
Praying that They May See

Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction We have been thinking together about prayer in the New Testament. Our aim is to shape and spur our praying. We want to be a praying people. Not just for itself, but rather in the way the Bible is. We opened by looking how Jesus laid the foundations for our praying in Matthew 6. The trajectory for our praying was set as Jesus gives us God's agenda for praying. We should be praying for God's concerns.

We hope, not only to shape and spur your praying, but to make it practical and concrete. So we long for you to be praying for requests like these:

Father, I give thanks for all the people in my life, especially for _____ that they will receive Your grace and thus glorify you.

Father, please help me to be one with _____ so that our differences in _____ may be an opportunity to love and serve one another.

Father, the God of hope, please fill _____ with joy and peace in believing so that they would, by the Spirit, abound in hope.

Father, may the true gospel revealed to the apostles and preached to us, go throughout the world so that all people groups may obey You by faith.

This is the way we ought to pray. We pray these things because we know the God we are praying to. Our confidence is grounded in His character and our motivation is fueled by His promises.

We need to learn how to pray shaped by and savoring in Biblical truth. In our minds we must connect who God is, what He does and what we ask of Him. How important that we link our prayer and petitions to God (v.15-23) with our praise of God (v.3-14). This text drives home the importance of prayer that prioritizes the spiritual.

What we have here is *the prayer for spiritual perception*.

The Practice Observed

(v.15-16)

Expresses his confidence in their being recipients of the blessings

Its Motivations

(v.15)

Doctrine - The glory of God's grace in the context

Relationship - The evidence of God's grace in the believers

Its Focus

(v.16)

Thanksgiving - The grace of God in others lives stirs up gratitude in our own

Petitioning - The importance of praying for people with whom we are engaged in life

The Petitions Expressed

(v.17-19)

Paul's prayers so often flow from his theology

To Know God Better

(v.17)

"[Some] can devote thousands of hours to the diligent study of Scripture and yet still somehow display an extraordinarily shallow knowledge of God. Biblical knowledge can be merely academic and rigorous, but somehow not edifying, not life-giving, not devout, not guileless." D.A. Carson

The God We Have

Description of the sovereign God we come to know

How It Comes About

Grace giving the Spirit to illumine

What It Attains

Knowing God better

This is not abstract facts about God. It is a right knowledge of God in the soul that motivates us to intimate fellowship with Him. That is why we need the Spirit who is one characterized by wisdom and revelation. To know God better requires spiritual wisdom that comes through a real, personal uncovering or disclosure of God in the soul.

To Know Truth Clearly

(v.18-19a)

The effect of the Spirit is to give light to our inner eyes, our mind, so that we can see God's truth. All of us have had the "Oh, I see" experience with something we all ready knew. This is what the Spirit's work does in us. Listen to me! I fear for us as Christians that just because we can talk about truth that we have experienced the truth

So in view of knowing Christ better, they must more and more know items of truth.

Hope To Which You Are Called

You have been summoned into salvation to what end? Eternal likeness with Christ.

Riches of His Glorious Inheritance

You, yourself, are God's rich inheritance given to Christ.

Incomparably Great Power

What is this power for? To know Christ truly, we must also have a firm understanding of our standing in Him. We must have an eternity-based, Christ-focused view of ourselves in which God's power brings life out of death.

The Power Needed

(v.19b-23)

How do we measure the power of God? Where is God's power most evident to us? In creation? In miracles and healing?

The Expression of God's Power

(v.19b-20)

Sets the standard by which power is to be understood. The power of God is seen in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and by implication our regeneration and ascension into the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).

The Elevation of God's Son

(v.21)

The superiority of Christ is a part of His exaltation.

The Extent of God's Sovereignty

(v.22-23)

Authority over all the creation

Headship over all the church

Indwelling in all the Christians

Lessons

- We should respond to the news of someone's belief by asking God to help them in what they know.
- Let us learn to pray and ask for what God is pleased to grant. Here, the Christian is praying for new converts to have the grace of an illumined heart. We pray for each other that all over the Word of God and in every aspect of knowing God they will have, over and over again, the “O, I see” experience.
- Knowing the kind of God whom we praise in verses 1-13 requires the Spirit’s work of illumination and application. The aim and result is that knowledge and life are united in wisdom.
- Do we pray for one another that we may SEE? This is knowledge becoming FAITH.
- So let us pray prayers like this:

Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give _____ a spirit of wisdom and of insight in knowing You, having the eyes of their hearts enlightened, that they may know what is the hope to which they have been called, what are the riches of Your glorious inheritance in them, and what is the immeasurable greatness of Your power toward all of us who believe. I praise You, for that power is according to the working of Your great might that You worked in Christ when You raised him from the dead and seated him at Your right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.