



WHO PRAYED FOR YOU?

When you were young in your faith, did you have someone praying for you, like Paul prayed for the Ephesians? Who was it? What did they pray for? Were their prayers answered?

If this person is still alive, you could call them and get their perspective. What did they pray for? Were their prayers answered? You'd have an opportunity to thank them and give them an update and ask how you can pray for them.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

Often, we think of the book of Ephesians as being divided into two almost equal parts: the doctrinal foundations of chapters 1-3 and the practical applications of chapters 4-6. But here in the last section of chapter one Paul describes in detail what he was praying for his Christian friends. The immediate practical application of knowing the benefits of being in Christ is that we want to pray that the Lord would give to others what he's given us. Paul doesn't wait till the end of his letter to model a theologically rich prayer asking God to give these relatively young Christians: hope, an inheritance and power.

Read through Ephesians 1:15-23 and make note of three truths you can hold onto.

1. Thanksgiving prayers can be ongoing. Vs 16
2. Petition prayers can be ongoing. Vs 17
3. All three persons of the Trinity are involved in you knowing God better. Vs 17
4. We are called to hope. Vs 18
5. Our inheritance is experienced in community. Vs 18
6. God's power (the same power that raised Christ) is for us. Vs 19
7. Jesus is at the Father's right hand. Vs 20
8. Jesus is and will be supreme in power and position for all time. Vs 21
9. Jesus' supremacy is for the church's benefit. Vs 22
10. The big 'C' Church is the fullness of Christ. Vs 23

What do we learn about how God gives us hope in the following verses?

Romans 15:4 This is God's recipe for hope

Romans 15:13

1 Peter 3:15 How do our non-Christian friends see hope in us?

Colossians 1:27

What do we learn about our inheritance in the following verses?

Colossians 3:23-24

Hebrews 9:15 We are not only free of the punishment, but also the power of sin. One day we will be free of the presence of sin. All of this is our inheritance.

Romans 8:17-18 Suffering has purpose and meaning in the Christian life. 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 4:13, Philippians 3:10-11

Galatians 4:7

What do we learn about God's power in us in the following verses?

Luke 10:19-20

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

2 Timothy 1:7 Everyone starting a new job or a new school year should memorize and meditate on this verse.

Ephesians 3:20-21 This is a great verse to recite together at the end of a prayer time if you have it printed in the same version.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

In Ephesians 1:15, Paul has heard two things about the Ephesians: their faith in Jesus and their love for the saints. A song currently on modern country radio has a painful lyric in the chorus: "I hate church but I love you [Jesus]." Discuss how this all-too-common, modern sentiment contrasts with the experience of the Ephesian church. How about your own experience? Is your love for the saints (all followers of Jesus) keeping pace with your faith in Jesus?

Loving Jesus and hating his church is as non-sensical as publicly insulting or slapping a friend's wife and thinking that we can maintain a good relationship with the husband. Our theology of church involvement must go beyond dutiful obedience (Hebrews 10:24) and deep into love (John 13:35). Attending a worship service without developing friendships is just scratching the surface. This home group, these friendships, this is the Church.

In Matthew 6:19-24, Jesus uses the spiritual metaphor of light, dark and the health of our eyes. Interestingly, Jesus has this metaphor sandwiched between two powerful little paragraphs about loving financial security more than God. Reflect on this together as you discuss Ephesians 1:18 and Paul's prayer for enlightened eyes of the heart that can see and focus on our true riches in Christ. (the hope to which he has called us, his glorious inheritance in his holy people, his incomparably great power that is for us)

APPLY IT THIS WEEK – Choose a young believer and pray for them using Paul’s model:

... ever since I heard about _____’s faith in the Lord Jesus and his/her love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for him/her, remembering him/her in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give _____ the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that he/she may know God better. I pray that the eyes of _____’s heart may be enlightened in order that he/she may know the hope to which God has called him/her, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

PLEASE PRAY...

- For the people who were baptized at Forest Home last week (John, Cecilia, MacKenzie)
- For the many people mourning a recent life-changing loss
- For the young adults attending the Relationship Panel - a joint event with two other local churches on how to honor God in singleness, dating and marriage