

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 3:14-21

Session 25: Paul's Prayer

Today we are going to learn something about prayer, about grammar and about Ephesians doctrine.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Bow my knees” is a figure of speech for “praying.” And now, in vs. 14, after a long digression into the mystery, Paul returns to what he started to say back up in vs. 1.

This means that Ephesians 3:2-13 is a **Pa-rim'-bow-lee** (*Parembole*). A **parembole** is a type of parenthesis or insertion. And let me say right off the bat (another figure of speech), it is important to be aware when you run across a **parembole**, even if you don't remember what it is called. As long as you recognize that the writer has inserted something and by doing so, has interrupted the main thought; that is the important part.

This isn't the first time we have seen a **parembole** in Ephesians. Ephesians 1:19b-23 is a **parembole**, and it also takes place within the context of Paul's prayer. Interesting.

Take a look at it back in chapter 1.

Ephesians 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know...

Paul tells the Ephesians that he has been praying for them to “know” something. In this case, “know” has two aspects: 1) they intellectually understand what Paul is saying, and 2) they experience the reality of it in their lives.

When you ask someone if they know how to drive a standard shift vehicle, you aren't asking if they have ever heard of it or seen it, you are asking if they have ever driven one before; have they ever done it. If they haven't, they don't really “know” how to drive one.

In the same way, Paul doesn't just want them to mentally understand something, but he wants them to experience it in their lives. So, what is it that Paul wants them to know?

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that ye may know 1)** what is the hope of his calling, and **2)** what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And **3)** what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ,

when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:²² And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

So, there is something Paul wants God to reveal to the Ephesians; something about God Himself.

First of all, realize Paul does not expect that God is just going to give it to them without anything on their part. God will give this to them in response to something they are doing with the doctrine (the word) which he is writing unto them.

Do you get what I am saying? Let me illustrate what I am saying. Let's say that you are going through something in which you will need patience, and you know that so far you have not been patient. Can you pray for patience? The answer is "yes" if you are praying properly. And by that, I do not mean you are asking in the name of Jesus, or you have confessed all your sins, or anything like that.

What I mean is that we cannot just pray for patience and expect that God will miraculously nullify our impatience, and suddenly we just want to be patient. If that is what you are expecting, then you are not praying properly.

But, if you are looking at your situation and you know that patience is the godly response, then you can pray for patience as long as you realize that patience comes by your prayerful engagement with God's word, which will then work in your inner man to produce godly patience (the character of Jesus Christ). So, in order to do that, what is the process?

Step One: Identify the lie. Your problem is your impatience. So, identify the source of your impatience. There is something you believe which is not true, and it is making you impatient. This "untruth" is making you impatient. Satan may or may not be the author of this untruth, but he will certainly use it against you.

Step Two: Replace the Lie with the Truth. Next you must replace the lie with a truth from God's word. That means you will have to take time and think about this. Do not worry about the doctrine you do not know, but deal with it out of the doctrine you do know. If you need help, start with your spouse, then a trusted friend or spiritual counsellor. You might even refer to the lessons in Sonship Transformation.

Step Three: Follow Through. When you discover verses that present the truth, write them down, memorize at least one of them so you can refer to it at any time during the day (get it in your subconscious), and then incorporate the verses into your prayer life.

In prayer, tell your heavenly Father that you renounce the lie (name the lie and tell Him you renounce it) and then affirm the truth of His word (name the truth you are choosing to believe and tell Him you believe it). Do all this out loud where you can hear yourself say it.

Make a choice to believe the truth and reject the lie. Say it out loud. Write your affirmation down on a notecard and put it where you will see it, perhaps at your bedside table. Let this prompt you to pray about this first thing in the morning and the last thing at night.

As you go through this process, you will discover that godly patience (and I call it “godly patience” because there is a fleshly patience which is a counterfeit) will begin to be built in you, built upon the foundation of truth from God’s word (which is what makes it godly), and transforming you from the inside (which is the work of the Spirit, not ours). It is wonderful, but it isn’t magic. When you engage in this process, the Spirit of God within you takes the word of God and effectually works it (makes it a reality) in your inner man. Patience will happen, but not always instantly. But once it is there, it is like a concrete foundation that does not easily go away, and this foundation can be built upon in the future!

Did you notice what we just did? We did a parembole, for the purpose of reminding you how the doctrine works through prayer and God’s word. But it wasn’t really a rabbit trail, but an example of the kind of prayer Paul is praying for the Ephesians, and the kind of prayer we ought to be engaging in.

Now let’s get back to the point we departed from; Paul does not expect that just because he asked God to “give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,” that this was going to magically happen without any effort on their part.

This is the whole reason for telling them what he was praying for, so that he would be involved in giving them the word which produces that, and they would respond by interacting with the truth which Paul is presenting (the word of God) and their own prayers, so that the Spirit of God would produce these things in them.

Now, let’s look at Paul’s prayer and notice the parembole.

Now, why does Paul ask this?

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that ye may know** what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe...

I don’t want to overload you with grammar, but did you notice something funny about vs. 18? It seems like there is a word missing, a verb, which without, it makes the verse read funny. What word is missing?

It is the word “are.” Wouldn’t it make sense to read it: “what is the hope of his calling, and what **ARE** the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power...”?

Why is this word left out? Because there is an ellipsis in the Greek text. So, the translators left it out when talking about the riches, but notice when talking about the greatness of his power, the word “is” is in italics.

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

That means the Greek had another ellipsis in vs. 19, but this time the translators put the verb “is” into the English. The laws of syntax declare that any sentence must have three parts to be a complete sentence: 1) a subject, 2) a verb, and 3) an object.

“I am short. Rain is wet. Dogs are great. Sermons are long.” This is why when God say “I AM” we are meant to fill in the third word with one of His Jehovah compound names: Jehovah-Jireh (I am the Lord who Provides) etc.

When a word or phrase is left out of a sentence, the omitted word(s) are called an “ellipsis.” The law of syntax can legitimately be broken by an ellipsis. The omission does not come from lack of thought, or care or by accident, but by design. What design? So that we may not stop to think of, or put emphasis on the word or phrase omitted, but on the words which are stressed by the omission.

Let me give you an example.

Matthew 14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, **and the disciples to the multitude.**

Does this mean that Jesus gave the disciples to the multitude? No. This ellipsis causes us to dwell on the fact that the disciples gave the bread instrumentally (and not as the Giver) to the multitude.

There is no sense in the latter sentence, which is incomplete, “the disciples to the multitude,” because there is no verb. The verb “gave” is omitted by the figure of ellipsis for the purpose we just stated. If we read the last sentence as it stands, it reads as though *Jesus gave the disciples to the multitude!*

Sometimes an ellipsis is in the Greek and the English may or may not supply it. If it does, the word is in italics to show it was not in the Greek. Other times, the ellipsis is in the English and not in the Greek so that by the omission of one English word all the other words in the verse can be translated literally in the way they are meant in the Greek or Hebrew.

There is a lot more to this which I find very interesting, but that is all we will do with it for now. Let me just say that understanding the ellipsis will allow you to rightly interpret some passages that otherwise would be unclear.¹

This has been another parembolē, but now back to the point, that Paul's actual 3-fold request stops in the first half of vs. 19, and everything from 19b to vs. 23 is a parembolē.

Ephesians 1:19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Do you see it? The same thing happens in Ephesians 3:1b-13, it is one long parembolē.

But now we come to vs. 14. Let's read the whole passage and see how far we can get in this lesson.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Paul's prayer requests are that God would grant the Ephesians four things:

- 1) To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man
- 2) That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith
- 3) That they may be able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth and height
- 4) That they would know the love of Christ

¹ Some examples of these would be Genesis 14:19-20; Genesis 39:6, 2 Samuel 3:7; Psalm 34:17, etc.

Let's begin with vs. 16 and the first petition.

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to **be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

See how the commas set off a descriptive phrase, but that phrase is not a separate petition. The petition is that they might be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in their inner man.

The work which the Spirit is doing today is in our inner man. This is not about the outward, physical things of Israel's program. In the DoGG, the work which the Spirit is doing is in you – the real you; not in your physical body and not in your outward circumstances.

The work of God's Spirit does not concern your physical needs as it was in time past with Israel, but it concerns your spiritual needs. The Spirit's work is to strengthen your soul and spirit, which constitute the real you which you cannot see with your physical eyes.

This is a perfect opportunity for us to learn something about sonship prayer. Firstly, what do we mean by "sonship prayer?" I am referring to the kind of prayer that should be in the life of a mature son who has been established in the faith by Romans doctrine. This is praying like an adult son, and not like a child. Even further, it is the kind of prayer that our Father is looking for. [It is the kind of prayer that a lost person would never pray.](#)

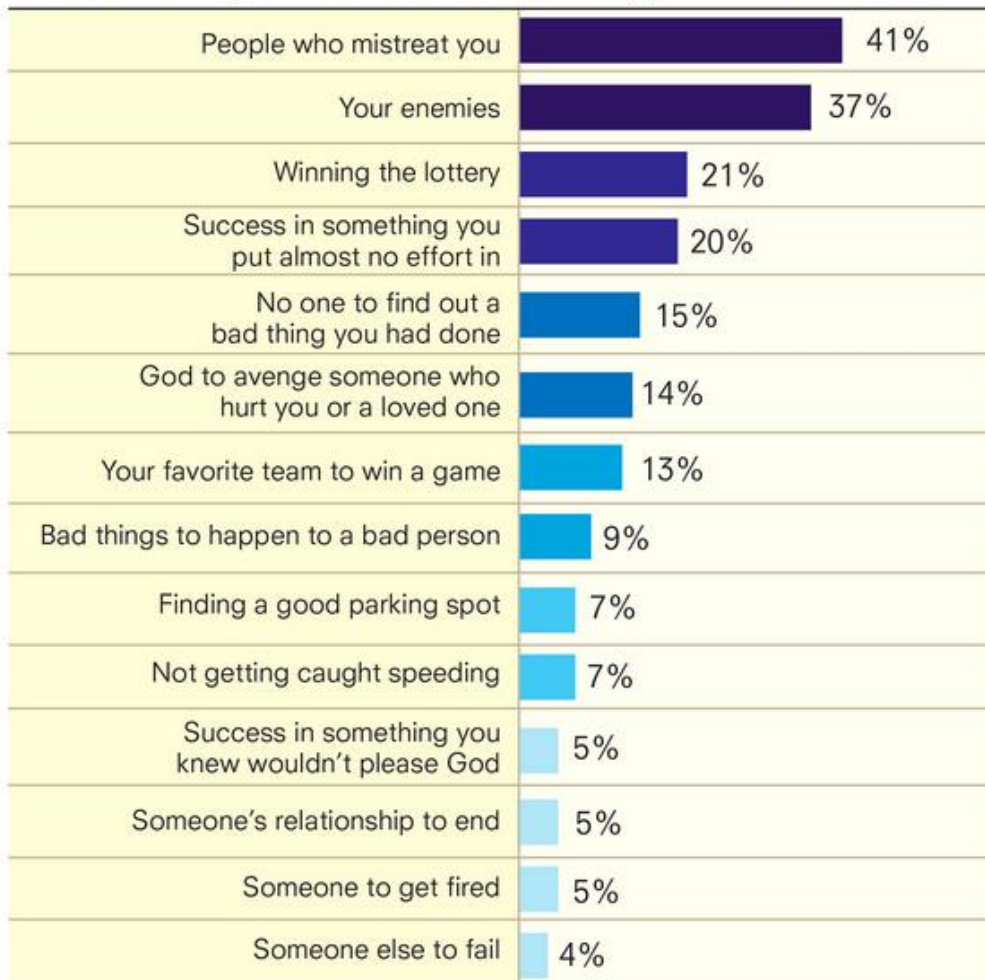
Stop for a moment and realize how most people pray. They pray for healing, they pray for a job, they pray for some kind of physical provision. Most of the prayer requests in churches today mirror how the religious world prays. The vast majority of prayers are for health, finances, security/protection, and direction in making a decision.

[LifeWay reports that 74 percent of people pray for their own needs and difficulties, and 42 percent pray for "my own sin."](#)

As you look at the chart which follows, just remember that even though these are all prayers to God, these prayers are not all directed to the God of the Bible. "The vast majority of Americans — no matter their religious affiliation or non-affiliation — participate in some kind of prayer activity. Barna Research Group has found this to be true consistently over the last several decades. The numbers have barely changed from year to year."

Among Americans who pray:

Have you ever prayed for ...



LifeWayResearch.com

Note: Participants could select all that apply



Do you notice a difference? Most of the prayer list on the left concerns physical things, while none of Paul's requests focus on the physical or material needs of the Ephesians.