

April 2, 2017

*The Bridge Bible Fellowship*

Pastor Paul S. Brown

Ephesians 1:15-23

**“Praying for Illumination”**

I. Greeting – 1:1-2

**II. God’s Eternal Plan for the Church Explained – 1:3 – 3:21**

A. Doxology – 1:3-14

1. The Father’s Role in Redemption (v. 4-6)
2. The Son’s Role in Redemption (v. 7-12)
3. The Holy Spirit’s Role in Redemption (v. 13-14)

**B. Paul’s First Prayer – 1:15-23**

**1. The Motivation (15)**

**2. The Model (16)**

**3. The Matter (17-23) – Illumination**

**a. Grow in Knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_ (17)**

**b. Grow in Knowledge of God’s \_\_\_\_\_ (18-23) – “you will know what is (are)...”**

**1) The hope of His calling (18)**

**2) The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (18)**

**3) The surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe**

**a) Defined (19a)**

**b) Illustrated (19b-23)**

**i. Resurrection & Ascension (20-21)**

**ii. Subjection (22a)**

**iii. Connection (22b-23)**

## Discussion & Application:

1. Paul describes the Ephesians as doing very well (1:15), yet he prays for them regularly. Why do we need to pray for people that are doing well spiritually?
2. What is intercession? For whom do you regularly intercede? Approximately how much time do you spend daily interceding for others?
3. What do you normally ask God to do when you intercede for others? Do you follow any biblical models?
4. What is illumination? How would you define it? What is the Holy Spirit's role in illumination (1 Cor. 2:6-16)? See also Eph. 1:17-18; 3:18-19; 2 Cor. 3:14-16; 4:6.
5. If God already opened our eyes to understand the gospel (2 Cor. 4:3-6), why do we need more illumination?
6. How often do you pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit for yourself and others?
7. Why do we need to grow in our "knowledge" of God? What kind of "knowledge" is Paul talking? How do we grow in this kind of knowledge? Why is the ministry of the Holy Spirit indispensable here?
8. Why does Paul bring up these three specific blessings? If we already have these blessings why do we need to have a deeper knowledge of them? How does a deeper understanding of these blessings help us grow spiritually, become united in the church, and gain victory over our spiritual enemies (world, flesh, and devil)?
9. The Spirit of God longs to illumine our minds to a deeper understanding & application of knowledge of God and His blessings. Below are three spiritual disciplines that the Holy Spirit works through to illumine our minds. How are you doing in each of these on a daily basis? What can you do this week to improve in each so you can grow in the grace and knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?
  - a. **Intake of the Word of God** (read, study, listen to it taught, etc.)
  - b. **Meditation on the Word of God** (think deeply about it and its implications in various areas of life – Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2)
  - c. **Prayer for illumination of the Word of God** (asking the Holy Spirit to enable you to understand and apply God's Word the way He intended).
10. Pray every day this week for the Holy Spirit to illumine your mind and the minds of some others you know well. Let them know you are praying this way for them, then ask them next week what the Lord did in answer to your prayers.

[Answer to blanks: God; Blessings]