

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, April 14, 2024

**Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Let's Pray
A Study of Ephesians 1:15-23**

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What's a "catalyst"? Describe someone in your life you regarded as a "catalyst" (in the workplace, in church, in your family/social circles). What difference did he/she make—what "got done" because of him/her?

You can be a catalyst when you pray for others. But because of this, the Enemy will work hard to sideline your prayer life. List the reasons why many Christians don't pray for others as much as they should.

Starting today and for the next two months, we'll learn how to pray for others by looking at how Paul prayed for others. We begin today in Ephesians 1.

Read Ephesians 1:15-16 and answer the following questions:

- ❖ What did Paul say prompted him to pray?
- ❖ If we pray for others at all, it's usually because of our fears or frustrations regarding them. What's the value in taking time in our prayers to identify where someone is making *progress* before we pray about our fears/frustrations?
- ❖ When we take time in our prayers to identify where someone is making progress, how does that lead to praising God?
- ❖ How well do your prayers for others match Philippians 4:8?
- ❖ Pastor Tom said that because Paul prayed like this, he was a "Catalyst" instead of just a "Critic." Does the way you've been praying make you a "Critic" or a Catalyst?
- ❖ If we're to start our prayers reflecting on someone's progress, is it wrong to proceed on to pray about our fears/frustrations?

In Ephesians 1, Paul said he constantly lifted up two prayer requests: That the Ephesians would gain ***a deeper experience with God*** and ***a deeper appreciation of his benefits***. Let's look at each request.

Prayer #1: A Deeper Experience with God

Read Ephesians 1:17.

What are the similarities and the differences between "wisdom" and "revelation"?

How does "the Spirit" give us wisdom and revelation?

If you prayed this for others and they began to gain greater wisdom and revelation, what differences would start showing up in their lives?

Paul says that the answer to this prayer will result in the Ephesians knowing God better. In what way(s) would you say you know God better than you did 5 years ago?

Prayer #2: A Deeper Appreciation of God's Benefits

Read Ephesians 1:18-19.

Paul uses the phrase "the eyes of your heart." What does that mean?

If he prays for the eyes of their heart to be opened, how can the eyes of your heart be "closed"? What are the consequences of a blind heart?

Once the eyes of your heart are opened, Paul says you will know three things: “the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.” Let’s look at each of these benefits.

First: Hope. As the eyes of our hearts are opened, we'll have a greater assurance of our salvation. (Paul calls it “the hope to which he has called you.”) What causes us to doubt that God loves us and wants an eternal relationship with us? What consequences result from this doubt?

Second: Resources. As the eyes of our hearts are opened, we'll have a more vivid reminder of the resources available to us. (Paul calls it “the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.”) You became an “heir” when you became a member of God’s family! What riches are available to you because of this?

Third: Power. As the eyes of our hearts are opened, we'll have a deeper appreciation of the power that is ours. (Paul calls it “his incomparably great power for us who believe.”) Read the rest of verses 19-23. What great event demonstrated the kind of power God possesses? With this power, is anything impossible with God? How do you need God’s power at this point in your life?

Take Five

Did you notice the daily exercise on the back of your sermon notes? Take five minutes for the next five days to pray for others. You will more likely stick to this if you set a regular time to do it. Which time of day will be best for you to “take five?”



Close with praise reports and prayer requests