

A prayer check-up

Ephesian 1:14-23

How can this study help me?

What would you say was your greatest need? If you take your bearings from this section of Ephesians, then you need, above all else, to know God the Father more intimately, to love Jesus with all your heart soul and mind and to be filled with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (1:17).

If, in the first part of this chapter Paul tells us how to praise God, then this section is the benchmark, an example of “best practice” in intercession. We would do well to meditate on these words long and hard if we want to become great intercessors.

What’s going on in this section?

- “For this reason ...” (1:15) is how Paul continues the reflection on his prayers. But what is the “reason” (motivation) that under girds the continuation of Paul prayer? (1:3-14)
- In summary, what needs does Paul pray for his friends in Ephesus? (1:15-19)
- Now Paul prays for his friends that you “may know him (God) better”. What is there to be learnt about God as _____ (v.17)? Where would you turn in the Bible to appreciate more deeply your relationship with God as the Father?
- Paul says that he recognises the Ephesians have the Holy Spirit (1:13, 14). But now he asks that specifically for the Spirit of _____ and _____ (1:17). Why is it important to have the Spirit in order to relate to God the Father?
- What do you understand to be “the hope” to which he has called you? (1:18)
- Paul seems to be saying that he can intercede because of three indisputable facts about Christ. What are they? (1:20-23) Why is the cross of Jesus presumed in all Paul says?
- Compare this prayer of intercession with another of Paul’s prayers in Col 1:9-12. What similarities and differences are there?

What about us here and now?

- Is it always true that praise precedes intercessory prayer? (cf., 3:14-21)
- Why must intercessory prayer reflect the full revelation of God as Father, faith in the Lord Jesus and the need of the (Holy) Spirit?

- Why is growth in intimate knowledge of the triune God indispensable to growth in holiness? (cf., 5:1)

So what do I need to do?

- When you think about praying for friends, do you ever get close to this pattern of intercession?
- When you intercede for people, how often have you asked for wisdom?
- How much are your prayers a function of the richness/poverty of your experience of the triune God?