

## Making Mention of You in My Prayers (Part 1)

June 28, 2002

Remember verses 3-14 serve as Paul's praise. Now we will begin to study verses 15-23, which serve as Paul's prayer.

### **Ephesians 1:15-23**

*15, For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which [exists] among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention [of you] in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. [These are] in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly [places], 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

- ***What three general aspects of prayer does Paul incorporate here in this prayer?***

Verses 15-16:

Verses 17-19a:

Verses 19b-23:

- ***What did Paul give thanks to God for?***

The **first** thing that Paul thanks God for is the Ephesian believers faith in the Lord Jesus. Paul probably has in mind here their coming to true saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This was not just a profession of faith, but the emphasis here is on true saving belief, with the lordship of Jesus in mind. Paul was rejoicing over their salvation. Their testimony had obviously spread out from Ephesus and the surrounding region and Paul had received news of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you here the good news of someone's salvation, do you take the time to turn to the Lord in prayer and thank God for their faith/their salvation/their testimony? Surely we can rejoice and thank God in our prayers every time someone has been saved by grace through faith.

The **second** thing that Paul thanks God for is the Ephesian believer's love for all the saints. True saving faith is the root and love for the saints is the flower that grows out of that root. The Ephesian believers had a genuine love for all the saints.

Notice the key word *all*. They did not just love the lovely, but also the unlovely. They loved all of their fellow Christians. Christian love does not discriminate! Christian love does not pick and choose whom it will love! Christian love extends to all believers because Christ loves all believers and they are precious to Him!

- *What kind of love is this/Describe what you think Paul means by love here?*

The term used here is AGAPE. It speaks of a thoughtful, volitional, and purposeful love that wills to love even the unlovely. It speaks of the very love of God Himself. It speaks of loving a person as God loves him. It speaks of a genuine and sacrificial love. Paul describes this kind of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

*"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."*

- *What do the following passages teach regarding the idea of loving one another?*

John 13:34-35

1 John 3:14

1 John 3:16-18

1 John 4:7

1 John 4:11

1 John 4:19-21

1 John 5:1

In many cases today there is simply a lack of a proper understanding about relationships. I felt that this was provided verse provided an opportunity to move to the more practical side of things this week and deal with a believer's understanding of relationships, specifically, **"how we should treat one another."**

Webster defines a relationship as, "the state or character of being related or interrelated." In a broad sense we have some type of relationship to anyone or anything, but my purpose this week is to

define God's perspective of a personal relationship. Therefore I want to examine the key elements in a Biblical Relationship.

### **1. The Pattern For Biblical Relationships.**

The best pattern for our relationships is to examine the ultimate blueprint—how God relates to Himself. The three members of the trinity do not only relate to one another functionally, but personally as well.

- ***What do the following verses teach us regarding the relationships of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)? What principals do these verses teach regarding our relationships with one another?***

Mark 14:32-36/Philippians 2:5-9

John 8:49/2 Peter 1:17

John 8:28-29; 14:31; 16:13

Philippians 2:1-11

Deuteronomy 6:4/John 10:30/John 17:11

John 8:28; 15:15; 16:13

Genesis 1:26/Luke 4:1/John 14:23/1 Peter 1:2

Matthew 11:27/John 8:55/1 Corinthians 2:10

Matthew 11:25/Luke 10:21/John 11:41

John 14:31; 15:9-10; 17:22-23

John 3:33/Titus 1:1-2/Hebrews 6:18

John 16:14; 17:1,5,24

The way the Trinity relates to one another definitely gives us a model for Biblical Relationships and highlights some key elements in a Biblical relationship. What an excellent pattern to follow!

### **1. The Principals For Biblical Relationships.**

Not only does God serve as the ultimate pattern for a Biblical relationship, but He also gives us clear directives or exhortations on how we should treat one another. The New Testament is full of this instruction on how believers should treat one another.

- *What principals do these verses teach regarding our relationships with one another? What are the key elements of a Biblical relationship emphasized in these verses?*

Romans 12:10

Romans 12:16

Romans 14:9

Galatians 5:26

Ephesians 4:25

Ephesians 4:32

Ephesians 5:21

Philippians 2:13

Colossians 3:9

Colossians 3:13

Colossians 3:16

1 Thessalonians 5:11-15

James 4:11

James 5:9

1 Peter 4:9

1 Peter 5:5

This is not an exhaustive list of the one another's. Clearly the Lord gives us much instruction as He exhorts us toward Biblical relationships. Notice also some of the similarities between God's example and God's exhortations.

- *What are some of the common elements between God's pattern and principals for Biblical relationships?*

### **1. The Pitfalls to Biblical Relationships.**

Before leaving the subject of relationships, it is necessary to address some of the pitfalls that must be avoided as we attempt to have Biblical Relationships. Major pitfalls exist in our relationships due to our sin nature. It is necessary that we try to do away with our sinful tendencies and replace them with Christ-like characteristics. What are the major pitfalls to a Biblical relationship?

#### **1-Not pursuing Christ first and foremost!**

Our relationship with Christ will always affect our horizontal relationships with one another. When we are not loving God with all of our heart, soul and mind; when we are not putting Christ first and foremost in our lives then all our other relationships inevitably suffer.

- Take time to make Christ your life and treasure. Pursue Him above all else! Spend time in the Word and prayer on a daily basis!

#### **2-Pride (the mindset of self)!**

Pride will cause us to look down on others. A person who is self-exalting will also get defensive, blame-shift, rename, or ignore sin rather than admit sin and ask forgiveness. The focus of sinful flesh is self! It finds great difficulty in being others-minded. Its thoughts, words and efforts are consumed with "my" agenda, "my" problems, "my" lacks, "my" desires, "my" needs.

- Allow yourself to be held accountable, seek to focus on God's desires and serving the good of others.

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.*

### 3-Sinful Communication!

All too often we can enter into a heated conversation that results in sinful communication. Deceitful, unwholesome, or hurtful words, as well as the tone of voice and body language with which they are said can be sinful. The flesh wants to excuse these sins based on circumstances.

- Communicate with truthfulness and love at all times.

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth,  
but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need  
of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

Ephesians 4:29

### 4-A lack of appreciation and thankfulness!

When we are focused on the negative aspects of a person or of a relationship, rather than on the positive, we are reluctant to relate as we should. All too often we fail to express our appreciation or thankfulness to one another. Remember that we are commanded to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

- Regularly think and share thoughts of appreciation and thankfulness.

*Therefore encourage one another and build up  
one another, just as you also are doing.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

### 5-Self-focused expectations!

Looking and waiting for another's growth, time, care, or attention is usually a bad idea. We must not live in expectation or put conditions on our love and care for others. Our focus is to be on loving God and others for God's glory, not on having personal desires met. It is a danger to have unrealistic expectations of others. We cannot expect immediate perfection, remember that it takes time to create new habits.

- Focus most on God's desires and your own responsibility to others, rather than on your own desires and the performance or responsibility of others. See your sin as large and the sin of others as small.

*And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye,*

*but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*

*Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the*

*speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye?*

*You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye,  
and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

Matthew 7:3-5

A Biblical relationship is a joint participation between two distinct Christian persons in which there is involvement, Christ-like love, good communication, appreciation, edification, and service, all in an attitude of respect and humility, and all for God's glory and the benefit of the other.

We are all involved in relationships of one kind or another. They are either poor or worsening, or good and growing. God has given us a pattern and principals to follow. We need to heed His instruction and avoid the pitfalls so that we can have Biblical relationships, treating one another as God has commanded.

Paul has taken time to offer up a prayer of thanksgiving to God in Ephesians 1:15-16. He thanks God for the Ephesians faith in the Lord Jesus and for their love for all the saints. Next week we will continue on in Paul's prayer by examining how he prays for the Ephesian believers.

**APPLICATION:**

- **Identify a weak element in your relationships with others, so that you can be held accountable by the others in your group. Then enact a plan for Biblical change.**