

## THE PRAYERS OF PAUL

### Study Questions Week 2

1. Read these prayers of Paul: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5; 2:13; 3:9-13  
How often do you thank God for other Christians, for what He has done in their lives, for how they have responded to God's work in them? Take some time to think of examples you can see of God working in a fellow believer's life and how they have responded to that. Write them down and commit to thanking God for the person(s), God's work, and their response to His work.
  
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13. In what ways does Paul's prayer in 3:9-13 show his passion for people? Do you feel a similar passion for the people God has placed in your life? In your church? What can you do to increase your enthusiasm for people?
  
3. Reread 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 5:23. These verses have two themes in common: Blameless, holiness, sanctification; and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are to pray like Paul, we should pray for sanctification, blamelessness and holiness in ourselves and for others.
  - a. Consider your blamelessness, holiness and sanctification using Kevin DeYoung's examples of what holiness looks like:
    - i. **Holiness looks like the renewal of God's image in us.** God is holy, so most basically being holy means being like God. Consider honestly how you are doing with this. Do you have things in your life that are decidedly ungodly? What could you change to be more godly?

ii. **Holiness looks like a life marked by virtue instead of vice.** As you read through the lists of virtues and vices in the Scriptures below, what are some of the vices in your life that you need to get rid of? What are some of the virtues you see and need to continue to encourage?

1. Vices: Romans 1:24-31; Mark 7:21-22; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; Revelation 21:8

2. Virtues: Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:12-15; 2 Peter 1:5-7

iii. **Holiness looks like a clean conscience.** Do you have any issues with your conscience? Are you aware of anything against yourself? Do you ever violate your sense of right and wrong, even if the action itself is not sinful? Do you realize that doing so is sin? Read Romans 14:23. Examples of situations where you might violate your conscience include drinking alcohol, what you watch, read or listen to, and physical intimacy before marriage.

iv. **Holiness looks like obedience to God's commands.** Do you know the Ten Commandments? Do they shape your living? How?

v. **Holiness looks like Christlikeness.** Jesus is the best, most practical, most human example of what it means to be holy. Read the Scriptures below and note what virtue of Christ is noted. How do you measure up to each virtue?

1. John 13:34

2. Philippians 2:5-8

3. Hebrews 4:15

4. 1 Peter 4:1-2

5. John 6:38 and 14:31

- b. Consider that Jesus will come again in glory and take us to heaven as noted in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 5:23. Do you pray with eternity in view – for God to strengthen hearts that people will be blameless and holy and live lives worthy of what it means to be a Christian? Or, are your prayers more worldly – for your kids/spouse/yourself to pass exams, get good jobs, be happy? How might your prayers need to change?
4. Ask God to put someone on your heart (from our church) for whom you do not now pray. Commit to praying for that Christian (or Christians) faithfully. After you have been at it for a few weeks or a few months, tell the person you are doing so – and then keep on doing so.