

How to Pray for Your Family (Part 2)

Opener: What's the most amazing answer to prayer you've ever received or heard about?

Scripture: For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:21-25

Discussion Questions

1. These verses bridge the gap between the doctrine and duty sections in Ephesians.¹ When Paul says “for this reason” he’s referring to the doctrinal point he’d made that all believers are one in Christ. What does Paul’s posture indicate about his prayer for them? Can you “kneel” without actually kneeling? Eph. 3:14
2. What does it mean that every family derives its name from God? How does that affect our identity and our actions? How does it affect how unbelievers view the God we serve? Ephesians 3:14-15
3. Everyone wants to be physically strong, but how does the Holy Spirit strengthen our inner being? Why is Paul concerned about their inner strength? Why do our prayers so seldom focus on inner strength? Ephesians 3:16; Romans 7:21-25
4. What does it mean for Christ to dwell in us? How does His love keep us rooted and established? Ephesians 3:17
5. We know that God’s love is vast, but Paul used specific adjectives to make us think about it. To that end, fill in these blanks: God’s love is wide enough to _____. God’s love is long enough to _____. God’s love is deep enough to _____. God’s love is high enough to _____. Eph. 3:18
5. What difference does it make in our lives when we comprehend how great Christ’s love is?
6. Paul prayed for them to be strengthened within, to be rooted in love, to have power to know His love, and to be filled with God’s fullness. How do your prayers for family and friends compare with his?
7. A benediction usually comes at the end, but Ephesians is like a two-part sermon with a benediction in the middle. What do vs. 20-21 tell us about God’s ability to answer our prayers? How can glory be given to Him in the church and wherever we are through us and our families?

Wrap Up: So often prayer is reduced to a good luck charm or a ritualistic way of getting what we want from God rather than encountering God himself. It can easily become nothing more than a transaction where God is a vending machine where we pay our religious dues and then wait for the blessing to drop. But as Paul’s prayer illustrates, real prayer is kneeling before our heavenly Father and asking for His strength to live life His way. That’s how we should pray for our families and for others.

¹ Doctrine is related to a belief system about who God is and what He’s done for us; duty refers to conduct.