



### Ephesians 1 v 15-23

#### Paul's prayer, leader's version

#### For an hour study, just do the starred \* questions

**Check in** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. 'for this reason...' The divisions between chapters and verses were made hundreds of years after the Bible was written, to help us find our way around. Paul's thoughts in v15 are directly linked to what came before. What came before? (review what you learnt in the previous study)

*We were chosen before creation to be holy and blameless in God's sight, predestined to be adopted as God's sons and sealed with the Holy Spirit for redemption - we are saved through Christ. We are 'blessed ...with every spiritual blessing in Christ.'* (Eph 1 v 3), *by grace* (v6).

#### What does the passage say and mean?

(60 minutes)

#### Read Ephesians 1 v 15-23

2. What has Paul heard about the Ephesians? (v15)

*That they have faith and that they love 'all the saints' (Christians).*

?

Has anyone heard about your faith in Jesus or your love for other Christians?

3. What does Paul pray for them and why? (v17)

*That God will give them wisdom and revelation (through the Holy Spirit) so that they can know God better. We have every spiritual blessing in Christ, 1 v 3, but Paul prays that their spiritual eyes will be opened to know more (don't unpack this – it will be covered later).*

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Paul remembers the Ephesian Christians in his prayers (v16). Do you know anyone who prays for you?

*If someone says no, reassure them that there are many people who pray for prisoners, including the prison chaplains and people who they may never meet. If you pray for the individuals in your group, tell them!*

4. **STICKERS** Why do we need to get to know God better and grow as Christians? Why not stay as we are?

*Because God has so much more in store for us than just staying as we are! As God changes our hearts, through the work of the Holy Spirit, He is making us more and more like Jesus in our attitudes and behaviour. This process of change brings honour and glory to God's name, and is not finished until Jesus comes back, see Philippians 1 v 6.*

5. What would help us to grow spiritually? (v17)

*We grow because the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of wisdom and revelation) is at work in our lives. We need to put effort in too; we won't grow against our will!*

*Think about what would give fertile soil for spiritual growth to happen:*

*Increasing trust in, and dependence on, God*

*Prioritising prayer and Bible study*

*Increased understanding of the Bible – discussing it in a group with someone who knows more than you do*

6. **STICKERS** As we grow in our faith (an inside growth), we start to change on the outside too. In what ways might we start to change?

*Think about specific behaviours, issues for individuals in the group, addictions, habits, attitudes, speech, forgiveness, healing of relationships etc.*

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Paul prays that God would give the Ephesians a spirit of wisdom and understanding and that they would **know God better**. Can you pray this for yourselves and others?

*Maybe the group can arrange for each person to pray for one other every day for the next week? (Make sure everyone is prayed for by someone!)*

Questions 7-9 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work on them in pairs.

\*7. **SDL** What 3 things does Paul want them to know and why? (v18-19)

*The hope to which God has called you (eternity with Christ), the riches of eternity with Christ and God's power to get us there. He wants us to understand them because they are crucial truths of our salvation, so deep that we can never plumb their depths fully. Knowing these things gives us assurance of our salvation. Try and unpack the three things individually.*

\*8. **SDL** God's power is at work in us, changing us. How powerful is God? (v19-20)

*Incomparably powerful! Paul reminds us of the power of the resurrection.*

\*9. **SDL** Do you believe that God's power is at work in your life, changing you? Have you got any examples?

*If there's no reply, remind them of what Jesus did on the cross and of God's power to forgive.*

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Paul prays that they would have their **eyes opened** to the glory of heaven. Do you want that too? Do you pray for it?

10. Read v20. Where is Jesus now?

*Alive and sitting at God the Father's right hand (a position of authority).*

11. How is Jesus described in v21-22?

*Far above all rule and authority, head over everything.*

12. How is the church described in v23?

*Jesus' body.*

13. If you are a Christian, you are part of the wider church - part of Christ's body. What does that mean?

14. Read Ephesians 4 v 1. How has this study helped you to think about living the life worthy of the calling you have received?

**Check out** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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