

^{2Co 4:16} Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

e. 1Co 1:30. **Hope to**

^{1Co 1:30} It is because of him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

f. Matthew 6:11-13, 31-33 **Hope for**

^{Mt 6:11} Give us today our daily bread.

^{Mt 6:12} Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

^{Mt 6:13} And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

^{Mt 6:31} So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

5. What riches accompany Christian's glorious inheritance (verse 18)? See also verses 1:3-14.

^{Eph 1:18} I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.

^{Eph 1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

^{Eph 1:4} For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

^{Eph 1:7} In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

^{Eph 1:9} And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

^{Eph 1:11} In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

6. What actions come to mind when you think about God's power (verse 19)?

7. What assurance do Christ's resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God in heaven give you?

8. Discuss a time with the group when you earnestly prayed for another person. What did you experience; extremes of emotion, urgency, joy and thanksgiving, burden?

9. What do you most often pray for? Do they relate to physical or material well-being or spiritual health?

Closing Prayer

Dear Gracious Lord and Savior, we join in the prayer you taught your disciples to pray.
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.
Amen