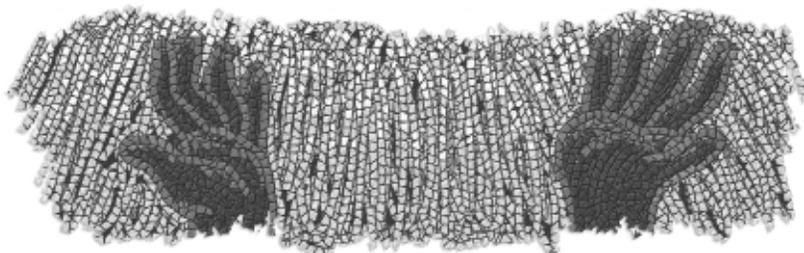


Praise and Prayer



SABBATH—OCTOBER 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Luke 1:37; Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 1:15-23; James 2:20, 26; James 3:13, 17.

MEMORY VERSE: “God placed all things under Christ’s rule. He [God] appointed him [Christ] to be ruler over everything for the church” (Ephesians 1:22, NIV).

PRAISE AND PRAYER. Paul had many struggles, many trials (troubles), and many griefs. But he was also a man of praise and prayer. In Ephesians 1:1-14, Paul lists the wonderful things God has done for us in Christ. Then he gives thanks to God for the faith of the church in Ephesus. This is because he has heard of their faith and of their “love unto [for] all the saints” (Ephesians 1:15). He then tells about his prayer of intercession¹ for the Ephesians.

So often we think prayer is only for those who are sick or in trouble. But Paul is praying for those who are doing very well. The lesson for us is that everybody needs to be prayed for regardless of what is happening to them.

Meanwhile, Paul’s prayer of intercession gives us a better understanding of what God has done for us in Christ. Paul’s prayer also gives us the great hope that is ours as a result of what God has done for us.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK’S LESSON: What was the spiritual condition of the church at Ephesus? How is love related to faith? How do we learn about God? How does Paul describe God’s power?

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, October 22.

¹prayer of intercession—a prayer for others.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 16**FAITH AND LOVE
(Ephesians 1:15, 16).**

Read Ephesians 1:15, 16. Paul thanks God for the Ephesian church because its members have faith in Christ and love “all of God’s people” (NIRV).

Christian thanksgiving is more than just being thankful. Christian thanksgiving must lead to a life that shows and shares God’s blessings in active, meaningful everyday living. The Ephesians lived such a life. They practiced their beliefs. While in prison, Paul heard about their “faith in the Lord Jesus” and “love for all the saints” (Ephesians 1:15, 16, NKJV). To them Christianity was more than a list of beliefs. Christianity was a call to transformed² living and strong relationships.³ Faith has three parts: (1) what we believe (doctrines),⁴ (2) who we believe in (Jesus), and (3) what we do as a result of what we believe and who we believe in. Faith works through love (Galatians 5:6). “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20, 26).



²transformed—to have been completely changed.

³relationships—the connections we have with other people.

⁴doctrines—church beliefs.

⁵Gentiles—people who are not Jews.

⁶witness—what our words and actions tell others about Christ.

⁷stewardship—the management of God’s property.

How would you connect the idea of “love for all the saints” with the idea that “faith without works is dead”? How are faith and love related?

The faith of the Ephesians was a living faith. They believed in the risen Christ. They claimed that through Christ, God has acted for the forgiveness and salvation of people. But faith is more than believing in a list of doctrines. Faith means being loyal to Christ. The Ephesians’ faith in Jesus showed “love for all the saints”—both Jews and Gentiles.⁵

Love, faith, and hope are the basics that show the Christian life (1 Corinthians 13:13; Colossians 1:4, 5). Our doctrines may be true. Our worship and witness⁶ may be good. Our stewardship⁷ may be faithful. But we cannot be Christians until we show love to God and love to people. This is the commandment Jesus gave us in Matthew 22:37-39. Why is it not possible to love God and hate people? Read 1 John 4:20, 21.

How can you show your love for others? What can you do in the next few days to show someone that your faith in Christ is real?

MONDAY—OCTOBER 17**WISDOM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (Ephesians 1:17).**

Yesterday we studied the first part of Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for the Ephesians' faith and love. Today we turn to the intercessory⁸ part of Paul's prayer (Ephesians 1:17-23). Often we are tempted to pray only for our needs. But the better part of prayer is intercession—praying for others. Paul prays that God may give the Ephesians "the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:17, NIV).

Is wisdom from the Bible only head knowledge? Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 2:2; Proverbs 4:5; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 11:12; Colossians 4:5; James 3:13, 17. Explain your answer.

Philosophy⁹ may say know yourself. Psychology¹⁰ may say that a person can find life's meaning through self-understanding. But there is no knowledge greater than the knowledge of God. The greatest knowledge we can have about God is the knowledge He Himself shows to us.

How has God shown Himself to us?

Psalm 19:1 _____

⁸intercessory—praying for others.

⁹philosophy—the study of human wisdom.

¹⁰psychology—the study of the human mind and human behavior.

¹¹revelation—to show what something or someone is.

Romans 1:19-21 _____

John 5:39 _____

John 14:9, 10 _____

Hebrews 1:1-3 _____



The heavens tell us about God.

God's revelation¹¹ in the Bible makes it possible for "you to know God better" (Ephesians 1:17, NIV). But "we cannot rightly understand or appreciate God's revelation without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy

Spirit helped men write the Bible.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 241. Paul prays that “your mind might see more clearly” (Ephesians 1:18, NIV). Believers need more than just knowledge. They need spiritual understanding so that, with the inner eyes of the heart, they may know better the following four great truths: (1) “the hope of his [God’s] calling,” (2) “the glory of his inheritance [gift]” (Ephesians 1:18), (3) “the working of his mighty power” (Ephesians 1:19), and (4) Christ’s leadership of the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23).



With the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we may understand the great truths of God.

How has God’s revelation of Himself changed your life? Why has it changed you? What would you be today without God’s revelation?

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 18

THE HOPE AND INHERITANCE¹² (Ephesians 1:18).

Write what you believe God is telling us in Ephesians 1:18.

In addition to wisdom and knowledge, Paul prays that the Ephesian church would understand fully “the hope of his [God’s] calling” and “the riches of the glory of his inheritance.” In Paul’s writings, the word “calling” points to both the right and responsibility of the Christian. God has called us to belong to Christ (Romans 1:6), and to have “fellowship with his [God’s] Son [Christ]” (1 Corinthians 1:9, NIV). Because of God’s call, those of us who were not His people have become His people (Romans 9:24). To those who are called, Christ becomes “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24, NKJV). Believers are called to eternal¹³ life (1 Timothy 6:12). The call makes them free. The call helps them “serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13, NIV). The call makes sure their fellowship is united and peaceful. The call makes sure their fellowship includes people of all race and class, because they are “called in one body” (Colossians 3:15, NKJV). God commands His people to lead a life “worthy of the calling” (Ephesians 4:1, NKJV). This calling expects us to be pure and to

¹²inheritance—the belonging of a relative that is given to another relative. God is our Father. He gives us many things that are His. These things are our inheritance.

¹³eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

live a holy life (1 Thessalonians 4:7, NIV) and a peaceful life (Colossians 3:15). This kind of life is “worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12, NKJV). This call to the kingdom is “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14, NKJV). This call should encourage us to press forward in the Christian race.

God’s call covers the past (forgiveness), accepts the present life of fellowship and peace, and awaits that “blessed hope and glorious appearing (coming) of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13, NKJV). This is the “hope God has chosen you to receive” (Ephesians 1:18, NIV). Paul prays that God will help us understand clearly how great His call is.

To hope, Paul adds “the riches of his [God’s] glorious inheritance” (Ephesians 1:18, NIV). We can understand this inheritance in two ways. First, believers are “heirs¹⁴ of God and joint [equal] heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17, NKJV). Second, the inheritance is what saints receive from God as His heirs. This suggests that inheritance comes in two ways: (1) the gift of salvation that we enjoy now and (2) a future reward that has been guaranteed (promised) and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 14). This final reward “is a gift that can never be

destroyed. It can never spoil or even fade away. It is kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4, NIV).

The Bible says we are to be “worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12, NKJV). As sinners, we can never be worthy enough to be saved. But because we are saved, we now want to live “worthy of God.” What changes should you make to show that you live “worthy of God”?

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 19

THE WORKING OF GOD’S GREAT POWER (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Paul’s prayer shows the need for wisdom, knowledge, and for understanding God’s calling and inheritance (gift). Paul also focuses on the need to know “his [God’s] great power. It can’t [cannot] be compared¹⁵ with anything else. It is at work for us who believe. It is like the mighty strength God showed when he raised Christ from the dead” (Ephesians 1:19, 20, NIV).

God is all-powerful. How is His power shown? Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 66:22; Luke 1:37; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

¹⁴heirs—people who receive another person’s property after that other person dies. Christ died for us. When we accept His death for us, we are His heirs. As His heirs, we can receive His gifts to us.

¹⁵compared—to show how things are the same.



The Second Coming and the first resurrection show God's great power.

Paul uses four Greek words in Ephesians 1:19 to show God's unlimited, great power. First, "the exceedingly [very] greatness of his power." The word for power here is *dunamis*. This shows God's ability to do what He has planned to do. The other three words for power are "according to the working [*energeia*] of his mighty [might = *ischys*] power [*kratos*]." Paul uses these words to show what God's power has done in the universe. *Energeia* suggests God's power at work. *Ischys* means intrinsic¹⁶ strength or power. *Kratos* is used in the New Testament only in connection with God or His Word (the Bible). *Kratos*

suggests the power that conquers everything or the power that is victorious. Putting these four words together, we have a powerful announcement: The exceeding greatness of God's power is seen in what He has set out (planned) to accomplish (do). This He did by going to work with all His strength and might and winning a great victory by subduing (overcoming) and defeating His enemy.

Paul adds that the great example of God's power is seen in what God has "accomplished [done] in Christ" (Ephesians 1:20, RSV). Paul shows this great power in three ways:

Resurrection:¹⁷ "He [God] raised him [Christ] from the dead" (Ephesians 1:20). To Paul, the greatest example of God's love is Christ's death (Romans 5:8). And the greatest example of God's power is Christ's resurrection (Ephesians 1:19, 20).

Promoted to Glory: "Seated Him [Christ] at His right hand" (Ephesians 1:20, NKJV).

Risen to Rule: "He [God] put all things under His [Jesus'] feet" (Ephesians 1:22, NKJV). Christ is Lord of the universe.

The power that brought Christ from the dead is the same power that saves us from sin. Then, why do we continue to fall if we have such a wonderful power working in us? How do our own choices limit what God can do in us?

¹⁶intrinsic—to be something naturally. God is naturally powerful. He has power because He is God.

¹⁷resurrection—coming back to life after dying.

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 20**THE CHURCH, CHRIST'S BODY
(Ephesians 1:23).**

How does Paul announce the great glory of Christ's full victory over Satan and His close relationship with the church? (Ephesians 1:20-23).

In the fourth part of Paul's prayer, Paul praises God because of Christ's resurrection and His return to His heavenly throne. Then Paul says that Christ's resurrection and return to His throne are important for two reasons: (1) Christ is now "ruler over everything for the church" (Ephesians 1:22, NlrV). This means that Christ has won the great war between Satan and Him and that Christ is the recognized Lord of all (Philippians 2:9-11). (2) "The church is Christ's body" (Ephesians 1:23, NlrV).

What does it mean that the church is Christ's body? What responsibilities does that give to church members? (Also read 1 Corinthians 12:12-25.)

The symbol of the body points to the unity of the church with and in Christ. The very life of the church as a community (group) of believers depends upon Christ's saving work. The church's beginning and its final home in the new earth are rooted in Christ. Without Christ, there is no church. The risen Lord is the Lord of the

universe. But He also is the Lord of the church. So Paul says, Christ is the Head of the church "which is his [Christ's] body" (Ephesians 1:23). As Head, Christ is the Authority (Power, Ruler) and Mission of the church.

The church is Christ's body. So Christ and the church are one. For this reason, the church "is filled by Christ. He fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:23, NlrV). Christ fills the church with every blessing and gift (Ephesians 4:11-16) so the church may remain faithful to Him.

What advice would you give to someone who said, "To serve the Lord, I do not have to be part of any church"?

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 21

ADDITIONAL STUDY: *Saving faith:* "It is not enough to believe about Christ. We must believe in Him. . . . Saving faith provides a way for those who receive Christ to join themselves in close relationship with God. . . . A living faith means a growing trust in God which helps the soul become a conquering power."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

On knowing God: "What God tells us about Himself in the Bible is for our study. This we may try to understand. But we are not to try to understand more than what is in the Bible. The highest mind may wear itself out in trying to understand the nature of God. The effort will be fruitless. This

problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can understand God. Let not man with his human limitations try to interpret God. . . . Here silence is best. We cannot ever try to discuss the all-knowing God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 279.

Christ, the Head of the church: “The relationship between Christ and His church is very close and holy. Christ is the Bridegroom. And the church is His bride. Christ is the Head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ means connection with His church.

“Loyalty to Christ requires that a member is faithful to church duties. This is an important part of one’s training. Training in a church filled with Jesus’ life will lead believers to search for lost souls out in the world.”

—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, pp. 268, 269.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, re-study Ephesians 1:15-23. For what is Paul praying in these verses? Why should you also be praying for these things?
2. Paul prays for wisdom and knowledge so believers may fully know God. For the Greeks, to know God means to know Him mentally. But to the Hebrews, it means to experience Him in life. Discuss the difference between knowing God mentally and experiencing Him in life.
3. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:20-23 about the victory Christ has won. Discuss, as a class, why the battle with Satan and sin is still going on.