

Praying for Spiritual Vitality and Power

At times our prayer life can be consumed with our own needs, right? We need God to work in relationships, in our careers, in our finances or in our health. Praying for such things is obviously advocated throughout Scripture. But in the passage that we are looking at today, we see a prayer by Paul that suggests that we should not let our circumstantial prayers crowd out praying for foundational, spiritual needs in our own lives and in the lives of others. As we look at this prayer, consider the possibility of imitating Paul and praying in a similar way for other believers that you care about.

Opening discussion: On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = very little; 10 = very much), how much of your prayer life is spent on praying for “foundational, spiritual needs”?

Read Ephesians 3:14-19

1. What strikes you about this prayer?
2. One core thing for which Paul prays is that they would be “strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (v. 16). What is the “inner man”? How would you summarize in your own words what Paul is praying for in this request?
3. Paul’s second core request is that they would comprehend the love of Christ (vv. 17b-19). How does Paul describe Christ’s love? And what does it mean to “know the love of Christ” (v. 19a)?
4. Paul also prays that they would be “filled up to the fullness of God” (v. 19b). What does this mean?

5. If all that Paul prayed for in this prayer was fulfilled in your life, what difference would that make? Get specific. What kinds of things would be different in your life?

Steve said:

It would be a mistake simply to be “wowed” by Paul’s prayer. And we definitely should not think, “I could never pray that way. I’m not that smart or spiritual. I don’t have what it takes to pray that way.” Instead, I would urge you to resolve in your heart, “By the grace of God, ***I will become the type of person*** who prays like Paul prayed. There’s too much at stake to do anything else.” Think about it: there is too much at stake in the lives of the people you care about ***not*** to pray like Paul prayed. People you know and love need so much more than you can give them. They need the touch of God in the deepest recesses of their lives. They don’t need a Band-Aid and a pat on the head. They need our Father . . .to grant them strong, Christ-centered hearts; they need to know the love of Christ; they need to experience the fullness of God. Since those are things only God can do, one of the most loving, godly things we can do for them is to pray for them the way Paul prayed for the Ephesians.

6. Do you agree that there is too much at stake to not pray this way? Why or why not?

7. What do you think it is going to take in your own life to see growth in praying like Paul prays?

8. List a few of the people that you know and love who “need the touch of God in the deepest recesses of their lives.”