



**SERIES: LOOKING BACK – MOVING FORWARD**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Saturday, July 30, 2022**

**Scripture: Ephesians 1: 15-18**

**TITLE: The Secret to Spiritual Growth**

“You have not, because you ask not”. Have you ever heard that? The Apostle James said it. I think this is true for us as Christians, especially in the area of spiritual growth. We do many things, but we do not grow. That’s because spiritual growth doesn’t just happen. It must begin with God. What do I mean by that? Paul answers this question in Ephesians 1:15-18 (NLT):

“Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.”

I don’t know if I’ve ever heard a prayer request quite like Paul’s. I’ve been to a lot of prayer meetings, but never heard a request quite like this. Paul is encouraged by the Ephesians’ strong faith and their love for God’s people. So he says, “This makes me happy. I thank God daily for you. I am praying for you constantly.” That’s a great start to a prayer I’d want to receive. And then he says, “I am asking God to give you spiritual wisdom, so you can grow in spiritual knowledge. Not only that, but I want your hearts to be flooded with light.”

Today, this is a prayer I think we need to be praying for ourselves and those around us. Many of us today are feeling spiritually stuck – spiritually idle. So what do we do? We turn on a Bible study like this. And you should. We use our favorite Bible app, like ours here at Back to the Bible, or goTandem. And you should. But maybe the problem is, you’re not coming to God first, and asking Him for help in that spiritual growth. You see, turning to God first, is the secret to spiritual growth.

I was amazed by meetings I attended at a local church. They would get into important discussions about their ministry and the vision of the church, but they never opened in prayer, or closed in prayer. They were doing good things, but it was absent from God’s oversight and direction. We do the same thing with our spiritual walk. We take off running. We try different things - most of which are very good - but they are not bathed in prayer.

My challenge for you today is to pray. Ask God for spiritual wisdom. James tells us that God will give this wisdom generously. So talk to God and ask Him for spiritual wisdom. Ask Him to grow you into maturity. Pray for that spiritual light, so your focus is on the hope of Heaven and pleasing God in all you do. This is a prayer God will answer. Now, it’s time to pray.