

A PRAYER TO KNOW GOD (Ephesians 1:17)

When we carefully examine the pastoral prayers of Paul on behalf of the believers in Christ, it's fascinating to observe how God-centered his prayers are. The focus of Paul's prayer is not any particular life circumstance such as the ongoing Christian persecution or the crippling economic poverty during the New Testament times. The emphasis of Paul's prayer is for believers to know God even better and deeper. Paul stresses the vital truth that our personal knowledge of God needs to be prioritized and cultivated in such a way that we nurture a growing and more passionate relationship with Him. Reflecting from Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers, let's consider two significant features of this prayer to know God.

1. A prayer for a _____ communion with our glorious God

This pastoral prayer is not merely a one time petition of Paul. This prayer to know God is a persistent and constant petition of Paul on behalf of the Ephesian believers. Paul earnestly pleads that the Christians in Ephesus would prioritize a deeper and a more intimate knowledge of God, a richer and a stronger relationship with Him (Eph. 1:17; John 17:3). This intimate communion with God is further defined by Paul in terms of reverence for the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father of glory. This reference to God should remind us of the faithfulness of our covenant keeping God in fulfilling His promise to redeem His people through the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:7-9). This title should also bring to mind our Lord Jesus' example of wholehearted dependence on God and obedience to His will while He was here on earth (John 20:17). God is also addressed as the Father of glory which should be a humbling reminder to all believers that the God we are privileged to know and worship is our good, gracious and loving Father to whom all glory, majesty and splendor belong (Exod. 33:18-23; Eph. 1:5).

2. A prayer for the spirit of _____

Paul further emphasizes the truth that for believers to grow in their personal knowledge of God, we need to fervently pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17). In our fallen and sinful nature, we are blind to the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:4). But praise God that when He regenerates us, the Holy Spirit delivers us from our spiritual blindness and enables us to see the light of the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). In our redeemed state, we should pray for the Spirit's work of imparting His wisdom which is the God-given ability to take biblical truths and principles and apply them to practical situations of life. Moreover, we need to plead for the spirit of revelation which is divine insight imparted by the Holy Spirit whereby we are aided to gain God's perspective while reflecting on the truths of the Scriptures.
