

## PRAYING FOR POWER AND LOVE

### Ephesians 3:14-21

Prayer is one of the most difficult struggles in living for Christ. But prayer is absolutely essential in living for Christ.

#### 1.THE POSTURE OF PRAYER – Ephesians 3:14,15

- The posture of prayer is humility. Kneeling was a sign of deep reverence and submission – Psalm 95:6,7. “For this reason” refers to Paul’s heart being stunned by God’s grace in saving sinners and uniting them into one Family in Christ. Prayer begins and ends with worship. It is a proper response to the amazing grace of God. We freely admit our helplessness and total dependence on our Sovereign God – Ephesians 1:17.
- But we come before God with confidence – Hebrews 4:14-16. God is our Father and Jesus is our High Priest. We come to the Father through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. We have a Father in Heaven we can always trust – Matthew 6:9. He is good and gracious to His children – Luke 11:11-13. He is rich and the source of all we need – “according to the riches of His glory”. God’s resources never run out and are never exhausted.
- May God give us a humble confidence in Him to rely on Him daily and express reliance on Him in prayer. *“Humility and boldness go together, since both arise from a biblical awareness of who God is.” – Richard Phillips.* Let us also see how important prayer is. It is an investment in things eternal.

#### 2.THE PETITIONS OF PRAYER – Ephesians 3:16-19

- **Prayer for Power/Strength – verses 16,17.** Each of the petitions begins with the word “may” in the ESV: verses 16, 18, and 19. These prayer requests are prayers we should make for all of God’s people and our family. The first petition of Paul is for power for the believers. God’s power comes to us through the Holy Spirit in our inner being – 2 Corinthians 4:16. We need God’s power to grasp who we are in Christ and for Christ to dwell within us. As believers Christ lives in us – Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27. So why pray for Christ to dwell in us? The word dwell means to “to be at home or settle down.” Christ desires to reign over every aspect and corner of our lives. Illustration: Buying a “fixer up” house. We are all fixer uppers and Christ transforms us into a dwelling where He is more at home. *“When Christ first moves into our lives, He finds us in bad repair. It takes a great deal of power to change us; and that is why Paul is praying for power...He is transforming us into a house that pervasively reflects His own character.” – D.A. Carson, Spiritual Reformation.*
- **Prayer for Perception to Understand God’s Love – verse 18 19a.** Paul prays for believers to be able to comprehend, perceive, and understand God’s love for them in Christ. Christ’s love for us is the very soil and foundation of our lives – verse 17b. All true believers know God’s love: *“An ungodly man may know something about Christ’s love; he may believe in the fact that of it; he may perceive something of the theory of it...But to know the love itself, to taste of its sweets, to realize personally, experimentally, and vitally, the love of Christ as shed abroad in our hearts by*

*the Holy Ghost, is the privilege of the child of God, and of the child of God alone.” – C.H. Spurgeon, 1800’s.* But we are to grow in our understanding of this love. We are to build our lives on this love. We can never plumb the depths of Christ’s love.

- The measure of Christ’s love surpasses knowledge, but Paul prays we as saints together begin to grasp the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ. Christ’s love is wide enough to embrace all races and every category of people. Christ’s love is long enough to stretch from eternity past to eternity future – Jeremiah 31:3. Christ’s love is high enough to raise us up to dwell with Him in heavenly places – Ephesians 2:6. Christ’s love is deep enough to reach the lowest sinner in the depths of depravity. Christ’s love makes us want to open our Bibles, worship Him, and talk to Him in prayer. Christ’s love compels us to serve and share Him with others – 2 Corinthians 5:14,15, 20.
- **Prayer for Fullness/Maturity – verse 19b.** We should never think we have arrived or do not need to keep growing. Paul prays for believers to be filled with the fullness of God. We know and learn of God primarily through God’s Word, the Bible. The fullness of God is like holding a bucket at the ocean beach trying to take in the ocean. We will never contain all God’s fullness, but we are to keep on seeking and desiring to grow in our knowledge of God and walk with Him in life – Matthew 5:6.

### **3. PRAY WITH EXPECTATION FOR THE GLORY OF GOD – Ephesians 3:20,21**

- God is able to do above and beyond all we ask or think. What priority does prayer have in your life? Do you pray first? Do you believe prayer is more important than your own plans, ideas, and personal agendas? Will you trust God’s sovereignty? *“Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring; for His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much.” – Isaac Newton.*
- God works beyond our imaginations by the power of the risen Christ at work in us – Ephesians 1:19,20.
- God’s purpose is His glory in the church and Jesus Christ forever. God is glorified in and through the church, especially as we rely on Him in prayer. God is ultimately glorified in His Son Jesus Christ, the Savior and Head of the Church.
- Our response is AMEN! Amen means “let it stand”, or “yes, it is so”. Can you say “amen” to Christ as your life and peace? Do you say “amen” to God working in your heart to transform you by His power, so that Christ dwells at home in you? Will you surrender your life and say “amen” to the surpassing love of Christ?

#### Concluding Applications:

- How is your prayer life?
- You need God’s power in Jesus Christ to live a life pleasing to Him. Do you pray for His ruling power over all of your life daily and will you pray this for our church and your own family?
- Are you growing in your understanding of Christ’s love? Dig afresh into His Word.
- Is your ultimate purpose God’s glory in all you are and do?