

## Paul's Prayer

(Ephesians 1:15-23) "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, {16} do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; {17} that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. {18} I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, {19} and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might {20} which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, {21} far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. {22} And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, {23} which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."

### **Ephesians 1:15-23**

#### **Subject:**

What are the three keys to TAP into God through prayer?

#### **Complements:**

1. Pray With Thanksgiving
  - a. Paul thanked God for their faith in Christ.
  - b. Paul thanked God for their love for one another.
2. Pray In Accordance
  - a. According to His Power (Eph 1:19-23)
    - i. In accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ
      - (1) when He raised Him from the dead
      - (2) when He seated Him at the right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule, authority, power and dominion and every name that is named
      - (3) when He put all things in subjection under His feet
      - (4) when He gave Him as Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.
    - b. According to His Will (John 14:13-14, Rom 8:26-27)
    - c. According to His Name (John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-26)
3. Pray With Petitions
  - a. God would give them a spirit of wisdom
  - b. God would given them a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him
  - c. Eyes of their heart would be enlightened
    - i. know hope of their calling
    - ii. know riches of the glory of His inheritance
    - iii. know what is the surpassing greatness of His power

## **Introduction**

When I was looking for a pneumonic device or catchy way to help people remember the main points this week, I came up with TAP. The T is for praying with thanksgivings. The A is for praying in accordance of God's power. The P is for praying with petitions. I did a quick Google on Tapping into God and found pages and pages of web sites, articles and information about tapping into God. I quickly surveyed the gist of many of them, but did not have time to read more than a few in detail. I did not see any of them speaking about prayer.

**T – Thanksgiving**

**A – Accordance of God's power**

**P – Petitions**

As we saw in the Life Group last week, prayer is the primary way that we tap into God. We have not because we ask not. We do not see and experience God's power because we do not pray. If we want to see God do more in our midst and in the East Mountains, we must tap into God through prayer.

Jack Webb, who spoke to us about being a house of prayer, told me that he has always had a heart for prayer, for connecting with God through prayer. He also said that he has always seen the Holy Spirit move mightily in all his churches. Why? Because Jack is a man of prayer. He taps into God through prayer.

This morning we are going to look at three keys to tapping into God through prayer. Paul's prayer contains three points. First, he gives thanks to God. Second, he prays his petitions. I have put this last in my outline. Third, he gives the basis for his prayers. They are in accordance with God's strength and might.

Paul begins this section with "for this reason I too." What is the reason? The reason is that they have listened to the gospel and believed the message, and have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. The seal does two things, authenticates and protects. Last week we spent a good bit of time looking at how the Holy Spirit authenticates our faith. The Holy Spirit also protects.

Your salvation has been sealed. No one can touch or break that seal. Your adoption has been sealed. Your redemption has been sealed. Your inheritance has been sealed. The enemy cannot break these seals. Jesus said that God's will is that Jesus does not lose anything and that everyone who beholds and believes in Him may have eternal life. Jesus promises that He will raise up those who have believed on the last day. Your salvation, once you have heard and believed, is sealed.

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(John 6:39-40) ""And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. {40} "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.""

When Paul refers to this reason, he is addressing the fact that their salvation has been authenticated. He gives two evidences of how it has been authenticated. First, he says that he has heard of the faith that they have in the Lord Jesus. Second, he mentions that he has heard of the love that they have for all the saints.

(Ephesians 1:15) "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints,"

The book of 1 John was given to us so that we would know that we have eternal life. John states the purpose of the book in chapter five. He has written so that we will know that we have eternal life. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

(1 John 5:12-13) "He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life."

He gives ten to twelve evidences in 1 John of our salvation. In 1 John 3:10, he says that by this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Those who practice righteousness and love their brother are children of God; those who do not practice righteousness and do not love their brother are not of God. Loving our brothers is one of the clear evidences of salvation. John repeats this in 1 John 3:14-18, and in 4:7-8. This is the basis for the song that was popular in the sixties, "you will know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes you'll know we are Christians by our love."

(1 John 3:10) "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

(1 John 3:14-18) "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. {15} Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. {16} We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. {17} But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? {18} Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

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(1 John 4:7-8) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. {8} The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Paul has heard of their sincere faith and their love for the saints. These evidences are clear signs that they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. These are authenticating evidences and reasons for him to thank God.

### **Thanksgiving**

Paul thanks God because of their faith and their love for one another. I believe that he thanked God for these two points. He may have thanked God for other things about them, but since he specifically mentioned these two things, I believe that these are what he thanked God for. Thanking God for our salvation or the salvation of others is very common. In Luke 10, the seventy that were sent out came back with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." He replied, "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." We can always thank God for our salvation and the salvation of others.

(Luke 10:17-20) "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." {18} And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. {19} "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you. {20} "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.""

The Lord teaches us in both the Old and New Testament that we are to give thanks to Him. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 that we are to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." You and I are to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in everything. That is God's will for us.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) "Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Paul writes to the Philippians that they are to pray about everything with prayers and supplications with thanksgiving.

(Philippians 4:6-7) "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. {7} And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

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In the Old Testament, Psalms 100 is titled, "a Psalm for Thanksgiving." In it, we are to told to enter His gates with thanksgiving and courts with praise. As we approach God, we should thank Him and bless His name.

(Psalms 100) "(A Psalm for Thanksgiving.) Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. {2} Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. {3} Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. {4} Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. {5} For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, And His faithfulness to all generations."

In Psalms 103, we are told to bless the Lord and forget none of His benefits. In other words, we are to thank Him for the many blessings and benefits that we have in Christ. Therefore, we should pray in this way, "Father, thank You for all the benefits You give to me. For from You and through You and to You are all things. Thank You for pardoning all my iniquities. Even though my sins were as scarlet, You have made them white as snow. You have removed them as far as the east is from the west. You have pardoned me and cleansed me from all unrighteousness. Thank You for cleansing my conscience. Thank You for calling me a saint, a holy one. You do not even recognize me as a sinner; You call me a saint. Thank You for healing all my diseases. Thank You for redeeming my life from the pit. Thank You for crowning me with lovingkindness and compassion. Thank You for satisfying my years with good things and renewing my youth like the eagle. Thank You....."

(Psalms 103:2-5) "Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; {3} Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases; {4} Who redeems your life from the pit; Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; {5} Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle."

Many of you who have received emails from me may have noticed that I send a lot of prayer mails. In most of my prayers, I begin with thanking the Lord for you. I thank Him for your gifts. I thank Him for your faithful service. I find things to thank Him about. For most of you that is an easy thing to do. This is not something that I am preaching to you and not doing myself. A few weeks ago I shared with you one of the life verses that I have: Ezra 7:10. Ezra set or determined in his heart to study the law of the Lord, practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. There are three P's for my life: Prepare, Practice, and Preach. My life and ministry will not be complete without doing the things that I am studying and learning. Our faith is about being doers of the word, not hearers who delude themselves.

(Ezra 7:10) "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel."

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### According

I used to be the Vice President and General Manager of a graphics design firm in Atlanta. As the Vice President I had a number of privileges. First, I could sign checks. As long as the money is in the bank, I can write a check and use the money that is available in the bank account. When it came time to do payroll or pay invoices, I would look to see how much money was in the account. If necessary, I would borrow or transfer money into the account so that I could write out a check.

The A is for praying in accordance with God's power. Paul says that "these are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might, which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead... Paul has prayed in accordance with God's power. Paul did not sign a check when the money was not in the bank. Paul has signed a check, knowing full well that the money is in the bank. The prayer checks that he has signed are based on God's power that he knows is in the account.

Paul then gives four specific examples of the power that God brought about in Christ.

(Ephesians 1:19b-23) "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might {20} which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, {21} far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. {22} And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, {23} which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."

First, God raised Jesus from the dead. The same power that can raise someone from the dead is the power that is available to you and I. Second, God seated Jesus at His right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. God, who has all power and authority, has seated Jesus at His side with all power and authority. There is no greater power or authority.

At the end of 1980 I was suffering from burnout. I had been away from my wife for many months and was not into playing golf. I had my PGA Tour card for the 1<sup>st</sup> part of 1981, but did not have the desire. I was kind of like Rocky who didn't have the eye of the tiger. I took a sales job in Dallas. It was an invaluable experience for me. I went through the six-week Xerox sales course as part of my training. It has been very helpful to me in my life. One of the many lessons that I learned was to find the decision maker. It is important to give presentations to decision makers. A lot of time is wasted if the person that makes the final buying decision is not present.

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Paul is saying that God is the decision maker. God is the one with all power and authority. There is no higher power, authority, dominion than Jesus. In the days to come, there will never be a higher power or authority. When Paul bases his prayers on this power and authority, he has given the presentation to the ultimate decision maker. God's decision will be final.

Third, Paul says that God put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet. Not only does God have all power and authority, but everything is in subjection to Him. When the centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant, Jesus says that "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes." Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion. The centurion understood authority and that if Jesus spoke something, it would be done.

(Matthew 8:5-9) "And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him, {6} and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain." {7} And He said^ to him, "I will come and heal him." {8} But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. {9} "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it.""

This is at the heart of what Paul is saying. God has put all things in subjection to His feet. Whatever Jesus says will be done. We are to be just like the centurion when we pray to God. Everything and everybody must submit to what God says. He not only has the position of power, but everything is in subjection to that power.

Fourth, Paul says that God gave Jesus as "head over all things in the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Some people today do not believe in headship. When the Bible talks about headship, they say that this means the source of all things. Paul says that God put Jesus as head over all things. Jesus is not the source over all things. He is the head over all things in the church. Jesus is the head of the church. All the sheep in the church are His sheep. Any shepherd, like myself, are under-shepherds. He is the Chief Shepherd, because the sheep belong to Him. The head means that He is the decision maker. He is the One that determines what is to be done.

All four of these are closely related. They all indicate the absolute and total power and authority that God has. Paul has written his checks on God's power account and he has just given us four examples to help us understand that all this power is available. In Ephesians 3:20, Paul repeats this thought. He says, "now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." God wants to do far more than we can imagine through you and I. This

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power works with us. Paul not only prays according to this power, but he is convinced that God has answered it, because he says, "according to the power that works within us."

(Ephesians 3:20) "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,"

This asking in accordance is not just about His power. Throughout Scripture, we find that we are to ask according to His will or according to His name. The principle that I want us to learn is that we are to pray in accordance to the name, will, character, and power of God. These are all consistent with one another.

For example, Jesus says that whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." He repeats this in John 15:16, "that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you."

(John 14:13-14) ""And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. {14} "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

(John 15:16) ""You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

He also repeats this in John 16:23-26. He says that if we ask anything in His name, the Father will give it to us.

(John 16:23-26) ""And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. {24} "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full. {25} "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. {26} "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf;"

What does it mean to pray in His name? Praying in His name means that this is in the best interests of Jesus' kingdom, according to His will, purposes, ways, and character. It is representing His interests on earth. To pray "in Jesus' name" is to represent Him just as the Holy Spirit does. In John 14:26 we find that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in His name, will teach you all things. The Holy Spirit represents the Father's interests. The Holy Spirit does God's will.

(John 14:26) "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things..."



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Now I am the Vice President of Operations for Murchison Drilling Schools. My title gives me the ability to do business on behalf of Murchison Drilling Schools. I also happen to have the name, but there are many other Murchisons who do not have the authority to do business under the name of our business. When I write a contract with a company, I am representing Murchison Drilling Schools. I have full authority to make obligations and commitments of our money, time, and resources. The power and authority given to me is to accomplish the goals, desires, and will of the owners of the company. If I used my authority to go buy a Porsche, that would not be carrying out the will of the owners. I would quickly have my authority to represent them removed. My authority is given to accomplish the will and desires that they have.

This is consistent with what John tells us about praying according to the will of God. In 1 John 5:14-15, he says that "this is the confidence that we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

(1 John 5:14-15) "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

When Peter tells us to cast our cares on Him because He cares for us. He is telling us to pray according to God's character. We cast our cares on God, because He is a caring God.

(1 Peter 5:7) "casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you."

When Paul says that "my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus," he is praying according to the nature and the resources that God has. God is a God that meets our needs. He is Jehovah Jireh, God our provider. He also owns all things. He has all wealth. He has money and resources available to give to You and I.

(Philippians 4:19) "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

When we pray to God for peace, we are praying according to His character and His name. He is the King of Peace, the King of Salem, the Prince of Peace, Jehovah Shalom, the Lord of Peace, the God of all Peace. The fruit of His Spirit is peace. His name, nature, character, and will is peace. When we pray for peace, we are praying according to His name. We are praying according to His character. We are praying according to His will. We are praying according to His resources. This is what praying in accordance means.

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We must ask ourselves some questions.

- Is the request according to His will?
- Is the request according to His character and nature?
- Is this petition according to His purposes?
- Is this prayer according to His ways?
- Is this according to His power?
- What does Scripture say?

We should only pray in Jesus' name if we are sure that this prayer request represents God's will, name, nature, character, and power. We should not ask something that is contrary to Scripture. If we are not sure if this is His will, we should ask Him. We should seek His Scriptures. We should seek counsel. Praying according to God's will or name is not simply an addendum to add at the end of our prayers.

The Holy Spirit not only does things in Jesus' name, but He intercedes for us according to the will of God. Look what Paul writes in Romans 8:26-27. The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers, particularly when we do not know what to pray. He intercedes for us according to the will of God.

(Romans 8:26-27) "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; {27} and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

### **Praying with Petitions**

The P is for praying with petitions. In verse 17 Paul begins to petition God on behalf of the Ephesians. There are two specific petitions that he mentions. First, he asks God to give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Second, he asks God to enlighten the eyes of their heart. All of these prayers are according to God's name, will, character, and power. Paul can be fully assured that these prayers were going to be answered.

Let's look at these two petitions. First, that God would give them a spirit of wisdom. You and I desperately need God's wisdom. We need to see and understand things from God's perspective. We need wisdom for direction. Many of you are trying to make decisions about changing jobs or careers, moving to another state, or a host of other decisions. James says that if any of us lack wisdom, we are to ask God who gives generously and without reproach. God wants to pour out His wisdom to you. He simply requires us to ask in faith. This prayer for wisdom is according to the expressed desire of God to give us wisdom. It is according to His nature to generously give us wisdom. It is according to His name and power. He is the God of all wisdom and He possesses all wisdom.

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(James 1:5-6) "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. {6} But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."

Paul also prays that God would give them a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. God wants to reveal things to you and I. We saw last week in 1 Corinthians 2 that God wants to reveal things to us. There are so many things that God wants to reveal to us through His Spirit. We have the book of Revelations that God gave to John on the island of Patmos. For some of us, we need to get away to an island in our lives so that we can listen to the revelations that God wants to give us. We are so busy that we can't listen to what the Spirit is saying. Fasting is a wonderful way to quiet our souls before God to listen to Him.

I have not been able to run in many years. My back does not handle running any more. One of the things that I miss about running is the revelation that I used to get while running. It seemed like the Holy Spirit was always running with me. He would speak volumes to me while running. When I would return and cool down, I would have to journal and write down the things that the Holy Spirit had spoken to me about. The vision that God gave me for the church came to me while running. He kept adding bits and pieces to the vision on different runs.

Paul does not just pray for revelation. He prays for revelation in the knowledge of Him. It is important for you and I to grow in our knowledge of Christ. We need to know His will, His ways, His methods, His principles, His priorities, His likes, His dislikes, His character, and His nature. The more revelation of knowledge of Christ that we have, the better we can pray. It will give us more wisdom. It will result in lives that bring more honor and glory to Him.

You and I need to ask God for revelation. We also need to avail ourselves to Him so that we can receive that revelation. Then, we must be good stewards and write down the things that the Lord shares with us.

The next petition that Paul prays for the Ephesians is that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened. He shares three specific reasons why he prays this. First, he prays that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened so that they will know the hope of their calling. Second, he prays this so that they will know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Third, he prays this so that they will know the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

(Eph 1:18-19) "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, {19} and what is the surpassing greatness of His power

toward us who believe.”

### **Eyes of our heart may be enlightened**

In Scripture the heart means many things. We do not have time to look at all the meanings of the heart, so I will give a simple definition. It is essentially who we are. Most of the time, our heart refers to our soul. Our soul is our mind, emotion and will. In Genesis 6:5, God says that the “thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” We think with our minds. The use of the word heart refers to our mind. Psalms 139:23 says, “search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts.” Again, our thoughts come out of our minds. However, anxiety is an emotion. An anxious thought from the heart is coming out of the mind and emotions.

(Genesis 6:5) "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

(Psalms 139:23) "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;"

In Hebrews 4:12, we find that the word of God is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The thoughts of the heart refer to the mind. The intentions of the heart refer to our will. We find that the heart simply refers to our soul, which is our mind, emotion, and will. It is essentially who we are.

(Hebrews 4:12) "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Jesus said that our actions all come out of our heart. He says in Matthew 15:19 that out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slander. If we want to change the behavior in our lives, we must change the thought process, our emotional responses, and the intentions of our will. We must have our hearts enlightened. This is exactly what Paul has prayed.

(Matthew 15:19) ""For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."

To get light into our heart, we must renew our minds. We must be do a couple of things. First, we must present ourselves to God as living and holy sacrifices. If we have not yielded ourselves to God, we will simply be carrying out our will and our desires. Our will needs to be surrendered to Christ. Our surrendered lives are to be living sacrifices. The rest of Romans 12 is about spiritual gifts and using your gifts to serve one another. Part of the proving of God's will in our lives is serving the body with a surrendered life.

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(Romans 12:1-2) "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

The second requirement is that we renew our minds. I greatly appreciate all our men coming to the Men's Breakfast yesterday. We heard a Biblical perspective of how the earth came to its present form. We were renewing our mind, by hearing what the Scriptures had to say. That is how we renew our minds. We must fill our minds with the word of God. We must read, meditate, study, sing, and apply God's word in our lives. That is how we prove what the will of God is. This is what Paul was asking God to do in their lives. He wanted the eyes of their heart to be enlightened.

### **Hope of their calling**

Paul wanted the eyes of their heart to be enlightened so that they would know the hope of their calling. God does not want you and I wandering aimlessly. He wants you and I to have purpose in our lives. He wants us to have vision. He wants us to be excited about life. He wants you and I to be fulfilled.

One of the reasons that we looked at spiritual gifts was to help all of us know and understand the hope of our calling. The way that the church is going to grow is for each of us to know the hope of our calling and for every joint to supply. The days of stadium Christianity is over. It is the day for every joint in the body of Christ to supply and to work properly, which will cause the growth of the body. This starts with knowing the hope of your calling.

(Ephesians 4:16) "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

### **Riches of the glory of His inheritance**

God has given each of us an inheritance. An inheritance is realized upon the death of the one who owned the property and it is given to those who have been specified in the trust or will. When Christ died on the cross, He left an inheritance to us. We saw in Ephesians 1:11 that we have obtained an inheritance. That is past tense.

(Ephesians 1:11) "also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,"

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We do not have the full inheritance yet. He said that He is going to prepare a place for us. We know that there are rewards in heaven. In Ephesians 1:14, Paul writes that the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a pledge of our inheritance. This means that some parts of it have not been given.

(Ephesians 1:14) "who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

But, there are some things that have already been given to us. But, here in Ephesians 1:18, Paul writes that he wants them to know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. This is present tense. There are riches in our inheritance for today. These riches are not necessarily financial. Having security is a tremendous rich. Having peace is a valuable possession. God has richly blessed us with many promises. These are all part of our inheritance.

(Ephesians 1:18) "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,"

Paul says to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:32 that he commends them to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build them up and to give to them their inheritance. He is telling them that they will find this inheritance through spending time with God and in His word. The Scriptures are full of the promises of God. We need to be treasure hunters, finding our inheritance.

(Acts 20:32) ""And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

### **The surpassing greatness of His power**

The last reason that Paul prays for their hearts to be enlightened is that they would know the surpassing greatness of His power. He follows this thought up by saying that this is in accordance to God's power and might. God wants to do great things through you and I. He wants to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we can ask or imagine. He wants to do that through each of us in this generation.

(Ephesians 3:20-21) "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, {21} to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Our hearts need to be enlightened to this power that works within us. Our hearts may have been darkened by bad theology. It may have been darkened by unbelief. It may have been

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darkened by our lack of experience. Paul is not so concerned about how their hearts were darkened, but that their hearts would be enlightened about the power in us that God wants to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we ask or think.

I long to see this become a reality in my life and in each one of your lives. I long to see this become a reality in our church. I long to see people streaming into churches because they know that they will find healing for their cancer. They will find healing for their marriages. They will find healing from their addictions. The depressed will find hope and encouragement. Those who lack direction and purpose in life will find purpose and satisfaction.

### **Conclusion**

We have looked at three ways to tap into God through prayer. We must pray with thanksgiving. Second, we must pray in accordance to God's name, will, character, and power. Finally, we must pray with many petitions. God is wanting to do amazing things through you and I. He wants to show Himself strong in our generation, if only the eyes of our hearts will be enlightened. He wants to grow our body, if only we will know the hope of our calling and for every joint to supply.

Let's pray. If you need prayer, I would like you to simply raise your hand. Others around you will gather and pray for you. We are going to start with thanksgiving. I am going to lead us into a prayer of thanksgiving. Those of you who need prayer, raise your hands and keep them raised while we are giving thanks to God. Give thanks to God for what He is doing in your life. Let's pray.

**Introduction**

- T – Thanksgiving**
- A – Accordance of God’s power**
- P – Petitions**

For this reason... because their faith has been \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (John 6:39-40, Eph 1:15, 1 John 5:12-13, 3:10, 3:14-18, 4:7-8)  
 One evidence of our faith is our \_\_\_\_\_.

**Praying with Thanksgiving** (Luke 10:17-20, Ez 7:10)  
 It is God’s \_\_\_\_\_ that we give thanks. (1 Thess 5:16-18)  
 We are to pray about everything with \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil 4:6-7)  
 We are to enter his \_\_\_\_\_ with thanksgiving. (Ps 100:1-5)  
 We are not to forget any of His \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps 103:2-5)

**Praying Accordingly** (Eph 1:19-23, 3:20)  
 We are to pray according to God’s \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Evidence # 1: God \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus from the dead.  
 Evidence # 2: God \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus at His right hand.  
 Evidence # 3: God has put all things in \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.  
 (Matt 8:5-9)  
 Evidence # 4: God has made Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ over all things in the church.  
 According means to ask according to His \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, character, and power. (John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-26)  
 Praying in Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ means it is in His best interest. (John 14:26)  
 We can pray with confidence when we pray according to His \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 5:14-15)  
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We must ask ourselves some questions.

- Is the request according to His will?
- Is the request according to His character and nature?
- Is this petition according to His purposes?
- Is this prayer according to His ways?
- Is this according to His power?
- What does Scripture say?

The Holy Spirit prays according to God's \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom 8:26-27)

### **Praying with Petitions**

Paul petitions God for \_\_\_\_\_. (Eph 1:17, James 1:5-6)

Paul petitions God for \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul petitions God for the eyes of their \_\_\_\_\_ to be enlightened. (Eph 1:18-19)

Our heart is our \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen 6:5, Ps 139:23, Heb 4:12, Matt 15:19)

Our actions come out of our \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt 15:19)

To enlighten our hearts we must \_\_\_\_\_ our minds. (Rom 12:1-2)

God wants us to know the \_\_\_\_\_ of our calling. (Eph 4:16)

God wants us to know our \_\_\_\_\_. The primary place we find it is in God's \_\_\_\_\_. (Eph 1:11, 14, 18, Acts 20:32)

God wants us to know the greatness of His \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. (Eph 1:19-23, 3:20-21)

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