

EPHESIANS



Rooted and Grounded
in love

Lesson Six EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Day 1

Father, feed me with your word. Comfort me with your presence. Heal me with your love.

- Read Ephesians 3:14-21 several times. Read through the passage *prayerfully*— responding to what you are reading with praise, thanksgiving, confession or surrender. (God speaks to us through his word and we respond back to him through prayer.)
- Pick one word or phrase that stands out to you to ponder on throughout the day and week. (It may be something that resonates with you or that you want to understand better.) Write it here.
- Write one sentence summarizing the passage.

Day 2- Eph. 3:14-15

Write out verses 14-15

1. In verse 14, Paul picks up where he interrupted himself in verse 1 and begins his second prayer for the believers in Ephesus. Paul begins his prayer saying, *for this reason...* Look back to chapter 2 to see the reason for his prayer. What truths in this chapter are causing Paul to respond in prayer?

Picture and Ponder:

"Paul's prayers are entirely in line with God's purposes. Thus, God's declared purposes become for Paul a reason for advancing these particular petitions to his heavenly Father."¹

For Discussion:

How can you pray in line with God's will? How does this affect your perspective?



When we see Paul bowing his knees before the Father, we see a picture of intimacy. The word *before* is a "face-to-face preposition", it is an expression of an intimate relationship.

- ❖ Have you thought of your prayer time as coming *before the Father* face to face? How does picturing this affect your prayers and perspective?
- ❖ What does addressing God as *Father* do for your prayer life?
- ❖ What attitude does kneeling in prayer foster or demonstrate?
- ❖ Has kneeling in prayer been a part of your prayer life, if so how?

2. What does it mean that the family of God—the church in all its diversity—gets its name from God the Father? (See 1:5 for help)

Day 3- Eph. 3:16-17a

Write out verses 16-17a

3. What resources make Paul's prayer request possible according to verse 16?

4. Summarize what the first thing is that Paul asks God to do for the Ephesian believers in verse 16.
 - How is this strengthening with God's power taken hold of?

 - Where is this strengthening with God's power taking place in the believer?

Digging Deeper:

Paul writes of the *inner being* in his letter to the Corinthians. What other insights do you gain about being inwardly strengthened from the verse below?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

5. What is the outcome of being inwardly strengthened with God's power according to verse 17?

Scholar's Note: There are two Greek words for *dwell* (v.17) One means “to inhabit a place as a stranger”. The other “means to settle down somewhere. It refers to a permanent as opposed to a temporary abode.”² Paul is using the second one.

 We know that to be a Christian means that Jesus does live in our hearts by his Spirit. The question we must ask is, *Is Jesus at home in our hearts?* The NLT renders v.17a: *Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him.* We need to pray along with Paul for God’s power to continually transform our hearts into a home that is fit for Jesus.

- ❖ If your heart is Jesus’ dwelling place—his forever home—have you given all authority over to him to rule and reign there? What areas have you made off-limits to Jesus?

- ❖ We will never grow in holiness without God’s Spirit strengthening us with his power. How much wasted energy do you expend striving for holiness without praying for God’s strengthening power? What needs changing in your heart to make Jesus feel more at home?

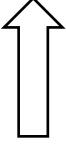
Begin to pray for God’s power to strengthen you in this area and trust Jesus to beautify his home in your heart and to bring you joy and peace as you continue to surrender to his control. For example, Father....

strengthen my heart with your power to be patient with _____.
strengthen my heart with your power to love _____.
strengthen my heart with your power to trust you about/with _____.
strengthen my heart with your power to endure _____.
strengthen my heart with your power to surrender to you in _____.
Strengthen my heart with your power to forgive _____.

- ❖ Who else can you pray this prayer for?

Picture and Ponder:

“Paul prays to the Father that Christ by his Spirit will be allowed to settle down in their hearts, and from his throne there both control and strengthen them.”³

 **Father help me to seek you and your strength, to seek your presence continually (Ps. 105:4). Forgive me for striving on my own power at times. Help me to remember you are my gracious and generous heavenly Father who wants to pour out his riches on me!**

Day 4- Eph. 3:17b-19

Write out verses 17b-19

For Discussion:

In what way are followers of Jesus rooted and grounded in love?

6. What does being rooted and grounded in God's love create in you?
 - Deep roots and being grounded (having a firm foundation) speak of stability. What lesser things do you look to, to give you stability in your life?
 - How rooted and grounded are you in God's love? (Do insecurity, fear, jealousy, worry loom large in your life?)
7. Because the love of Jesus surpasses human knowledge (v.19), what do we need, that Paul prays for, in order to comprehend that love according to verse 18?
 - In what kind of context does the power to grasp Jesus' love take place? (Who are your comprehending with?)
 - What does Paul pray that we will comprehend about Jesus' love?

Picture and Ponder:

"Modern commentators warn us not to be too literal in our interpretation of [the dimensions of the love of Christ], since the apostle may only have been indulging in a little rhetoric or poetic hyperbole. Yet it seems to me legitimate to say that the love of Christ is 'broad' enough to encompass all mankind (especially Jews and Gentiles, the theme of these chapters), 'long' enough to last for eternity, 'deep' enough to reach the most degraded sinner, and 'high' enough to exalt him to heaven."⁴

Digging Deeper:

What else do we learn about the dimensions of Jesus' love from the following verses?

Romans 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Father, thank you, thank you that **NOTHING** can ever separate me from your love!

Picture and Ponder:

"Paul is not asking that his readers might become more able to articulate the greatness of God's love in Christ Jesus or to grasp with the intellect alone how significant God's love is in the plan of redemption. He is asking God that they might have the power to grasp the dimensions of that love in their experience."⁵

8. To what end in v.19b, does Paul pray that the Ephesian believers will be able to grasp the love of Jesus?

Scholar's Note: To be *filled with all the fullness of God* "is simply a Pauline way of saying "to be all that God wants you to be" or "to be spiritually mature".⁶ "God's fullness or perfection becomes the standard or level up to which we pray to be filled."⁷



Paul is teaching us in his prayer, that to be spiritually mature, we must grow in experientially knowing the love of Jesus. And to do this we must pray for God's power to grasp his love.

- ❖ Why do you think spiritual maturity—becoming more Christ-like—coincides with how much you grasp and live in the love of God for you in Jesus?

- ❖ Jesus says in John 15:9 *As the Father has loved me so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*
How does this kind of love impact you? How can you abide in this love?
- ❖ How will you incorporate this prayer to comprehend the love of Christ into your prayer life?
(Consider memorizing this prayer.)

Day 5- Eph. 3:20-21

Write out verses 20-21

Verses 20 and 21 are the climax of chapters 1-3. This doxology closes out the blessing that Paul began in 1:3. "In the doxology [Paul] rehearses themes already touched on--the abundance of God's gift (1:18, 19; 2:7; 3:19), the power made available to the Christian (1:19; 3:7, 16, 18), and the indissoluble link between Christ and the church (1:22, 23; 3:10)."⁸

9. What do each of these phrases in verse 20 teach us about God?

able to do-

far more abundantly-

than all we ask-

than all we think-

- What does grasping this reality do for your heart?

- What does it do for your prayers?

Father, it is so comforting and satisfying and joyful to know that you are a God who is both powerful and generous and you go beyond what I can even imagine in giving me good things! Help me to remember this and to trust you when it doesn't look true. And help me to align my prayers to your word.

10. God does infinitely more than we can imagine, verse 20 says, *according to the power at work in us*. Look back at 1:19-20. What is the power at work in us?

11. In verse 21, Paul shows us the ultimate purpose of Paul's prayer. What is it?

- Is this the purpose of your prayers?

For Discussion:

What do you think it means that God would be glorified in the church *throughout all generations (history) forever and ever (eternity)?*

Taking Root:

- What in this portion of Scripture swells your heart with love for God, or makes your heart treasure Jesus?
- What from this portion of Scripture spurs you on to love others?
- How are you challenged to reach God's world after living with this portion of Scripture this week?

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- ¹ Carson, D.A. A Call to Spiritual Reformation, Praying With Paul. P.177. Baker Academic, 1992,2014
- ² Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 135). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
- ³ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 136). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
- ⁴ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 137). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
- ⁵ Carson, D.A. A Call to Spiritual Reformation, Praying With Paul. P.168. Baker Academic, 1992,2014
- ⁶ Ibid. P.172
- ⁷ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 138). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
- ⁸ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

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