

Study Series: Pray Big

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 Lesson Title: “Pray for Love and the Spirit’s Ministry”
(pp. 43-54)

Session 4

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The main point of this lesson is: The believer’s prayer for oneself and others should seek the knowledge of God’s love and the working of His Spirit.

Focus on this goal: To help adults pray for the Holy Spirit to convince them of God’s love for them and to grow their love for God

Key Bible Passage: Ephesians 1:4-5,13-14; 3:16-20

Before the Session

1. Invite an adoptive parent or adoptee to share how that adoption helps them understand being adopted by God. (Step 3)

2. Have note cards and pens/pencils available. (Step 5)

3. Write Ephesians 3:20 on the board or on individual note cards. (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask participants to discuss if they ever have difficulty being convinced of God’s love or growing in their love for Him. State that God’s love is the crux of the entire gospel. Paul understood that and prayed believers would personally understand God’s love and grow in their love for Him.

Step 2. Pray for Love, Part 1

Ask learners to define love from both worldly and biblical views. Record on the board.

State that people celebrate love on Valentine’s Day with chocolates, flowers, and sweet cards. Ask: If we were to celebrate God’s love, how would we do it?

Draw attention to the love definitions and direct learners to compare and contrast the two kinds of love (Day One, activity 2, p. 45). State that because God’s love is so immensely different that earthly love, the celebration would have to be different.

Read Ephesians 1:4-5; 3:16-20. Ask what these verses teach us about God’s love.

Step 3. Pray for Love, Part 2

Say: Paul stated that comprehending God’s love is a matter of knowing the unknowable, but it is possible to grow in our understanding of God’s love.

Invite learners to share how their understanding of worldly love grew, either as a spouse or as a child. Guide learners to discuss how their understanding of God’s love has likewise grown as they have matured in faith (Day Two, activity 1. p. 45).

Lead a discussion of being adopted by God (Eph. 1:5). If you enlisted someone to give a testimony about being adopted—or adopting a child—call on that person to share now, drawing spiritual application from earthly adoption to God’s adoption of His children.

Step 4. Can All this Really Happen?, Part 1

Ask: What role does the Holy Spirit play in Christians grasping all that Paul has prayed for in his prayer? State that the author explained the Holy Spirit’s work in the Christian’s life is the answer to Paul’s prayer.

Briefly discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life, describing His role as both miraculous and mysterious.

Organize the class into two groups to discuss their answers to Day Three, activity 2 (p. 48), assigning one part of that activity to each group. After a few minutes, call on groups to report to the class.

Step 5. Can All this Really Happen?, Part 2

Acknowledge that our lives are filled with distractions, depression, and doubts—all which try to call us away from knowing God. Brainstorm biblical examples of distractions, depression, or doubts, stating that these challenges are not limited to today’s world.

Call on learners to share some of the “3D” battles that they face (Day Four, activity 1, p. 49). Briefly discuss that one role of the Holy Spirit is to draw us back to God even when all these worldly concerns are beckoning us away.

Distribute note cards and writing instruments, asking participants to write on the cards at least one distraction, one doubt, or one area of their lives that causes depression. Ask learners to come to the front of the classroom, rip up their cards, and throw them in the trash can as you pray for the Holy Spirit to release learners from those strongholds.

Step 6. Can All this Really Happen?, Part 3

Ask: Why did the writer describe external religious effort as a counterfeit Christianity? If we understand that truth in our minds, why do we still exert external religious effort?

Invite an artistic learner to draw a dead-end sign on the board while other learners add their explanations of how Christianity is not about external religious efforts (Day Five, activity 1, p. 51).

State that culture teaches us to change outwardly, but God desires to change us inwardly through His Holy Spirit. Briefly discuss how the Holy Spirit can work in believers’ lives as they participate in preaching, prayer, fellowship, and Bible reading/study. Ask learners how those means have strengthened their faith (Day Five, activity 2, p. 52).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Instruct learners to write these words prominently in their prayer journals: focus, hope, riches, power, and love, which is what Paul, in Ephesians, prayed for Christians. Encourage learners to pray big prayers. Call on learners to read Ephesians 3:20 in unison.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the big prayers Paul modeled for us to pray, and asking for the faith and obedience to likewise pray big prayers.

After the Session

Discipline yourself to pray big prayers, as Paul did, as an example to others. Pray regularly for those in your class, letting them know of your prayers.

