

IMMEASURABLY MORE ..

learning from the letter to the Ephesians

“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, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! [Eph.3.20f]

The letter to the Ephesians sets out for us ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ’ (Eph.3.8), and assures us that God is ‘able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine’ (Eph.3.20): this study is intended to help us all enter into and enjoy that ‘immeasurably more’.

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

*

No pressure!

As always there are 7 [sets of] questions in this study: that’s mainly to provide the option, which some find useful, of the material being used as a daily study guide. It’s more difficult this week to identify which are ‘the *key* questions’, as that may vary between the groups.

Priorities!

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. It’s a short passage again, which makes it difficult to prioritise some questions above others! The ‘business’ end of these three verses, however, is v.17, so perhaps the ‘key’ questions are questions 1, and then 5-7!

Prayer!

Do try also to make a point in your Community Group of leaving time for praying together!

*

8. Eph.1.15-17 [w/b Sunday 26th February]

“..that you may know Him better ..”

With this study we start in on the first of Paul's prayers for the Ephesian believers. It's an instructive (and sometimes humbling) exercise to see how the apostle prayed for the churches in his care, and to compare that with the priorities reflected in our own praying.

Running through the prayers of this man for the church is, almost invariably, the desire for a deepening *knowledge* of God: his concern here is primarily for a growing *relational* knowledge (vv.15-17), but combined with that, and integral to that, is his burden that they may have a growing *intellectual* knowledge, a clearer grasp, that is, of the great truths of the gospel (vv.18-23)

It's a short passage again, which makes it difficult to prioritise some questions above others! The 'business' end of these three verses, however, is v.17, so perhaps the 'key' questions are questions 1, and then 5-7.

*

1. Read Ephesians 1.15-23. Paul prays that they may know God better (relationally), and that they may have a clearer, fuller intellectual grasp of the hope, the inheritance, and the power which is theirs.

When and how did you first come to know God in a truly relational sense – rather than simply knowing *about* Him?

What have been the means by which you've been conscious of growing in your knowledge of Him?

2. Read Ephesians 1.15. Paul's prayer here flows out of what he has just been writing about (remember vv.3-14 are all one sentence, and thus, in Paul's mind, all a single train of thought).

What prompts Paul to pray as he does? Or, putting it slightly differently, to what does his "*For this reason..*" (lit. '*because of this ..*') refer?

3. Read Ephesians 1.15, 16. Paul's praying for the Ephesian believers is against the backdrop of what he knows, or has heard, about them.

Why do you think that the faith and love of the Ephesian believers are characterised in the terms Paul uses here?

What does that have to teach us?

4. **Read Ephesians 1.16.** Paul's prayers, like his letters, usually begin with gratitude: this one is no exception.

For what would Paul have continually been giving thanks to God in relation to the Ephesian believers?

Read Philippians 4.6. What benefit have you found in being careful to preface your requests to God with your giving thanks to Him?

How can we cultivate a perspective in which our primary default attitude is that of gratitude?

5. **Read Ephesians 1.17.** Paul is very specific in the way in which he addresses his prayer to God, describing Him as 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ', and as 'the glorious Father' (lit. 'the Father of glory').

Why do you think Paul designates God so fully? Why didn't he just say *'I keep asking that God may give ..'*?

Read Luke 11.5-13. Paul says he *'keeps asking..'*: why do you think we are encouraged to continue to bring specific requests to God?

Do you think there are occasions where such persistent asking reflects a *lack of faith*?

6. Read Ephesians 1.17. It's striking to see how in praying for those who are already believers Paul is essentially asking for *more* of the same. They have the Spirit (vv.13-14), but here he now asks the Father to '*give you the Spirit...*' (v.17)

What does Paul suggest is the role which the Spirit has in our growing to know God better?

Why does Paul characterize the Spirit as the Spirit of both 'wisdom' and 'revelation'?

Do you think there's a deliberate parallel between the designation of the Spirit in these terms here, and what Paul has earlier written in v.8?

7. Read Ephesians 1.17. This first actual petition in Paul's praying for the Ephesian believers has as its simple stated aim the desire that they might 'know (God) better'.

Why do you think it matters so much that we get to 'know Him better'?