

EPHESIANS
PAUL AT PRAYER
Thursday, September 10
Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23

Ephesians 1:16 *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.*

These verses contain an extended prayer by the apostle for the church. The main focus of this prayer is that believers would know God better. This is done through the Spirit's wisdom opening our eyes to the hope of God's call (1:17-18a), the riches of God's inheritance (1:18b), and the greatness of God's power (1:19-23).

We are called to be like Christ (see Romans 8:29-30). Our great hope (assurance) is that when Christ returns, He will finish the job He has begun in our lives (see Philippians 1:6). This hope should spur us on to live for Christ and build a growing, personal relationship with Him. Our inheritance in heaven centers on the fact that we will be with the Lord. We are precious to God because we are His treasure. This should spur us to live to please God and to serve in His power.

The words of S. D. Gordon, a popular speaker/author at the beginning of the 20th century, can be convicting. "The great people of earth are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray."¹

LESSON ONE: "Remembering You in My Prayers." How many times have we ended a conversation with the words, "I'll pray for you"? This is a fine thing to say, but do we actually carry through and do it! Has this statement become a cliché we use to sound spiritual? Do we really take the time to pray for each other? What is interesting is the subject of Paul's prayer. Paul does not pray for sick "Aunt Judy." His prayers take on a much more personal plea for the spiritual well-being of believers. This is not to say that praying for the sick and hurting is not important. We are told to "bear one another burdens." But do our prayers go beyond the physical well-being of people to their spiritual health? Read over Paul's prayer several times and write down the spiritual issues he mentions. Then add these to your list as you pray for people.

LESSON TWO: "That You May Know Him Better." The Christian life is not about obeying a bunch of rules, going to church, or being a good person. The Christian life is about knowing God better every day. Those other things are helpful, but your quest is to have an intimate relationship with God so you become like Jesus Christ. What are some key ways you can know God better? Chisel out some quality and quantity time with God this week. Meditate on His Word and prayer.

LESSON THREE: "His Incomparably Great Power." Why are we so timid about sharing our faith and living for the Lord? The power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at the right hand of the Father is available to all believers through the Holy Spirit. Maybe we cannot tap into God's power because we don't have a strong relationship with Him. Spend some time praying about areas you need to see God's power working in and through your life. Then step out in faith depending on His power and not your own.

¹ <http://www.christianquotes.info/quotes-by-author/s-d-gordon-quotes/>