

reference to all of one's inner powers. This really explains what it means to have wisdom, revelation, and the knowledge of the Almighty. Illuminated eyes (heart) will shine with the smile of God's divine glory.

Conclusion What a prayer. What a deep concern Paul had for the Ephesians. They had so much, but they needed to have their experience match their position. Too often we come up as fat cats rather than expressing the deep hunger for spiritual growth. May this prayer incite in us a heavenly desire.

## THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"An Enlightened Heart"  
Ephesians 1:15-18a

### Introduction

1. The salutation has been indicated (vv. 1, 2). The tremendous blessings which belong to the child of God in Christ are known (vv. 3-14). Such a beginning is consistent with the high altitude on which the book of Ephesians is written. It is indeed life on the highest plane. Oh, to experience all that is ours in the Lord (Obadiah 17).
2. Next comes one of the two prayers in the epistle (cf. 3:13-21). Paul is burdened, so he prays. While believers have so much, this does not in the least limit the burden for prayer. In fact, it appears that the more possessed, the more prayer is needed.
3. There are three major divisions to Paul's prayer:
  - a. The occasion for the prayer (vv. 15-18a).
  - b. The substance of the prayer (vv. 18b-19a).
  - c. The explanation of a segment of the prayer (vv. 19b-23). This may well serve as a model for some of our personal praying.

#### 1. WHY PAUL PRAYED v. 18.

##### a. Because of his information

The "wherefore" is a direct link with what has preceded. On the basis of the previous record of God's great grace (vv. 3-14), Paul prayed. This all points up that the knowledge of His grace prompts to prayer.

##### b. Because of his attention

The verb "heard" denotes that Paul had communicated to himself certain important knowledge about the Ephesians. He was not alone in this, as the particle "I also" points out. Now, what did Paul hear?

1) About their faith. Interestingly, this comes first in the list. It always should. That this faith

was not isolated is construed from the Greek phrase rendered "your faith." It might well be understood as "among you" to show that it was common among the Ephesians. This faith was not something abstract, but concrete. It was focused on the person of our Lord. To be the object of our faith, He must be just that--Lord. Moreover, the construction in the original makes it out that faith is active and not passive. The faith is "in" the Lord Jesus. For a similar construction, check out other passages (Mark 1:15; Gal. 3:26; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:14; 3:13). Saving faith must act (cf. James 2:14-26). The huge thrust here is that faith is centered in the person of Christ. None other object of faith is worthy for salvation.

2) About their love. While there are some manuscripts which omit this virtue, there is far too much evidence for its inclusion. Love grows out of faith and is its natural concomitant. Obviously this is not some sort of sentimental love, but one which is the fruit of the work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). In these days of dreadful superficiality, let it be noted that the early believers knew the issues and they loved. Moreover, "all the saints" are included (cf. 6:18).

## 2. HOW PAUL PRAYED v. 16.

### a. Thankfully

A quick glance at Paul's epistles will reveal that he was always grateful for the saints. His books are filled with thanksgiving (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4, etc.). Noticeably, however, Galatians is not included among the churches for whom Paul gave thanks. He was deeply distressed for them. They had distorted the Gospel. There can be no thanks for this sort of thing. Truth is vitally important, even to love (1 Cor. 13:6).

### b. Continually

The word for "cease not" is the present tense verb "to stop." Paul makes it evident that he does not stop praying for them. Moreover, the verb "making" is also present, thus underscoring the constancy of concern and thanks.

### c. Directly

The word prayers does not show to whom Paul makes an address, but the next verse (v. 17) does. The Father is referred to as "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" because of the incarnation. Christ came from the Father to testify of Him. He is also the Father of glory, that is, the possessor of glory. All His divine holiness is meant. Such designations of God the Father clearly support the infinite position which Paul acknowledged God to have. Days of neglect have come in which our God is brought down to man's level in a sort of "Christian humanism." Sad!

## 3. WHAT PAUL PRAYED vv. 17-18.

### a. Spiritual help

The purpose of the prayer is seen in the word "that." Here is the very intent of Paul's prayer. He longs to see the Spirit of God work in their lives. "Spirit" must be capitalized. This cannot be a reference to the human spirit. It just doesn't make sense that way. In view of earlier evidence (vv. 13, 14), it is evident that Paul does not mean to speak here of the indwelling of the Spirit nor His seal. It is rather that they might experience to the fullest degree the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit in the capacities mentioned, viz., wisdom and revelation. Succinctly, what is meant here is divine illumination (cf. John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:9-16). This presumes a walk in the Spirit.

### b. Spiritual knowledge

The goal of the Spirit's work in the life is the "knowledge of Him." Of course, this speaks directly of the Father, but includes the other persons of the Godhead. Philosophy says to "know thyself." The Gospel says "know thy God." The word for knowledge means full, accurate, thorough knowledge. It is experimental. This is the necessary prerequisite for what follows.

### c. Spiritual enlightenment

"Understanding" is the word for "heart." It is intelligence without excluding the emotions. It is a