

# Memories

By Mary Kane

I woke up very early one morning before my alarm went off. I looked at my clock and saw that I still had quite a bit of time to sleep before I had to get up. In my quasi-dream state, I wondered why I woke up so early. Somewhere in the back of my foggy mind the thought came to me that perhaps someone needed prayer at that moment. "God, who's in need of prayer right now?" I asked while I was lying there. My niece, Elise came to my mind. Elise had been in Africa with YWAM for several weeks. As I prayed for God to cover Elise and keep her safe, I made a mental note to pray for Elise more often.



After I finished praying, I drifted off to sleep again. A few days later I received an e-mail from my sister Laura, Elise's mom, asking us to keep Elise and her team in our prayers. It seemed that a young man from Elise's team had had a terrible accident—he fell three stories while working on a roof and was killed. Elise heard him fall and ran outside to see if she could help him, but he had already died. Elise and the rest of the team were very distraught. When I heard this news, I prayed again for my niece and the family of the young man who died. Then, I remembered my early morning prayer session—chills spread over me. God had been at work while I slept bringing to my mind a sister in Christ in need. How glad I was that I was able to pray for Elise during this time of hardship and sadness.

Please read Philippians 1:1-6.

**Please fill in the blank for the following verse: "I thank my God upon \_\_\_\_\_ every of you."**

As I read this passage of Scripture, the word *remembrance* caught my attention. I looked up *remembrance* in the original Greek and I was not disappointed. (God's Word is never disappointing!) The original word used in the text for *remembrance* is *mneia* which means "remembrance, memory, mention, to be recalled or to return to one's mind" (*BLB*). Every time this word is translated as *mention* in the New

Testament it is used in tandem with the concept of prayer! At times, God works through our memories, bringing someone suddenly to mind, so we can intercede on their behalf through prayer. In other words, one of the reasons God has given us the ability to remember is so that we can effectively pray for others in need.

**Whom has God brought to your mind recently?**

**Has God laid on your heart any burden to pray for this person in any specific way?**

Anything that God uses for our good, Satan likes to counterfeit and use for our detriment. Sometimes Satan likes to try and hurt me through bad memories—by reminding me of someone who has hurt me or someone I have hurt in the past. Don't let Satan have the satisfaction of hurting you in this manner any longer. Turn that hurtful memory around by thanking God for how He has promised to use all things for your good. Pray to be made stronger and better able to serve Him for the hard experiences that you remember. Praise Him for how He has changed you to be a little more like Jesus than you used to be. Satan will not stick around to torment you for very long when you are busy praising God. By turning your bad memories around to praises, God uses them for your good.

**Please go back and read Philippians 1:3 out loud.**

Paul had established a very valuable "holy habit." Whenever he remembered his brethren in Philippi, he prayed for them. The habit of prayer was so deeply embedded in Paul that a mere thought of another required that he pray for him or her. Notice that he didn't think of this habit as drudgery.

Verse 4 states that he prayed for them "with all \_\_\_\_\_."

Let's employ this same holy habit in our own lives. Whenever God brings someone to your notice, take a moment to pray for that person. Perhaps this has already happened to you. Like my early morning prayer experience concerning my niece Elise, maybe God has awakened you early in the morning and brought someone to your mind. Or perchance you've been going about your normal daily activities, and God has suddenly brought to your mind someone you haven't thought of in years. I've learned to recognize and heed these interventions of God as calls to prayer. Sometimes, days later, I will receive confirmation that the person in question was in great need of prayer during the same time frame as my early morning wake-up call.

This activity has given me confidence in Psalm 121: that our God never sleeps or slumbers. How comforting it is to know that when I am in great need, He is busy waking up the troops in order to pray for me.

### **According to verses 3-4 how often did Paul pray for the Philippians?**

The word for *always* in this verse means just what you think it means: always, every time, whenever. So every time God brought the Philippians to mind, Paul prayed for them. The word for *every* means just what you think it means as well: all, any and every. The original Greek word for *prayer* in this verse is a little different from the other Greek words for prayer that we have studied thus far. *Deesis* translates as petition, prayer and request. *Deesis* is prayer for specific needs, wants, or privations. Paul wasn't just throwing up to heaven a random, generic "one-size-fits-all" kind of prayer. The *deesis* kind of prayer involves a little effort. Paul had to take interest in the people of Philippi and invest a little energy in his relationship with them in order to pray specifically for them. As we dig deeper into the meaning of *deesis* prayer, we can trace it back to the Greek word *deo* which means "to bind together, to bind around, to fasten, to tie, to knit."



This rendering of the word *prayer* also means a lack or need, to beg for something, to desire something. The same Greek word is used again later in verse 4 for the word that translates *request* in the NKJ, "...always in every *deesis* (prayer) of mine making *deesis* (prayer) for you all with joy."

From these definitions, we can see how pray binds us together, with each other, through Christ. Our prayers are the ties that bind us to people halfway around the world; we hear on the news

about those who are suffering and struggling through persecution, war or natural disasters. As we pray for our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ in Darfur and Iraq, we are forging bonds with them through Jesus; our hearts are joined with theirs, and we fellowship with them in their sufferings.

I remember a blanket ministry project that I was involved with at a Catholic school where I worked several years ago. We gathered over 50 blankets to send to persecuted Christians in the Sudan region of Africa. As we gathered the blankets, I prayed for the people who would receive them—perhaps some of them would be mothers with little children who needed God to protect them. With every prayer I lifted for the fellow Christians, another bond of prayer knit my heart to their suffering hearts. I hope someone received a little relief from the blankets we sent.

This same word for prayer is used in Romans 10:1. Let's look up this verse and see what insight we can gain from how it is used in this verse.

**In Romans 10:1 Paul said it was his prayer and \_\_\_\_\_ for Israel to be saved.**

We see that the desires of Paul's heart were included in this prayer. Again, I think this heart connection is illustrated in the type of prayer that is being offered. It is easy to pray for God's will to be done for someone we do not know well, such as when we hear on the news of someone being seriously injured in an accident. In this case we might pray, "God, please let your will be done in this person's life." It's quite another matter to pray for someone we know well who has developed a serious illness or been involved in an accident, because our hearts' desires will definitely be knit together with our prayers for God's will to be accomplished in our loved one's life.

**What did Paul say he did when he remembered the Philippians (verse 3)?**

**Why was Paul thankful for the Philippians (verse 5)?**

He was thankful for them because they shared in his work of the Gospel. Paul felt they shared in his work whether he was out freely working among the lost or whether he was imprisoned and in chains. Their interest in his work helped to ease his burdens. Friendship is indeed a blessing from God. I am most blessed by my friends who lead me closer to Christ!

**Name a few friends who have been a blessing to you and record how they have blessed you.**

Let's finish today by considering one final scripture. Please look ahead to Philippians 1:19 and read it carefully.

**If we bother to take the time to *deesis* for our friends, what will be the result?**

By the power of our prayers and the aid of the Holy Spirit, our friends can experience great deliverance in their personal lives! The chains of the world that bind them will be broken, and they will experience new freedom in the bonds they form Christ. So let us *remember to deesis* for our friends!

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