

Discussion Guide on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians
Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation (Ephesians 1:15-23)

1. Of all the things you pray for, where does the request “to know God better” fall in your priorities (v. 17)? Is it even on your prayer list? For what do you normally pray?
2. Paul prays that we may have a kind of “spiritual eyesight” whereby we may know three things (1:18-19). List those three things. Paul’s prayer is that we would appreciate the value that God has placed on us and, in doing so, live up to our high calling (see Eph. 4:1). How does your prayer life compare to these prayer requests?
3. Believers everywhere must pursue wisdom, which necessarily entails a growth in knowledge. Sadly, to love God with all our minds (Matt. 22:37) is often displaced by a new brand of Christian “maturity” that ends up being a sappy sentimentality devoid of God’s wisdom. Willful ignorance is not only an intellectual issue but an ethical one for the believer. God’s Holy Spirit does not, however, work in a vacuum nor does He work *against* knowledge. The Spirit of God works *with* truth and knowledge from God’s Word to transform our lives. How will you invest in your mind to ensure the darkness of ignorance is replaced by enlightened eyes that seek wisdom from above (see Ps. 119:18, 105; Pr. 23:23; Col. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:2 [NASB]; James 1:5)?
4. Naturally, Paul would not pray for something his readers already possessed. Therefore, this prayer for wisdom and revelation implies we don’t automatically have them. Will you begin praying for wisdom and revelation that you may know the power of Christ in your life?
5. Someone once defined Christian hope as “faith standing on tiptoe.” Exactly how does the fact that God called you in salvation bring you hope? What does hope look like in your life (Hint: What does despair look like)? Do you have a forward slant in your disposition? How can you begin to appreciate the profound significance of God’s call for your eternity?
6. Specifically, the power Paul mentions is God’s life-giving power *available to believers*. Compare Eph. 1:19 with Rom. 8:11-14 and Col. 3:1-4. Describe a time when God’s power was unleashed in your life.
7. Ephesus was a place of political, social, economic, and religious pride. Roman emperors were quick to establish a display of their power in the city. Yet, Paul claims God’s greatest display of power was Jesus’ resurrection (Eph. 1:22 is an allusion to Psalm 110:1, quoted more often in the NT than any other OT text, and Psalm 8:6; see also 1 Cor. 15:25-28 and Heb. 1:13-2:9). Precisely how is resurrection power on display in your life (see 1:19-20)? Is this display limited to Easter Sunday?
8. Paul goes so far as to claim that Jesus trumps not only all religious figures of his day, but also all those in the future (1:21). Doesn’t this sound a bit exclusive? How does this exclusive claim fit with the Islamic faith that Muhammad is greater than Jesus, or Mormons who insist Joseph Smith is God’s greatest prophet who restores the true church?
9. Whatever layers of authorities there are in heaven and on earth, Jesus Christ sits above them all (1:21-22). He outranks and outflanks every human or angelic presence. Christ, then, exercises universal and comprehensive lordship over the church and every member in it. Turn to John 14:15, 21, 23 and note the relationship between love and obedience. When we fail in submitting to Christ as Lord (disobedience), is it not our love that has failed? In what areas of your life can you show more love (obedience) for Jesus?
10. As Head over the Church universal (and this necessarily implies every local expression), all members of Christ’s Body share in the same vital union of one life under one Head. How is Christ’s life evident in and through you? How is Christ’s life evident in and through your church?

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11. Describe some ways you have or will put this prayer into practice.
12. Some of the changes God's power and enlightenment bring, such as destroying secret sins and growth in prayer, go unnoticed by the world and by others. Ask God to show you areas in your inner life that require his attention and humbly seek his "incomparably great power" to change.