

PATTERSON FAMILY PRAYER LETTER (Aug. 1, 2017)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Warmest greetings in the mercy, grace and peace of our Lord! Many thanks for taking time to read my Prayer Letter and for taking time to pray with me for God's blessing on this great ministry He has led me into! Please join me in praise and prayer for a sampling of the many needs of individuals in my ministry.

- In relation to my prison ministry, allow me to ask prayer for 3 "groups" of men there:

1) First, pray for men who get released from prison and move on into the difficult time of transitioning to life on the outside. Specifically pray for *Luhan*, a wheel-chair bound man who has been faithful in Bible studies with me for many years. He has just released to the care of his sister who is a believer and there will be a church home for him. But he is very concerned regarding his transition, his parole period, etc. I got to have a good talk and prayer time with him just before he left. Pray for him!

Another "favorite" student, *James*, has also just been released. He was a leader and a great example to the other Christian men. He is already greatly missed! With him also, I had the opportunity to offer special encouragement and to say a prayer over him just before he left. Pray for James!

Those two represent many who leave whom I've had the opportunity to serve and see grow in their walk with God. Pray for them as they encounter many trials that will surely come their way as they move into the outside world! (The Lord knows the names and needs of each one!)

2) Second, let me also ask prayer for those my life is intersecting with who do not know Christ as their Savior. Another *James* has come into the Chaplain's office to check out books. I got to have good conversation with him. I invited him to come to my Sunday evening Bible study. He came last Sunday night and is full of questions! Some of his questions are "unanswerable" (Deut. 29:29). But many are good questions. Pray that God will keep drawing him!

I was called on to see *Dave*. He defines himself as a "sceptic". Church and the Bible etc. have had no part in his life. But getting incarcerated has "gotten his attention"! His wife has started reading the Bible and seeking God. She and his father and father-in-law are urging him to do the same. So, he calls for me and gives me almost 2 hours of undivided attention. He received a Bible and says he will start reading in it. I gave him a good tract and a good Christian book. He told me he had read 2 Christian books written by a prison Chaplain since he's been incarcerated. He said that they "made sense" to him. Pray that the Lord will "fan into flame" this bit of "smoking flax" (Isaiah 42:3 KJV) that already seems to be kindled within him! He desires to spend more time with me. Pray for others like him! Coming to prison is often used of the Lord to halt men from their fast-paced pursuit of temporal pleasures and to get them to thinking about God and eternity and what really matters in life! Pray for all these in whom God is working!

3) Third, I would ask special prayer for the many men with whom I work who are serving life sentences. For example, Maury and Mike are very faithful in attending studies I lead and in completing assignments etc. They love the Lord and His Word! They reflect true contentment and joy in the Lord. In one sense, they will never be "free" but they are already free on the inside and they know that the fullness of eternal freedom is God's promised inheritance for them since they wholeheartedly trust His Son! My heart goes out to these men, but their attitude greatly blesses and challenges me. They are content and grateful even though prison will be their "home" the rest of

their life. Their family in Christ here is pretty much their “family”! Their “church family” is their “home church”. Prison is their “home town”! Prison is their “mission field”! Pray for them! Pray that God will bless them and use them – that they will be “fruitful” here where He has “planted” them!

- Thanks for your prayers for Camp. Schedule has prohibited me from involvement there this summer but from Frances and other counselors and staff, I have heard numerous good reports! Pray for ongoing ministry there. Pray for the Lord’s leading and provision as we move into the future there!
- I continue to greatly enjoy fellowship and ministry with my church family at the Fairfield Covenant Church. Pray that God will continue to bless us there with greater and greater love for Him and for one another and for all the people He brings into our circle of influence!
- At the church and at the prison, I continue to preach and teach, verse by verse, through the Gospel of John. I am just now finishing leading us through chapter 17, our Lord’s great “High Priestly Prayer”! A favorite commentator points out that our Lord’s *petitions reveal God’s purposes* for us. And since our Lord is the One offering this prayer for His own, His *petitions become God’s promises*. And since God’s purposes reveal His will, they *reveal paths* we, by His grace, should be seeking to walk in! And since these are our Lord’s own petitions, by His Almighty Spirit, they become increasingly attainable “*possibilities*”! This commentator applies these same truths regarding this inspired prayer to the equally inspired prayers of our Lord’s Apostles. I have sought to apply those realities regarding Biblical prayers to prayers like the one in Ephesians 3:14-21. Wow! That makes meditating on the prayers in Scripture a profound blessing and a great challenge – to really believe and receive and respond in obedient, appropriating faith to His high and blessed calling and standard for my life in Christ! He Himself indwells me! That reality assures me of the reality of His exceedingly abundant love and *power*! May that be, in ever increasing depth and fullness, the experience of our lives as we walk in genuine fellowship with our great Lord and Savior!

Thank you very much for your prayers and encouragement and support! May God richly bless you and yours!

With you in His service and care,

Dean Patterson and family, Ephesians 3:14-21

