

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
“A PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL POWER”
(EPHESIANS 3:14-19)
MARCH 25, 2007

MEMORY VERSE:

Ephesians 3:18-19, “You may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”

INTRODUCTION

Paul concludes the first section of this letter to the Ephesians with a passionate prayer concerning their understanding of God’s love. He wants them to truly understand the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ’s love. Paul clearly knew that it was God’s power and revelation that provided this understanding and energized his ministry. His prayers make it clear that it required the miraculous work of God for the “eyes of our hearts” to be opened (Ephesians 1:18). We all need God to reveal truth to us. We need His work in our lives to move information from our heads to our hearts. We need to understand our need for understanding. As we continue this study of Paul’s second prayer for the Ephesians, notice his earnest desire for all members of the Church to experience the truly amazing and boundless power available to them as God’s children. Ask the Lord to grant us a deeper understanding concerning the vastness of His love and the power we have as a result of trusting our lives to Jesus.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-15. Paul begins verse 14 with the same words that he used in Ephesians 3:1 (before he digressed to explain the mystery of the Church – Ephesians 3:2-13) ... “For the reason.” What is it that prompts him to pray this prayer (see Ephesians 2:19-22)? What exactly is Paul asking for in his prayer and why does he ask?

2. Divine power is needed to live the Christian life, to grow in grace and to develop into full maturity. Where does this power come from and how does it work in our lives? (John 16:13; Romans 8:26-27; Galatians 5:16-18; James 1:5)

3. In Ephesians 3:17, what do you think Paul means when he says to be “rooted and grounded in love”? What do Matthew 22:37-39; John 13:34-35 and 1 John 4:8,19 further reveal concerning the basis of this spiritual foundation?

4. Read Psalm 103:11-13, 17. What parallels and insights do you observe when comparing to Ephesians 3:18? Why do you think Paul prays the Ephesians would have “strength to comprehend” the love of Christ?

5. In Ephesians 3:19, what does Paul mean when he says “to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge?” How does this knowledge of Christ’s love help us be “filled with the fullness of God”?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. What are some ways that the “abundance of God’s glorious riches” are manifested in our lives? Do you truly believe you have the power (through the Holy Spirit) to make changes in your life and relationships? How do you know this power is available to you? If this is true, what hinders us from tapping into this power in our daily living?

2. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians focuses on his desire for them to know the love of Christ and to discover the fullness of God. How does his prayer differ from how most of us usually pray? What changes can we make in our prayer lives to more closely follow the example that Paul sets for us in Ephesians?

3. Is there a difference in knowing that Christ loves you and knowing Christ's love for you? If so, what is this difference? What do we need to do to more fully understand and grasp the vastness of Christ's love for us?

GOING DEEPER

1. Compare this prayer with Paul's first prayer to the Ephesian believers in Ephesians 1:17-23. Then look at his prayer to the Colossian believers in Colossians 1:9-14. What similarities do you observe and what seems to be emphasized throughout all three prayers?
2. Read Galatians 5:22-23. How do the fruits of the spirit relate to the "fullness of God"?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"Why does God need our prayers? If He knows what is best for someone, why doesn't He just do it without involving us? That's the other dimension of the oneness Jesus prayed for. He came not only to make us one with God, but to call us to oneness with each other. The reconciliation he died and rose to provide, and returned to impart, is both vertical and horizontal: it is with God and between us and others. That's why intercessory prayer is so crucial. The Lord wants us to be to one another what He has been to us in love, forgiveness and unlimited concern. The mystery of it all is that often He will not bless another until we pray. When we do pray, His love flows through us to the other person."

Lloyd John Ogilvie

"One great cause of the present condition of the Church is that we do not know Christ's love to us. We spend our time with petty things, and in fussy activities and discussions. Were we to be full of this love and of the knowledge of this love we would be entirely transformed. It is this knowledge that makes us mighty. That is why the Apostle prayed without ceasing that these Ephesians might 'with all saints comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all understanding.' Oh that we might know it, and grow in it and rejoice in it."

“The Unsearchable Riches of Christ,” D. Martin Lloyd-Jones
SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
“A PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL POWER” EPHESIANS 3:14-19
WEEK NINE – March 25, 2007

CONNECT 20 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Questions:

1. What color would you use to describe you week and why?
2. Are you a “detail person” or a “big picture thinker?” What evidence do you have to support this claim?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) 5 MINUTES

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING 30 MINUTES

1. Ask the Lord to help each member in your small group to more fully understand and grasp the vastness of Christ’s love for each of us.
2. Pray that each member of your small group would truly believe, understand and begin to more fully tap into the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Intercede for one another and ask the Lord to help each of you make the changes in your lives and with your relationships that God is nudging you to address.
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group.