

“WHO AM I?”

“THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER” (Ephesians 1:15-23)

Community Group Curriculum for week of October 26, 2014

Big Picture

It's likely that as Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians, he was in a Roman prison. In the first portion of the letter, he focuses on praising God for His kindness and the blessings He has bestowed upon us. The second part (this week's study) is focused on the Ephesians themselves – asking that they would know with their heart as well as their minds what God has done. Paul wants us to know fully all the benefits spiritual citizenship brings. He desires that Christians use all the spiritual resources at their disposal.

Let's Explore Together!

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-16. Paul gives thanks for the Ephesians' strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the love that they had for all their fellow Christians. He prays for them constantly. Can you truly love as described in this passage? How do you love those who are “difficult” to love? Can you be a disciple of Christ and not be loving to others? Discuss in your group.

2. Read Ephesians 1:17-19. In this passage Paul gives an eloquent example of how we should pray for our fellow Christians. What did Paul pray in these verses that the Ephesians would come to know increasingly deeply?
 - a) Verse 17 -

 - b) Verse 18 -

 - c) Verse 19 -

 - d) How would you change if your group prayed verses 17-19 every week for each other? Discuss in your group and make it a challenge that each of you pray this prayer every day for your group members.

3. Paul discusses several topics in his prayer for the Ephesians (vv. 18-23). Look up and then note how the following verses expand on those topics.
 - a) Your Hope in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:19-23; 1 John 3:1-3)

 - b) Your Inheritance through Christ (Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:3-6)

 - c) God's Power through Christ (Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7, 12:9-10; John 14:12-14)

4. Read Ephesians 1:20-22. Write out Paul's description of Christ's authority as stated in:

Verse 20 –

Verse 21 –

Verse 22 –

Why is Christ's authority important?

5. Describe the relationship between Christ and the Church that this passage describes.

a) How does Christ's position relate to you personally (Philippians 2:9-11)?

b) What role does RiverLakes Community Church play in your life? Is there a ministry you are currently involved in or thinking about being involved in? Discuss in your group.

IF TIME PERMITS: Read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12. Using this passage and Ephesians 1:15-23, what can we learn from Paul regarding praying for others? If others prayed for you this way, what is one specific thing that you would want God to change in your life?

Prayer

We too can pray like Paul. Begin by praying daily according to the model Paul set forth in chapter one of his letter. Pray the praise, say the thanks, and ask the requests for yourself and whomever God leads you to pray for, whether close to you or in distant places. May we be unified as a body to love our fellow believers (and non-believers), and to demonstrate that love to one another throughout our community and beyond.

Final Thoughts

This wonderful passage ends with verses 22 and 23. In verse 22 Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 as being fulfilled by Christ's exaltation over all creation and as head over the church. Being the "head" is like a present-day "head of government," and it points to Christ's preeminence as Lord. In verse 23 Christ has so identified Himself with His church that it is said to be His very body. The church, filled by Christ, fills all creation as representatives of Christ. Amen!

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A Powerful Prayer

Matt Vorhees
October 26, 2014

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INTRODUCTION:

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SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:15-23

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EXPOSITION:

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1. Know _____ (1:18a)

1. Know _____ (1:18a)

2. Know _____ (1:18b)

2. Know _____ (1:18b)

3. Know _____ (1:19-23)

3. Know _____ (1:19-23)

BOTTOM LINE:

BOTTOM LINE:

APPLICATION:

APPLICATION: