

Ephesians 1:15-23

Week 2 - Thanksgiving and Prayer

Learning Objectives

- Better understand our eternal future as God's people
- Explore how God's power is to our benefit

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read to the group: Our last lesson of Ephesians broke down Paul's greeting to the saints of Ephesus. He now transitions into thanksgiving and prayer as he closes out chapter one. You may have talked about what it means to be adopted by God, your identity in Christ, and God's nature. This lesson will add onto those topics.

Read Out Loud: Ephesians 1:15–23 (NIV)

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

? In verse 18, Paul prays that the Ephesians would have an enlightened heart. What do you think that looks like?

Possible Answer: To believe in what God has laid out before you and His plan to care for you eternally. To comprehend the blessings believers have received through Christ. To trust and have peace about our eternal assurance in Christ.

? Paul highlights a few things that should give the Christians in Ephesus hope. What are these and why do they offer hope?

Possible Answer: A commitment to the gospel and sharing it with others offers hope. Christians should understand and believe in their eternal future as God's people. We are His glorious inheritance, God's power is to our benefit. God raised Himself from the dead, so he has power over our lives.

? Look at the way Paul prays for the Christians in Ephesus. How does it express love? How might it be a good model for us to pray for others?

Possible Answer: Love is shown here through a desire for others to grow in their relationship and understanding of God.

? Starting in verse 19, Paul speaks of God's great power, what is that exactly?

Possible Answer: God has the ability to defeat all evil. He is above all who have walked, and will walk, this Earth. He is in charge, and that can give us comfort because He is also good.

? How has God's great power been borne out in your own life?

Possible Answer: Answers will vary.

Read Out Loud: Romans 8:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

? Based on these verses, what can we know about God's power within us?

Possible Answer: The Spirit strengthens us, the Spirit is able to intercede for us, it knows us. God wants to help us in our weakness. Even when we don't know how or what to pray, God knows what we need.

? Have you experienced God's power firsthand? What was that like?

Possible Answer: Answers will vary.

Leaders' Note: This question may bring negative thoughts like, "I don't have an example, does that mean God isn't working in me?" You may want to address this can affirm people that the Lord is working in their lives, and maybe encourage the group to express how they have seen God work in each other's lives.

? Has your inheritance in Christ ever impacted your self-worth? How should God's value in you affect how you see yourself?

Possible Answer: Answers will vary.

? How is it to our benefit that Jesus is the head of the church?

Possible Answer: Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, placed above every name that is, was, and will be named.

For Discussion And Accountability

? In what areas do the eyes of your heart need to be enlightened this week?

? In light of your inheritance in Christ, how can you love others more boldly tomorrow?

Leaders' Note: Take some time at the end of study to pray and give thanks. Consider praying over verses 18-20.