

# WHY PRAY?

## Becoming God's Friend

Discussion Guide

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Sermon Title

### The Prayers of Paul

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Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21

#### Sermon Outline

**Introduction:** Having considered the background of God's perspective on life in this present time, and what His goals and objectives for our lives are, we are ready to move on to an understanding of what Paul prays for in the lives of the churches he has established, and why. His prayers in Ephesians stand out because they are offered for a church under spiritual attack. Ephesus was a church born out of deeply rooted occult and spiritistic practices; it was also a church that was headed for trouble from within the ranks of its own spiritual leadership. Here is what Paul prays for them:

#### I. That God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the true knowledge of Him.

##### A. The Request:

1. Spirit of wisdom—understanding and perception of spiritual truth & application
2. Spirit of revelation—to have spiritual eyes to see those things which God desires to reveal, beyond mere observational or intellectual ability
3. In the true knowledge of Jesus Christ—in *experience* as we walk ever more closely with Him day by day

##### B. Why Paul would pray this

1. It reflects his own singular passion in life: That I may know Him (Phil 3)
2. It goes to the heart of God's goal for us: That we may know Him and be made into His likeness and character
3. It brings us to a place where the adversities of life make sense, which will fortify us against the attacks and give us perseverance in the trial
4. Ultimately it brings us into a deeper understanding and awareness of God's immense love for us (Eph 3)

#### II. That the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you will know what:

##### A. is the hope of His calling

If we clearly understand our destiny as sons and daughters of God in Christ Jesus, and if we have some indication of what God has planned for us in His eternal presence, we have an appropriate indifference to this world's issues.

##### B. are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints

Similar to the hope of His calling, yet a somewhat different viewpoint, Paul wants them to understand who they are in Christ Jesus: joint heirs, the Bride of Christ, the joy set before Him, the apple of His eye, the glory of all of His character displayed in the story of redemption and restoration.

##### C. is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe

With respect to our present trials and difficulties, if we could only understand how great God's power (δύναμις) truly is, and fully believe by faith that there is nothing He can not do for us or in our defense, we can rest in Him in confidence that if we need it, He can provide it, no matter what *it* might be!

**Conc:** What at first seems obtuse and impractical, once understood, becomes a prayer whose answer will fortify us against all the storms and needs of our life.

*For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,<sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;<sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might<sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,<sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.<sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Ephesians 1: 15-23  
(NASB)



### Discussion Questions

1.) In what ways does your heart need to be enlightened in order for you to understand how very much God loves you personally?

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2.) Name some of the things you anticipate when you meditate on the “hope of His calling” for your life and the Church?

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3.) Name some of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

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4.) What is Paul's #1 goal in life? Do you share that goal with Him? How does that change the way you look at the things of life that are difficult?

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5.) When Paul says that he wants us to know the love of God which surpasses knowledge (Eph 3) how is that possible? What do you think he means?

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6.) How can you pray for others using Paul's prayers in Ephesians as a pattern?

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7.) Think of someone you are praying for right now. Would they appreciate knowing if you were praying this way? Why or why not?

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*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*  
Ephesians 3: 14-21 (NASB)

