

Do You Know How to Pray

All the glory of Ephesians 1:1-14 is brought into the first apostolic prayer from Paul in verse 15 and following.

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,

Ephesians 1:16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers

The greatness of the blessings prepared for everyone of us in eternity past, of verses 1-14 are the most precious plan by God for every believer. It does not matter how good or how horrible history is, God has a marvelous plan for you. This passage lays it clear, you have to have no fear, worry, or anxiety throughout your life. God loves you and He has planned a marvelous life for you.

The first message of Ephesians chapter 1 is so important. I hope you learn it and never forget it. God is never taken by surprise. God is never shocked, there was never a time when God was not aware of your needs! There are troubles that often come as a surprise on us in our lives, but God has been aware of every need we have every day of our lives and not only is He aware of our needs but He is always ready to supply our every need... you just be ready to trust Him! No matter what goes on in your life, you can secure God's provision. This security in your life was set up by God before you ever came along.

Which came first, you or your security?

Every need that you may have, came before you...it came from God. Paul is a great teacher of the importance of God's word and God's plan.

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And here Paul is so overtaken by the teaching of the Word of God that it causes Him to go into deep prayer.

Note the beginning of verse 15: *for this reason* which refers to what preceded this verse, and what precedes is the declaration from God in verses 1-14. It should be translated *because of this* or *for this reason*. This is because of what the plan of God declared in these verses. Verses 1-14 contain some of the most wonderful, powerful teaching in the Word of God. What is here declared is the eternal plan of God. It is very difficult for us to understand eternity past. It is very difficult for us to understand that there never was a time when God did not exist, that God did not live. There never was a time or a point when God was not perfectly happy, perfectly satisfied and in perfect control of everything. Oh, and for the record, after you die, and especially after the time of mankind, you, yourself, will be eternally happy, eternally satisfied with your existence.

So, because of this or for this reason. Paul now reads himself into the plan of God.

Verse 15 *for this reason I too, having heard*, Paul has heard some good news about the believers in the Roman province of Asia. Ok, this is an *aorist participle*, which precedes the action of the main verb. So, what is the main verb? **Not cease—giving thanks for this reason or for this reason I ceased not**, but first we are going to read what he heard from these believers.

For this reason I too, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus. Ok, Paul has heard that these people heard of the Lord and they have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

Your faith which exist among you and your love for all the saints. Paul first heard that they knew of the Holy Spirit and lived in the Holy Spirit and they loved one another from the love from the Holy Spirit—

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their love is *agape* or love of the Holy Spirit. I wonder how many believers love by the power of the Holy Spirit? What Paul is mentioning are two wonderful benefits from these believers.

They know how to live by faith in the Holy Spirit. And secondly, they have this love toward one another. It is amazing how many believers do not have Spiritual Love toward others in their assembly. It is so wonderful for many believers in the same assembly to get together and have spiritual love toward one another. There are many obstacles for believers to come to the assembly with other believers to worship God.

Today, in Covid 19 many believers stay away from assembly at church. Therefore, they lose out on love toward one another in the same assembly and miss out on worshipping together.

But it is really a wonderful, powerful blessing, to assembly with each other and worship together and love one another in the power of the Holy Spirit.

First, you have to have the filling of the Holy Spirit but also you have to grow in the Word of God. You see, spiritual love is from the power of the Holy Spirit but also it is important to meet together in the study of the Word of God with each other. This spiritual love between believers causes others to love being with them and not ceasing to give thanks to God for each other. I pray that many of you will start assembling with each other to worship together.

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,

Ephesians 1:16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

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In verse 16 Paul begins his thanksgiving on the reason for praise in verse 15.

Note the two issues in verse 15: *faith and love*; Paul has heard of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for one another. Here is the greatest issue of believers when they come together. Their faith in Jesus Christ and have the Filling of the Holy Spirit so that they have Spiritual love toward one another.

For believers who now have faith (in the Holy Spirit) and love for One another, now they are each one to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God and be in prayer for each other.

Paul now says in verse 16 **I do not cease giving thanks for you while making mention of you in my prayers**

Paul gives thanks to God for these saints!

Let us daily be in prayer for one another and give thanks to God for each other!

Question: Are you thankful for other people? Not in a general way, but truly thankful for other believers. Yes, we should be in prayer for unbelievers, we should be in prayer for members of our family but the entire book of Ephesians is about believers praying and working with one another for Christ.

Is someone thankful for you today?

Why are you thankful of others? Is it because they give you something? They give you money? Or help you in life in some way?

Or do you give thanks to someone because you love the Lord and they love the Lord? Because you love the Word of God and they love His Word? Because going to church is important to you and it is important to

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them? Do you give thanks to God because that person comes to church and the very fact they come, causes you to want to be in church also?

Do you give thanks to someone because they believe in Jesus as their Savior, and this gives you joy because they love the Lord? I give thanks by name, every day for so many people, right here in this assembly. Because you love the Lord, because you love His Word, because you love other believers who love the Lord.

Please note in verse 15 that Paul remembers and is thankful because these believers love one another. This should cause you to be thankful to other believers.

In verse 16, Paul now tells them of his prayer of thanksgiving for these believers. The issue in Ephesians is for believers. There is not much at all in Ephesians in reference to unbelievers. Paul begins with his constant prayers for these believers. You should note Paul's continual prayer for those who have believed in Jesus and who love to grow in the Word of God. (Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:4. Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2:13; and Philippians 4) You will note the reference to their spiritual love for one another. Everyone of these live out what they claim to believe. I am so thankful for members of our assembly who also live by what they claim. They come to the assembly and grow in the word of God and love one another.

How are we taught to pray from the Bible?

First, Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew How does Jesus tell us to pray?
Jesus taught,

Matthew 6:5 “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men ...

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Matthew 6:6 “... but when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father who is unseen.”

So we are first taught to pray to God the Father.

Secondly we are to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, we are to pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lex orandi, lex credendi

“the law of praying is the law of believing”

1. People, why should we always pray?

This may surprise you but God desires to hear your voice.

This is one of the reasons why God created angels and mankind.

It does not matter if you are joyful, thankful or hurting and angry. He desires to hear your voice. Have you ever received nothing but silence from someone you love? Silence hurts!

A child that will not talk with his/her parents troubles their parents? A husband/wife who will not talk, not communicate, but is just silent is most troubling in silence.

We all know that David was a man after God’s own heart. Have you ever wondered why? David was a womanizer, a murderer, an adulterer...but David always came right back to God, and prayed to God, just read some of his prayers in the Psalms; he cries out to God, he prays for forgiveness, for help, for deliverance, he praises God, complains to God... but oh, David always talked with God in prayer. God desires to hear your voice in constant prayer.

2. Prayers should always be proclaimed in Thanksgiving.

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Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God.

For what do you constantly give thanks to God?

It is very important to give thanks to God the Father. The more you give thanks for someone or something, the more you will appreciate that person. For example, when you give thanks for your assembly, you will value your local church. If married, we should give thanks everyday for that person for whom you are married. Throughout the day give thanks to God for the person He has brought into your life. Give thanks for your children, your parents. Give thanks for your local church where you learn about Jesus Christ for whom you are thankful for everyday. Give thanks and fellowship with others who are like-minded. Remember, the more you give thanks, the more you will value and appreciate.

3. Different emphasis of prayer: Thanksgiving is vitally important to our prayer life as we see in

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

or

Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

But wait a minute, both of these passages say to give Thanks for All Things! But what about praying about the bad things that happen? Please learn about your God and your Savior. They are able to have all things work together for good! Do you believe this or not? Oh, I

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know it sounds nice but do you believe it? Do you believe it to the point where you will start giving thanks to God for everything?

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to the will of God.

Remember the two points on all things working to good: *to those who love God* and *those called according to the will of God.* Therefore always remember:

Ephesians 6:18 With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

Ephesians 6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Ephesians 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

4. Order of prayer:

As you can see from these few examples all prayer is addressed to God the Father. I have heard various pastors and believers complain about this "...I want to pray to Jesus"—while this sounds nice—it is not Scriptural and the same is true while praying we should not pray to God the Holy Spirit. All Prayer is addressed to God the Father.

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First God the Father is the author of the entire Divine Plan.

Second, please remember that Jesus came to bring us to the Father.

Third, therefore, we pray to the Father under His authority of and because of our position in Christ; and we pray in the power and guidance of God the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, all facets of prayer demand our Faith, and our Trust in God the Father that our prayers will be answered, and then our trust in the Holy Spirit that He will guide us to pray in accordance to the will and plan of God the Father.

And remember that we can call Him Father, because of our relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. Not until Jesus did anyone pray to Him as Father. We have this privilege because we are in Christ, the Son of God.

How to Pray in the Holy Spirit:

- (1) Admit inability to pray to God in your own power and knowledge;
- (2) Go to and depend on the Holy Spirit to guide you in your own prayers.
- (3) The Holy Spirit is of Power, Truthfulness—and the guide to you in prayers.
- (4) Therefore when we pray in the Holy Spirit, we should pray with boldness and assurance.
- (5) The Holy Spirit leads in prayer: Start off with the Filling of the Holy Spirit knowing and guided in the Word of God in prayer; let the Holy Spirit lead you as to what you ought to pray.

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Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit,

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord;

Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God even Father;

5. Prayer is dependent upon Relationships:

First there is the relationships of the individual members of the Trinity with each other. It is because of their relationship with each other that we can pray. Then there is our relationship designated to God the Father. Why anyone would not want to pray to God the Father is beyond me. Then there is our relationship with Jesus Christ under which we can come to the Father in prayer. We can pray to the Father because He is the Heavenly Father of Jesus Christ and we are in Jesus Christ. And then there is our relationship with the Holy Spirit—who guides and empowers us to pray. Unfortunately so many people, Christians, are so sloppy and abusive in their prayer life. God hears only the prayers of believers who are praying in the Holy Spirit and prayers that are based on our relationship with His Son.

Colossians 1:3 We give thanks to God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.

He is called God the Father because He is the Father of His Son, Jesus Christ. And since we are in Christ, by faith alone in Christ, He is our Father also. Paul is in prison. You would think he has enough

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problems of his own, but no, Paul constantly prays for believers often whom he has never seen.

6. When we are so confused, so broken, God the Holy Spirit prays for us. This is so important in our daily lives.

Romans 8:26 Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

Romans 8:27 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.

- (1) Notice our position in this need: *weakness*.
- (2) The Holy Spirit prays for us when we *do not know what to pray*, so the Holy Spirit prays for us with *wisdom* from God that we need in weakness.
- (3) The Holy Spirit intercedes for us *with groanings too deep for words*. This is so wonderful...here you are in pain, you do not know what to pray and the Holy Spirit not only knows what needs to be said but in groanings too deep for us.
- (4) Here is something so wonderful...the Holy Spirit prays for us according to the *will of God*. Sometimes we are in fear, in weakness and do not even know what the will of God is in the situation, and here comes your friend, the Holy Spirit to pray exactly what the will of God is.

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(5) So often when we find ourselves so weak and do not even know what to pray, we can find ourselves empty of love, but the Holy Spirit prays by bringing to us the Love of God, and the Love of Christ, that we need and cannot lose. ... nothing will be able to separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Question: why does the Holy Spirit pray for us?

- (1) He prays for us because we are *weak* and we are in need of His aid. We need His strength.
- (2) He prays for us because we do not know how to pray to God.
- (3) He prays for us because He intercedes for us by the will of God. We do not know what God's plan or will is, and the Holy Spirit brings it to us.

Here is the love of God for us when we need Him, in the time of prayer. Don't spend time in the situation, spend your time in prayer with God and to God. He will give peace to soul, strengthen our weakness.

And here is something so beautiful, Jesus is also said to pray for us, not only in His prayer in John 17, but also Hebrews 7:25. I feel sorry for those who want to say that Hebrews is not for the Church Age but for The Tribulation. They are in denial that **Jesus prays for them** when they know not how to pray.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

When things in your life come to a point where you simply do not know for what you should pray, please just bow down alone and

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pray to God the Father that His Spirit will compose the prayers that should be proclaimed. Then have peace in your soul for the prayers of the Holy Spirit. In all circumstances we are helpless! And we are in need to just go into prayer to God for our needs and when we do not know, go to the Holy Spirit and to Jesus Christ Himself! Often what we physically need is not what we spiritually need and therefore we cry out to God, in our weakness for the Holy Spirit to pray for us.

We may not directly know what God is doing in Covid 19 but the Holy Spirit knows and Jesus Christ knows.

We may not know what is going on in our own assembly but the Holy Spirit knows and Jesus Christ knows. Let us pray together with the Spirit in regards to our assembly.

7. Paul gives thanks for all the good things he has heard concerning this group of believers.

Another ingredient of prayer is **intercession**, praying for others. We should pray for believers and unbelievers. Some times we pray that we have the opportunity to offer the truth of the gospel and pray for a multitude of ways unbelievers will hear of the gospel.

Prayer for believers covers a number of ways to pray for others. Pray for pastors, missionaries, evangelists. You should pray for those in your family, those who are your friends. Be in prayer for those who do not like you and set out to harm you...pray for your enemies.

Then there are **petitions** which are prayers for your own needs. Never fail to pray for your own needs and your own work in the plan of God. There are a multitude of petitions in your own needs. Physical needs; works, personal needs like marriage etc. Most

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important are spiritual needs. Like growing in the word of God. Getting along with others. Getting along with family members. Getting along with those in the assembly. Remember, you may not 'get along' with everyone, so be sure to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Be in prayer for them, be in prayer for yourself. Take time and study from Colossians chapter 3, where Paul covers a multitude of things about getting along with one another and closes with the words '*beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*'

8. Learn about prayer from the Word of God.
 - (1) Job prayed for his friends who were against him Job 42:10
 - (2) How to have your prayers answered John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15
 - (3) Pray at all times in the Spirit Ephesians 6:18
 - (4) Pray that others will be filled in knowing the Word of God Colossians 1:9
 - (5) Pray so that you can live a quiet life 1 Timothy 2:1-2
 - (6) Pray for us 1 Thessalonians 5:25
 - (7) Pray for another believer who is in sin 1 John 5:16
9. For whom do you pray? Paul has never personally met certain believers, yet he prays for them, gives thanks for them. Do you spend time giving thanks for other believers, whom you do not yet know?

Like in Tucson Bible Church, or Jody Brown's church in Indiana? Or those in other states or even other countries.

There are believers who are known for their love toward one another.

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1 Thessalonians 1:2 We always give thanks to God for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;

1 Thessalonians 1:3 constantly keeping in mind your work of faith and labor of love and perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.

This is a perfect example for everyone of us of what to pray for our prayer life.

10. Now as we come to the close of this study on prayer today, it is so important to pray for one another and be in prayer for people we do not know: and this is about spiritual love. We should love those we pray for in our families, in our local churches and other believers. First pray for everyone in the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember:

Galatians 5:22 but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

So when you pray for others always remember two things: first: yourself, under the power of the Holy Spirit and then, secondly: pray for these fruits of the Holy Spirit for those for whom you pray. In other words pray for love to one another, and pray for joy, peace for one another, that they also come under the power of the Holy Spirit and have patience, kindness etc.

So with this in mind in the Fruit of the Holy Spirit and your prayers:

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love

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of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

Philippians 1:4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all

11. Two closing points in prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing

Jude 1:20...praying in the Holy Spirit