

**“That Your Love May Abound More & More...”:**

*Praying With Paul, Part 2*

*Sermon Notes*

➤ **No Christian graduates the biblical school of prayer without being mastered by the prayers of Paul**

*\*For example, in Philippians 1, Paul teaches us to...*

1. Pray that we would be a church of ever-increasing love and totally-unflinching truth...  
(v.9)

2. ...so that we develop much-needed discernment and mature biblical wisdom for our day...(v.10a)

3. ...in view of the soon return of our King and his radical commitment to our personal holiness (vv.10b-11)

**Next Sunday: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 - “Our Worth & Work in the Gospel”:**

*Praying With Paul, Part 3*

## Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of August 15th-21st

### Getting Started

1. Author Gary Millar writes:

“If any of the New Testament writers can lay claim to being the ‘theologian of prayer’, it is the apostle Paul. Paul talks more about his own prayers, encourages his readers to pray more and includes more prayer in his letters than anyone else. Paul, more than anyone else, shaped the theology and practice of prayer in the church of the Lord Jesus...”<sup>1</sup>

How has the apostle Paul shaped your own life of prayer? Honesty is always the best policy, so feel free to admit if you believe he hasn’t had much of an impact on how you pray. But for those of you for whom Millar’s words ring true, take some time to share a bit with the rest of the group what difference Paul’s prayers and teaching about prayer have made in your walk with the Lord.

### Digging Deeper

2. In our current preaching series, we’re studying three prayers of Paul (Ephesians 3:14-19, Philippians 1:9-11, and 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). However, Paul mentions prayer some 45 times across his 13 letters.<sup>2</sup> Footnote #2 below contains a sampling. What’s one truth you’ve been meditating on from our study of Paul’s prayers over the last two Sundays that’s been of particular help to you?

### Open Your Bible to Romans 8:26...

3. In Romans 8:26-27, Paul jumps into the deep end of the theology of prayer as he unfolds the role of the Holy Spirit in our petitions to God. Read these two verses carefully. What is the Holy Spirit doing? Bearing in mind the broader context of “sufferings” (8:18), “futility” (8:20), “bondage to corruption” (8:21), and “groaning” (in fact we see groaning 3 times: once in 8:22, once in 8:23, and once in 8:26), why is what Paul says in 8:26-27 such good news to us as we make our way through this sin-cursed world?
4. Paul clearly had a vision for the critical role that prayer plays in the work of evangelism. Compare his words in Romans 10:1 with those in Colossians 4:2-4. How many truths about evangelistic prayer can you draw out of these four verses? Share your findings together as a group. Does Paul model anything here that you think might find its way into your pursuit of your ‘List of 5’? If so, what is it?

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<sup>1</sup> J. Gary Millar, *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL. 2016. p.201.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 1:10; 8:26; 10:1; 12:12; 15:30-32; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 9:14; 13:9; Ephesians 1:17-23; 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 1:9-12; 4:2-4, 12; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 5:17, 25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:1, 8; 4:5; and Philemon 6.

5. Take a look at the appeal Paul makes to the church in Rome relative to prayer in Romans 15:30-32. What invitation does he issue to them in verse 30? Do you tend to think of prayer this way? Why or why not? Now consider the particular prayer request he asks of them in verses 31-32. What does he want? Why does he want it? Feel free to use a study Bible or any other commentary sources you may have for further background information. In what ways might we follow Paul's lead in praying for these types of situations in the church today locally, nationally, or globally?
6. In 1 Corinthians 7:5, Paul addresses the rather delicate but important aspect of marital intimacy with the church in Corinth. Giving thought to the immediate context (verses 1-4)<sup>3</sup>, what is the meaning of Paul's counsel to married believers in the church here with reference to prayer in verse 5? What is the benefit to a husband and wife abstaining from sexual intimacy with each other for a time in order to "devote themselves to prayer"? Paul assumes married couples might be in this sort of habit. To put the question another way, what is it about marital intimacy that might serve to threaten or interrupt a couple's life of prayer? How might we apply this in the context of our marriages today?
7. Finally, consider Paul's references to prayer in 2 Corinthians 1:11; 9:14; and 13:9. Take some time to look up each of these verses, seeking to interpret them faithfully using the COMA method (**C**ontext, **O**bservation, **M**eaning, **A**pplication). What do you learn? Once you've pondered the context, made observations, and found what is likely the original meaning, what sort of practical application can you make to our church today?
8. Close your time together as a group in prayer for one another. Bearing in mind the truths you've discovered in your study, make sure to incorporate a number of them in your adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession. Let us pray!

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<sup>3</sup> It's important to note that when we read the phrase "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman", first century Corinth was known to have an especially debauched and sexually permissive culture (does that remind you have any culture you know?). So Paul is responding to what had become a bit of proverbial wisdom and ethical guidance in the young Corinthian congregation. Some of the believers in this church essentially began to overcorrect and adopt this phrase with binding moral authority for all Christians.