



unstuck

TEACH ME TO PRAY

WEEK 3: PRAYING IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

Welcome to the week three small group guide for the **UNSTUCK: Teach Me to Pray** series. This guide is based on the sermon from Week 3 of the Unstuck series. **If you were unable to watch the sermon**, please check it out online at <https://www.firstdecatour.org/sermons/>

Over the past 2 weeks Pastor Brian has charged us to not only move into prayer, but to also move more deeply into prayer. This week Pastor BJ gave us the perspective on prayer from the heart of the Apostle Paul. Herein we find both our 'why' for prayer as well as the deeper purpose of prayer as imbedded in the key verses from Pastor BJ's sermon:

Have someone READ ALOUD the following passages:

- ▶ 2 Timothy 1:3-10
- ▶ 2 Timothy 4:2-8, 22

Pastor BJ has raised the bar, calling us to pray in Light of Eternity. In BJ's opening remarks he pointed out that Paul's prayers were focused on the matter of ultimate importance.

BJ takes us to the very heart of prayer in the light of God's Big Story. While it is true that God ministers to His children and wants to lead, deliver, heal, and comfort us; and while it is true that through prayer, He gives us living hope and a peace that passes understanding - the bigger picture, according to Paul, is that we are to be mindful and not ashamed of the gospel.

Just as the Father sent Jesus to seek and save the lost, He wants us pray along those lines. And so, BJ was clear to draw our heart (our attention) to the Paul's main message – the matter of eternity.

- ▶ What do the verses we just read suggest to you?



START

- ▶ What thoughts regarding prayer come to your mind when you think about God's eternal message?

How might this change the way we pray?

Perspective - BJ did not tell us that we should not pray for relief from earthly circumstances. He did not infer that we not pray for good healing or good outcomes of our efforts, but rather suggested that we should broaden (not overlook) the eternal perspective when it comes to prayer.

Remember - Paul prays that we remember our own gift of salvation, and that we bring to mind the hope, joy, and peace it brings. For in doing so, we might be all the more earnest in praying for this eternal gift for the lost.

- ▶ Open up this idea (of praying with an eternal perspective) for discussion. Allow some time for reflection. Ask others to share their perspectives on how their own hope (their eternal perspective) helps them in difficult times.
- ▶ Take some time to allow each other to share about loved ones who do not know Christ and how knowing Him might change them.

As you continue through the lesson – encourage each person to consider a shift in the group prayer time at the close of the meeting. Be thinking about being mindful to pray in Light of Eternity for those who have not received these gifts from God.



READ EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Pastor BJ shared his personal prayer of eternal perspective for Dominic, that he would know, love, serve, and walk with God all the days of his life. With that in mind what can we draw from Jesus' prayer in John (immediately below)?

John 17:20-21 suggests that Jesus even prayed for us. He prayed ²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Although we were outside Jesus' immediate circle at the time the Gospel of John was written, His eternal perspective still reaches us today. For Jesus still cares about our earthly disappointments and our earthly circumstances. Yet His mission was basically one of Eternal Perspective (to seek and save the lost). Remember, as said in past weeks it is so easy for us to laser focus on the immediate, but this nearly always leads to cynicism.

- ▶ So -- Shouldn't our predominate focus then be on the eternal perspective. ***Discuss this*** --
- ▶ And likewise, Is there anything more important than desiring and praying that the hope of eternity might be granted to our lost loved ones? ***Talk about this*** --

Paul's heart – Our hearts

In Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus 3:14-19 we see this prayer "For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- ▶ What does it mean in the above passage when Paul prays that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith?
- ▶ Discuss this and then ask someone to paraphrase this into a prayer (in light of eternity) for the lost which are in your realm of influence –
- ▶ Ask others to refine and offer insight to this passage - What else in BJ's sermon jumped out to you?

As you close your group time today, take time to share prayer requests with one another. Write these down and following group time have someone in the group distribute the list to the rest of the group. As you connect with God in prayer this week, take time to also pray faithfully for one another. Next week, plan to share what God has done with these requests.