

03/19/17

Prayer Lab

WITH PAUL

PASTOR STEVE
LUXA

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21, ESV)

The Power of Examples

Praying for Power in the Inner-Being (vv. 14-17a)

(See also 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Praying for Power to Know God's Love (vv. 17b-19)

Tim Keller: "I am going to judge my circumstances by Jesus' love, not Jesus' love by my circumstances."

Because God is Able (vv. 20-21)

D.A. Carson: "We simply cannot ask for good things beyond God's power to give them; we cannot even imagine the good things beyond God's power to give them." (*A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, 202.)

*Recommended book for the whole series: *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* by D.A. Carson.

Your Prayer Lab

A Prayer Lab means it's time to experiment. To try new things. John Ortberg writes, "*God has a plan for the me he wants me to be. It will not look exactly like his plan for anyone else, which means it will take freedom and exploration for you to learn how God wants to grow you. Spiritual growth is hand-crafted, not mass-produced. God does not do "one-size-fits-all."*"

If walking while you pray helps, then walk. If you've never tried journaling your prayers, why not try it. You can pray out loud, silently, on your knees, outdoors, or indoors. You can pray in your own words or pray through the prayers of the Bible. During our Prayer Lab, we invite you to try different things. Each day we will have a suggested prayer activity. Enjoy.

Monday: Read Ephesians 3:14-21 once through. Then try praying it in your own words, expanding on the key ideas in Paul's prayer. Before you go to sleep, take one more look at Paul's prayer and thank God for any answers to prayer that have come through the course of the day.

Tuesday: One of Paul's requests is that God would strengthen them from the inside out. Where in your life do you need God's strength? Is there an area of weakness that you can bring to God in honesty and in faith? Once again, before you go to sleep, reflect on how God was involved in strengthening you during the day and thank him.

Wednesday: Read Paul's prayer through once. What is it that most strikes you about Paul's prayer? Talk to God about that. Be as honest with him as you can. Honesty is one of the critical elements of prayer. Ps. 62:8 says, "Pour out your heart before God." Give God what is on your heart.

Thursday: Another theme of Paul's prayer is for the strength to believe deep in your heart that God loves you. Where or how do you struggle to believe that God loves you with a vast robust love? Talk to God honestly about that. Ask him to penetrate your heart with his powerful love.

Friday: A final theme of the prayer is for God's glory. Ask God to glorify his name in your life. To pray for God's name to be glorified is to ask God to reveal his character in your life – to reveal his compassion, mercy, holiness, power, etc. Talk to God and ask him to do just that. Finally, close your day by reflecting on how God might have answered that prayer during your day.