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The Request for Godly Wisdom
1: 15-18b

The request for Godly wisdom DIG: How does Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers compare to most prayers today? How might prayer habits change if the main focus were on spiritual growth? Is there a difference between Yeshua as Savior and Lord? Why? Why not? Paul prayed for the Ephesians to know ADONAI better? How well do you know Him?

REFLECT: What practical steps could believers take in their daily routines that would help them increase their focus on others for the purpose of praying for them? What part of your life are you not allowing Yeshua to be Lord over? What is hope? How is it related to your calling? What does it look like for you to live with hope rather than hopelessness?

Paul's request went beyond intellectual knowledge or worldly wisdom.

Paul addressed **ADONAI** in **1:3-14**, now **he** turned **his** attention to the recipients of **his** letter. Two things characterized those believers in **Ephesus**: (1) their **trust** in **the Lord Yeshua**, and (2) their **love** for all believers. But in addition, **Paul** prayed for their **wisdom**. In **Galatians**, **Paul** described the life of a believer as **faith working through love (5:6). Yeshua** had also taught the same truth – that **love** was evidence of true faith **(John 13:35)**. We shouldn't read into **Paul's** words any insinuation that the **Ephesian** believers had mastered these two crucial virtues. Though they **loved** one another, **Paul** would encourage them to continue working on their unity and **to bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2-3).**

The apostle's prayer for the **Ephesian** church was characterized by two important qualities: persistence and gratitude. The consistent practice of prayer will never result solely from a sense of obligation, but only out of a deep sense of thankfulness for all that God has done. The same is true of a regular ministry of intercessory prayer. While we are commanded to **pray for one another (Ephesians 6:18)**, obedience to this mandate will not flow out of a begrudging spirit. It isn't so much

that we *have* to pray for others, but rather that we *get* to do so. To pray for others is to remember them. To remember someone in prayer involves specific prayer. **Paul's** prayer was both persistent and specific. As we keep others in mind, rather than just thinking about ourselves, we will be more faithful in intercessory prayer.[81]

Praise for their trust: Ever since I heard about your trust in the Lord Yeshua . . . (1:15a). Paul pauses at this point of the letter to reflect on some of the amazing blessings from **God**. This would naturally include the obvious point of the opening paragraph, such as the plan of **the Father** (**to see link click Ao – Chosen in Messiah**), the provision of **Messiah** (see **Ap – Redeemed in Messiah**), and the power of **the Spirit** (see **Aq – Sealed with the Ruach**). But **the apostle** was especially thankful that this group of Jews and Gentiles actually trusted in this Great Plan and appropriated its riches! The message is the Good News of **God**, yet that Good News only becomes effective as a person puts their faith to work in **the Redeemer**.[82]

The emphasis here is on true saving faith, with **the lordship** of **Yeshua** as the object of that belief. This cannot be overstated. Some today would like to accept the term **Lord** only as a reference to deity, not sovereignty. But such a separation is artificial, because deity implies sovereignty. **The One** who alone is **God** rules alone. The B'rit Chadashah doesn't separate **Yeshua** as **Savior** and **Yeshua** as sovereign **Lord**. **He** is both, or **He** is neither. Rabbi **Sha'ul** declares: **If you confess with your mouth Yeshua as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (Romans 10:9; Acts 16:31). Yeshua** becomes **Savior** when **He** is accepted as **Lord**. **To this end, Paul** explains later in **Romans**, **Messiah died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14:9).** Believers say, in fact, only believers can say: **Yeshua is Lord**, because they possess the **Ruach Ha'Kodeah (First Corinthians 12:3)**, who was given to them when they were saved **(Romans 8:9)**. To receive **Yeshua** as **Savior**, but not as **Lord** would divide **His** nature in two. When we receive **Him**, we receive **Him** wholly as **He** is.

Praise for their love: . . . and your love for all God's people (1:15b). This kind of **love** is indiscriminate; it doesn't pick and choose which believers it will love. **Messiah loves** all believers; and they are precious to **Him**. By definition, then, our **love** should extend to all believers. **Paul** calls on believers to maintain **a common love (Philippians 2:2b)**, which is to **love** all believers the same. True salvation produces true **love**, and true **love** does **not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth (First John 3:18).** When **the Lord** had washed the feet of the

proud, self-seeking apostles, **He** told them that what **He** had done for them was an example of how they were to **love** each other **(John 13:34)**. **John** emphasizes the same truth: **The way that we have come to know love is through his having laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers! If someone has worldly possessions and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how can he be loving God? Children, let us love not with words and talk, but with actions and in reality (First John 3:16-18)!** That was the sort of **love the Ephesians** initially had **for all God's people**. Sadly, however, **their love** did not last. In **His** letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor **the Lord** said to the church at **Ephesus**: **I have this against you, you have left your first love (Rev 2:2-4). They** had lost the great **love** for **Messiah** and **their** fellow believers for which only a few decades earlier **Paul** had so warmly praised **them**.[83]

In my prayers I have not stopped giving thanks for you, petitioning **the God of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, the glorious Father (1:16-17a)**. **Sha'ul** distinguishes **God the Father** from **Yeshua** without contradicting **his** view that in **the Lord, bodily, lives the fullness of all that God is (Colossians 2:9).** Aside from that, two features of **the apostle's prayer** life can be seen in this verse. First, we see steadfastness. **Paul** urged others to **pray constantly (First Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2)**. And from all **his** letters we can form a clear impression of his earnest, unwavering **prayer** for **all the churches**. Secondly, we see the place of **giving thanks** in **his prayer**. **He** taught others that praise should always accompany intercession **(Ephesians 5:19-20; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 3:15-17; First Thessalonians 5:18)**, and this we also see from the **prayers** in **his** letters.[84]

Praise for a spirit of wisdom: I keep asking God to give you a spirit (Greek: *pneuma*) **of wisdom and revelation (1:17b). The spirit of wisdom** is given *through* **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. But this **spirit** does not refer to **the Spirit of God Himself**, as some interpreters suggest, meaning that **it** has no Greek definite article before **it**. In such cases **it** is usually translated as a spirit. Believers already possess **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** (see the commentary on **Romans Ch – The Indwelling of the Ruach**), for whom their **bodies** are **temples (First Corinthians 6;19)**. How could **YHVH** give us something we already have? Nor does it seem that **Paul** was speaking of the human spirit, which every person already possesses: **For who knows the inner workings of a person except the person's own spirit inside of him (First Corinthians 2:11a)?**



The basic meaning of the word *pneuma* (from which we get such English words as *pneumatic* and *pneumonia*) is *breath* or *air*. But like our English word spirit, *pneuma* sometimes is used of a disposition, influence, or attitude, as in "He's in high spirits today." **Yeshua** used the word in that same sense in the first beatitude: **Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3). He** was not referring to **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** or to the human **spirit**, but to **the spirit**, or attitude, of humility. What **Paul** was praying for is that **God** might so work in the lives of the **Ephesian** believers that they would have the **spiritual wisdom** and **revelation** (used as a synonym for **wisdom** here) from **Him** that is a result of **the Holy Spirit's** work of energizing their human **spirit**. That they would be characterized by a **spiritual** outlook.

This **spiritual wisdom** and **revelation** was given **so that the Ephesians** would **have a fuller, deeper knowledge of Him (1:17c).** The Greek word **knowledge** is *epignosis*, meaning *knowledge that is true, accurate, thorough and full.* It was **the knowledge** of **God Himself**. **Paul** was **praying** in effect, "**God**, give them a keen, deep, rich, strong understanding of their inheritance **in Messiah**." **The apostle prayed** that **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** would give their **spirits** the right **spirit of wisdom and revelation** so that they would have **a fuller, deeper knowledge of Him.** This knowledge goes beyond intellectual knowledge or worldly wisdom (see the commentary on **First Corinthians An – The Foolishness of Worldly Wisdom**). It is far richer, and **Paul** desired that the **Ephesian** believers, like those in Colossae, would **keep seeking the things above, where Messiah is sitting at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1).**

I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened (1:18a). This is not a new sentence in the Greek, it is a continuation of the previous verse. These words are a perfect participle in the Greek text, referring to a past complete act having present results. It was **the Rabbi's** way of saying that while most things are

observed with the physical **eyes**, there is another realm of **the Ruach** much deeper and not naturally observable. In most modern cultures, **the heart** is thought of as the seat of emotions and feelings. But most ancients – Jews, Greeks, and many others – considered **the heart** to be the center of **knowledge**, understanding, thinking, and **wisdom**. So, **Paul** prayed for **ADONAI** to enlighten the **Ephesian** believers about the wonderful truths of election, predestination, adoption, redemption, forgiveness, **wisdom**, insight, inheritance, and the sealing of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** as a downpayment on their eternal home with **YHVH**, about which **he** had just been teaching them (see **An – The Basis of Spiritual Blessing in Messiah**).[85]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** gracious loving heart that has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Messiah (Ephesians 1:3).** We so thank **You** that **the blessings** are not given out by the first come get the most, nor by who is prettiest, nor who sings best; rather all **Your blessings** are offered **"in Messiah."** As in **Your** beautiful allegory of **the vine and the branches**, **You** want me to be constantly connected to **You**, drawing from **You** so I can grow strong in **Your** wisdom and being conformed to **Your** likeness**. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing (John 15:5).** As a baby is born and then grows to act and think like his father, so you desire your children to abide in you, **"in Messiah"** and so grow to bear fruit by acting like you.*

*To act and think like **You** means that we also need to have a passionate heart to share **Your** great love so that all may hear of how wonderful **You** are and come to accept **You** as their **Savior**. As **Paul** prayed for the **Ephesian** believers to keep others in mind, rather than just thinking about themselves, so we will rejoice in faithfully interceding for family and friends who do not yet know **You**. May **You** open the eyes of the hearts of those I am thinking of right now, neighbors, family, and friends that they may move beyond knowing "about you," into a connected relationship like **the vine and its branches**. They think they can live for themselves and you will still take them and everyone else into heaven. How wrong and selfish is their selfish thought of all going to heaven. **You** desire all to enter heaven but you are a **Holy God** and only those who come with a repentant heart that has turned away from sin to follow **You** in love, are welcomed into heaven. **The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you – not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (Second Peter 3:9).***

Messiah Yeshua *graciously offers for all to come to* ***Him*** *for eternal rest.* ***Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*** ***(Matthew 11:28-30).*** *What a wonderful offer! Yoked together with* ***Messiah*** *means spending time with* ***You****, giving* ***You*** *control of all we do, say and think. What a joy to trust our all to* ***You*** *for* ***You*** *always guide* ***Your*** *children in what is the very best. May these family, friends and neighbors that I have brought before you, find the greatest of joys by trusting you as their* ***Lord*** *and* ***Savior*** *and placing their lives in your loving hands. In* ***Messiah Yeshua's*** *Holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*