

## Ephesians 1:15-23

Typical prayer requests: For material needs, health, situations at work or school. It's probably much less often that our prayers touch exclusively on the spiritual needs of others.

In Paul's introduction to the letter he informs us in Christ that we are:

Chosen (v. 4), Predestined (v. 5), Adopted (v. 5), Accepted (v. 6), Redeemed (v. 7), Forgiven (v. 7), Enlightened (vv. 8, 9), Given an Inheritance (v. 11), Sealed (v. 13), Assured (v. 14)

In this section he's going to pray for the Ephesian believers. The prayer can be summed up by one request: That they would know God better.

**Pray that we would know God better; it's the biggest need that any church or any Christian has.**

1:15 **For this reason** points back to verses 3-14. Because of everything he mentioned before Paul is confident to pray this prayer. Reread items.

1:17 **Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him** Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that came upon Jesus and now dwells within you. The Holy Spirit is the One who reveals God to us.

**Revelation** *apokalypsis* unveiling, revealing, disclosure Paul is praying that the Holy Spirit would cause the Ephesians to know God better than they ever have before.

**Pray that we would know God better; it's the biggest need that any church or any Christian has.**

1:18 **the hope of His calling** is the calling all of us share as Christians. In the introduction to Romans, he tells the church "you are the called of Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:6). He then says that they are loved by God and "called to be saints" (Rom 1:7).

The **hope** here, as all through the Bible, is a sure and steady expectation. It is something we wait for with certainty.

It is the "desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it." (*Complete Word Study Dictionary*)

Paul wants us to understand fully what Christians have a right to expect in the world of glory.

Application: It is very important for us as Christians to keep looking forward – and to do so confidently – full of hope. Romans 12:12 tell us to be, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer." Our best days have never been behind us. We have more to look forward to than we can imagine right now. Cultivate a sense of expectation about the future. Regardless what happens today, glory awaits us.

**Riches** In this case it refers to “God’s wealth deposited in the believers is his inheritance, his precious possession.” (*New Bible Commentary*)

Bible Knowledge Commentary: “God will inherit those whom He has purchased at a great price according to the riches of His grace (v. 7). In 1:14 Paul wrote that the Christians’ “inheritance” is their final redemption from the presence of sin. Here in v.18 he wrote about God’s inheritance, the saints themselves! That is no small feat, to turn people like us into God’s glorious inheritance, is it? But that is exactly what He is doing.

This is the second of six times in Ephesians in which Paul referred to “**riches**”:

**Ephesians 1:7 NKJV** *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

**Ephesians 1:18 NKJV** *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

**Ephesians 2:4 NKJV** *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

**Ephesians 2:7 NKJV** *That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

**Ephesians 3:8 NKJV** *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*

**Ephesians 3:16 NKJV** *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

**Pray that we would know God better; it’s the biggest need that any church or any Christian has.**

1:19-23 Two things we need to understand better than we do now:

1. The power of Christ’s resurrection, which now is at work within us.
2. The position that Christ now occupies, high above anything and anyone there is.

1:21 There is very much in the spiritual realm that we do not understand. There are powers, both angelic and demonic that God simply has not revealed it to us. We know of their existence, but we know very little about who they are, what they are like and how they operate. God has chosen not to satisfy our curiosity in this regard. At the same time, He seems very willing to reveal more and more of Himself to those who seek Him. And if Paul’s prayer is any indicator, He is also willing to reveal Himself to others in answer to our prayers. That should motivate us to join Paul in prayer for these very things.

And consider, if we know Jesus, who is far above and over every principality and power, etc. (read v.21 again), then does all the stuff about angels and demons really matter very much? When we focus on Jesus, our curiosity about all these other things tends to wane.

## Applications: Praying for our Spiritual Needs

**1 Cor 15:19 NLT** *And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.*

1. Greater understanding – that God would open the eyes of our hearts (as the song says). We desperately need to know God better.
2. A greater sense of hope. God has called us to hope, a firm expectation. Followers of Jesus should never be hopeless. Would others not all benefit from our prayers for them about this very thing?
3. That we would grasp exactly what God possesses in us, the saints.
4. That we would appreciate the greatness of the power of God that is at work within us. The power that raised Jesus from the dead.
5. That we would appreciate the exalted position that Jesus Christ now occupies in the universe. Contrast the “buddy Jesus” image that He is sometimes forced into today. Don’t get me wrong here, Jesus is the one that referred to us as His friends:

**John 15:13-15 NKJV** *<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

- But Jesus calling us His friends sounds a lot better coming from Him than it does from us. Since He is our Lord and King, He has the right to come down to our level. However, we, by assuming too much in our relationship with Him, are in danger of not appreciating His true identity. We may therefore grossly underestimate how great a privilege it is to have God the Son speak to us. We begin to take Jesus for granted. This can be disrespectful to Him, and detrimental to our own spiritual growth.
  - When Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, the first thing Paul did was fall to ground. John the apostle, by seeing the glorified Jesus, fell to directly the ground “as dead”.
6. Because we do not appreciate the power and glory of Jesus Christ, we often do not appreciate how much power He makes available to us to transform us into people who would be wiser, godlier and more confident as we live our lives for Him.
  7. In short, knowing God better would not only transform our relationship with God; it would ultimately transform us.