

**Legislators and Staff
Prayer Breakfast**

Tuesday May 23rd 7:30-8:30am

Member's Dining Room
Legislative Cafeteria

We give thanks for those who have given
their lives for our freedom
May 29 Memorial Day.

Note: The Legislators Only Bible Study will
move from Tuesday to Wednesday that week
May 31st 7:30 -8:30 AM

As the week of eye examinations were completed, the result was that every person with correctable vision received the exact eye prescription need. As our team grasped that fact, we were taken back in awe! Our vision of God was perfected. Let me explain:

- God moved in people to donate eyeglasses with the exact prescription a person on the other side of the world needed 6 months before the person was ever examined.
- Some of the correction lenses were very complex and yet, the eye glass need was there.
- The odds of that happening were 1 in 2.25-44% of the time people donated the right prescription. We were stunned at the awesomeness of God.

Our eyes were opened to see a glimpse of our great God working behind the scene! In this week's Scripture passage, Paul is praying for God's people in Ephesus to have this kind of sight.

Ephesians 1:15–16 (ESV)

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

“For this reason” points to the believers’ “acquisition of every spiritual blessing—including election, predestination, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, understanding, knowledge of the mystery of His will, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and inheritance.”¹

1. “Your love toward all the saints”

A proper relationship with God leads to proper relationships with believers. As I have traveled the world, I have witnessed a kindred love for people in the family of God; people I have just met, people who speak a different language. This love is placed in each believer when they become part of God's family. When I was teaching a Bible conference in a mud sheep barn in 2007 there arose a disagreement among the pastors.

A mission trip to help people see opened our eyes.

In April 2008, a team of ten people stepped off the jumbo jet in Nairobi Kenya. This group was made up of young and old; a lawyer, teacher, business professional, pastor, optometrist and five college students on their first international trip. The purpose of the trip was to conduct an optometry clinic, hold a ministry conference and share the good news of Christ.

One thousand pairs of glasses were donated from churches across North Carolina; an additional 800 were purchased. They were analyzed, labeled and bagged according to prescription. The team was trained to conduct the clinic by a local optometrist.

That week 815 people came to the eye clinic. It was rainy season and some stood in the rain for hours. We did our best to provide shelter. God gave us a deep compassion for all who were there. They came to the clinic walking hours There are so many basic needs unmet. The majority of our patients came with fairly basic eye prescription needs, but some had complex eye needs (plus in one eye and negative in the other). A few with vision concerns that went beyond glasses. These were directed to National Ophthalmologists.

¹ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 619). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

I worked with them to resolve this difference. The man who allowed us to use his sheep barn told our group that he heard we were Christians, but when we resolved our differences he *knew* we were Christians. He testified to the love of God that he witnessed within us. A love that pursued reconciliation of our disagreement.

How does the love for those in the family differ from those in the world that do not know Christ personally?

Every person on planet earth experiences God's common grace, kindness and God's compassion. Lamentations 3:22 declares "*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail.*" But God's full love is experienced after a person comes to faith in Christ. 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that the Spirit God places within us, at the moment of belief, a spirit of love. How wonderful it is to know God! God is love and those that know Him personally experience the basic need of unconditional love every day for the remainder of this life and all eternity. This love experience changes our relationship to those around us.

Paul prays for the believers in Ephesus

Ephesians 1:17–19 (ESV)

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, ..."

There is a connection of understanding what occurs when people respond to the truth of the gospel. There is growth in the knowledge of God. The Spirit who drew you to the gospel of Christ also helps you understand God better. Part of that work is the illumination of the Word of God and allowing the believer to understand the revelation God has given in the Bible.

But there is also another outcome presented, the outcome of seeing God through the experience of answered prayer- life's ups and downs. It is the experience of walking together with the True Shepherd of your soul! Do you enjoy walking together with God? It is this experience Paul also writes about in the final words of the first letter to the Thessalonians. "*Be joyful always, pray without ceasing and give thanks in*

everything for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus, 5:16-18." The involvement of you with God and God with you in life is a tremendous experience. The Westminster shorter catechism explains man's purpose this way. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." If you know God, are you enjoying Him? God is not a boring God, He is awesome! He is amazing! He is marvelous!

Paul gives key words to expound his prayer request of wisdom.

The phrase "*in the knowledge of Him*" is not abstract knowledge of God or objective facts about Him, but knowing Him personally and intimately. It is the same word used in the Old Testament again and again for intimate relationship between a husband and his wife. "*the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*" refers not to your blood pumping organ but to the part of you that reasons, meditates, and chooses. Enlightened means "to become understanding". It is the Greek word Photizo. You do not have to know Greek to realize our word "photo" or "photography" comes from that word. You might say Paul is praying for God's people to see snapshots of God!

This enlightenment of the heart is for this purpose: So you may know. The word "know" in Greek is "oida," meaning knowledge acquired through reflection or thinking. So where does this insight lead? It leads to "hope."

The word for hope "elpis" means someone upon whom our hope is centered. It is an expression of faith upon an object of our faith. In this context the object of our faith is Christ. Hope in this context is the surety of heaven, the awareness that although life looks very insecurity there is security in a Sovereign God who is never shaken by anything. A God who is victorious, a God who is faithful and a God who can be trusted.

May the Lord give you eyes that see the true God!

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday @ 7:30am – 8:00am, LOB 414

Monday @ 12:00pm – 1:00pm, LB 2nd Flr.

Monday @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, Chapel