



KNOWING CHRIST

Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

LIVING IN CHRIST

Ephesians 3:1-21

Inductive Discovery Lesson 10

I'm praying for you . . .

Those words, spoken sincerely, assure us that someone cares. We need the prayers of others, don't we? There is power in prayer—not in the words themselves, but in the faith that lays hold of God's Word. *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

Paul was a praying man. His prayers were filled with faith and armed with courage. He knew that God answers prayer; and if you asked him to tell you *how* he knew, you'd better pull up a chair and plan to stay awhile.

Paul had always been a praying man, but the limitations of house arrest freed him to pour yet more of himself into prayer for the church. He often thought of the believers far away in Asia. He vividly recalled the times of his life there, how hard the enemy had pressed and how greatly God had blessed. When visitors came, Paul eagerly sought news: *what do you hear from Colossae? How does it go for our brothers in Philippi? What of Ephesus?* Though years and miles separated them, Paul had left part of his heart with them. *I'm praying for you*, Paul wrote. His prayer welled up from the depths of his soul, where God's Spirit lived and moved and breathed. He prayed for the saints at Ephesus *and all who are faithful in Christ Jesus* (including you!) to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

He prayed what he knew. When Paul contemplated God's calling on his life, it humbled him. When Paul thought about the wisdom of God's plan, it exhilarated him. When Paul pondered the magnitude of God's love, it dropped him to his knees. When Paul thought of all that God's Spirit supplies to help us live, and love, and grow in Christ—well, he couldn't contain his praise! The neighbors probably heard him singing!

Working Text for Ephesians 3:1-21

New Living Translation (NLT)

1 I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ Jesus because of my preaching to you Gentiles. **2** As you already know, God has given me this special ministry of announcing His favor to you Gentiles. **3** As I briefly mentioned earlier in this letter, God Himself revealed His secret plan to me. **4** As you read what I have written, you will understand what I know about this plan regarding Christ. **5** God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now He has revealed it by the Holy Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. **6** And this is the secret plan: The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children. Both groups have believed the Good News, and both are part of the same body and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus. **7** By God's special favor and mighty power, I have been given the wonderful privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

8 Just think! Though I did nothing to deserve it, and though I am the least deserving Christian there is, I was chosen for this special joy of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. **9** I was chosen to explain to everyone this plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. **10** God's purpose was to show His wisdom in all its rich variety to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. They will see this when Jews and Gentiles are joined together in His church. **11** This was His plan from all eternity, and it has now been carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. **12** Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of His glad welcome. **13** So please don't despair because of what they are doing to me here. It is for you that I am suffering, so you should feel honored and encouraged.

14 When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, **15** the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. **16** I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength through His Holy Spirit. **17** And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. **18** And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. **19** May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God. **20** Now glory be to God! By His mighty power at work within us, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. **21** May He be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen.



Use the second column to record information you gather from other sources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps, etc. You can also use this section to jot down **your thoughts, impressions or questions that come to mind**. *Do your best to follow Paul's train of thought.* Does he emphasize a particular topic? Are his words urgent? Encouraging? Commanding? What issues or problems does he address? What questions does he ask?

Facts from the passage:

[illegible]

Ephesians 3:8-13

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

[illegible]

Ephesians 3:14-21

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

[illegible]

Key Words and Phrases

Key words and phrases help us understand the main point the writer wants to make. How do we recognize key words and phrases? Here are some simple things to look for.

- When you see a word or phrase repeated, you can be sure Paul is using it to make his point.
- If you are unfamiliar with a word or its meaning, it becomes a key word *for you*. Take time to learn the definition so you will understand how it is being used in the sentence.

List any key words and phrases you found in Ephesians 3:1-21

Write the definition of the following words or phrases. Use a regular dictionary or a concordance with a Greek Dictionary if you have one.

“the **unsearchable riches of Christ**” (vs.8) _____

“the **manifold wisdom of God**” (vs.10) _____



INTERPRETATION — *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: “Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLICATION — *How does it apply to me?*

We don’t study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to ***put it into action***.

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

Ephesians 3:1-7

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

?

Ephesians 3:8-13

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

?

Ephesians 3:14-21

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the passage is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter that will help you personally to remember it.



Take a Closer Look

Now to Him who by His power within us
is able to do infinitely more than we ever dare to ask or imagine—
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen!

Ephesians 3:20-21 (Phillips Translation)

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize from and re-write the verse here.

Meditate on God's Word

Look up. What does this verse teach you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, His promises.)

Look around. What does this verse teach you about the world and people in general?

Look within. What does this verse teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



Something to Think About . . .

This is the secret, isn't it? You and I can do nothing—but God, living in us, filling us, working through us, is able to do more than we can even think to ask Him...

God can exceed your wildest dreams—if you stop trying to manipulate, scheme, and bring it to pass in your own strength. Allow Him to live in you and through you, and the wildly unthinkable will become commonplace in your life...

- Ray Stedman¹

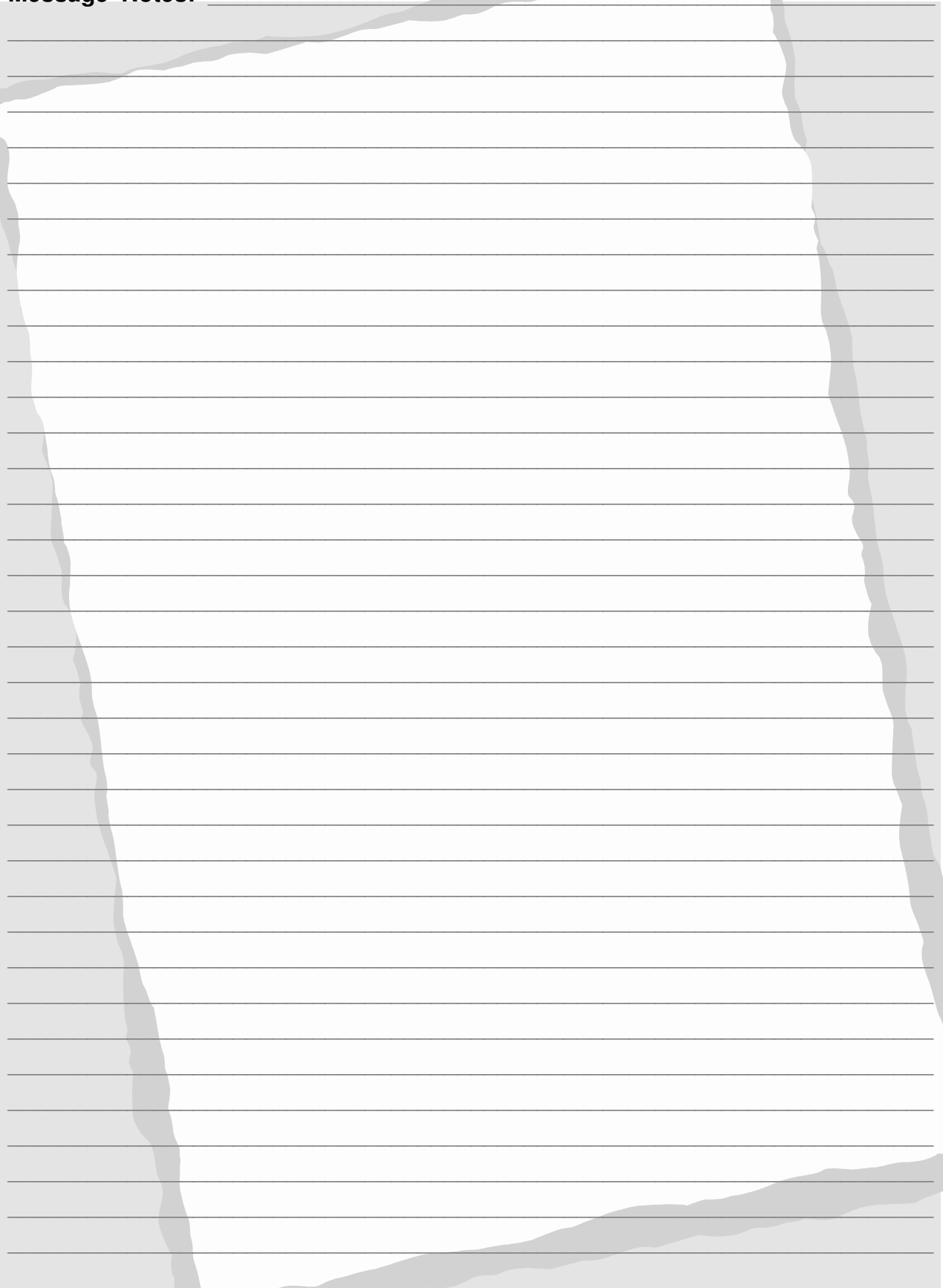


God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you, personally, what has been the most important lesson from this study?
How will you put what God has shown you into practice?

¹ Ray Stedman, *Our Riches in Christ*, pg. 164

Message Notes:



A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or a message box. The area is defined by a thick, irregular, torn-paper-like border on the left and bottom edges. The top edge is straight. The background of the area is light gray, and the lines are thin and gray.



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