

Be Specific

Scripture Reading — Ephesians 6:10-20

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak ... I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.
—Ephesians 6:19—

When I first started praying in a group, large or small, I felt the need to pray for everything. At mealtimes, I would ask for forgiveness, offer thanks for food, request healing for the sick, praise God for salvation, ask him to bless missionaries, and express appreciation for living in a free country.

When we pray in vague terms, we often miss the working of God's hand. While it's not wrong to pray for "those who are sick," we should be mindful to pray also for people we know who are sick—and we'll be able to see how God answers (according to his will). If I ask God to forgive me for the sin of envying my cousin's business success, I gain a different understanding of my sin and God's grace than if my prayer asked God to "forgive my many sins."

In our verse for today, Paul makes a very specific request: that his words may be effective in presenting the gospel. Even though he mentions some general concerns for prayer, he also has one request that he wants others to remember.

When we bring specific requests to God in prayer, we consider our words carefully. That helps us avoid having our prayers become a mere listing of items that we repeat, often without thinking. And when we pray specifically, we grow to care more about our concerns (especially people!) as we grow closer to the God who hears us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, shape my prayer life so that I may see your work and grow nearer to you. In your name, Amen.

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