

May 21, 2017

Ephesians 3:13-19

Praying for Comprehension

“Pray for me.”

How many times have you heard that request? Other Christians often ask us to pray for them. Sometimes they tell us very specifically what they’d like us to pray, but other times their request is more general.

Who do you pray for regularly? Probably your family members, friends, your Sunday School teacher, and your pastor are on your regular list. What do you pray for those people? Do you ever feel unsure what to pray?

In this week’s lesson you will study a prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus. You will discover the specific things he prayed for them. These requests may help you to better pray for those on your prayer list.

Eph. 3:13 The word **Wherefore** refers back to the eternal purpose of God revealed in the preceding verses. Re-read **Ephesians 3:8-12** to refresh your memory. What did Paul desire?

What kind of tribulations did Paul experience?

Eph. 3:14 What did Paul’s desire and concern for the Ephesians cause him to do?

Who did he pray to?

Eph. 3:15 Most children carry the family name of their father. The same is true of God’s children, who are known as “Christians.” The “*whole family in heaven and earth*” refers to all the redeemed, including those now living and those already dead.

In **Ephesians 3:13-15** Paul told his readers **why** he prayed for them. In the next verses, he tells exactly **what** he prayed for them.

Eph. 3:16 Paul asked the Lord to grant his first request “according to the _____ of His _____.” God has an inexhaustible supply and can answer any prayer that is in keeping with His will. The first thing Paul asked was that the Ephesians would “be _____ with _____ by His Spirit in the _____ man.” The **inner man** refers to the spiritual part of the believer. Summarize what Paul asked God to do for the Ephesians:

Eph. 3:17 Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians “That _____ may _____ in your hearts by faith.” The word **dwelt** carries the idea of being “at home” somewhere. The Spirit of Christ comes to live within

the believer from the moment he or she is saved, but the Lord is “at home” in a heart that is kept pure by obeying God. Paul also prayed that the Ephesians would be “_____ and _____ in love.” He wanted them to be firmly established in God’s love.

Eph. 3:18 Read this verse and the first phrase of the next verse together. What did Paul ask God to help them comprehend?

He wanted them to understand the greatness of God’s love for them, so he used words we usually use in describing an object: “What is the _____, and _____, and _____, and _____.” Why do you think he used those words?

Eph. 3:19 How did Paul describe the love of Christ?

What did he pray that they would be filled with?

When you are “*filled with all the fullness of God,*” you will do what pleases the Lord, not what pleases your flesh. The ultimate goal of Paul’s prayer for the saints at Ephesus was that they would be completely yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ and entirely under His control.

Concluding Thoughts: Let’s review the things Paul prayed for his friends. He asked God to:

1. Strengthen them by the Holy Spirit in the inner man (3:16)
2. Cause them to live in such a way that Jesus was at home in their hearts (3:17)
3. Establish them firmly in love (3:17)
4. Enable them to comprehend the great extent of Christ’s love for them (3:18-19)
5. Fill them with all the fullness of God (3:19)

Paul prayed these wonderful things for those he loved. What about you? Are you praying regularly for those you love, as well as for your church leaders? What are you praying for those people?

Think right now of a few individuals you pray for. Look at the list above and pray those things for those people. You may even want to read **Ephesians 3:16-19** as a prayer for each of those people. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if God granted your request and did all of those things for those people?

You can also pray these same things for yourself. Why don’t you do that right now?

Project: Start a prayer list today if you don’t already have one. List people for whom you need to pray. Ask God to do in them the things Paul asked for the Ephesians. Pray daily for those people. Don’t forget to do the **Daily Bible Readings** every day this week and come to Sunday School this Sunday.