



Ephesians 3:14-21

Praying to be Strengthened in God's Love

The prayers and doxologies in the Bible are some of the most beautiful expressions of faith and motivation for daily Christian living.

If you want God to answer your prayer, just pray some of these prayers of king David, Jesus and the apostle Paul. Pray these from your heart and watch God answer them. He will reward your time spent with Him when you let the Scriptures settle deep down into your heart and pray.

The apostle Paul prayed to our heavenly Father. For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named (Ephesians 3:14-15 NET).

He actually started to pray in verse one, and then suddenly followed his thoughts about the mystery of Christ. After his digression in verses 2-13 he returned to his prayer.

PAUL PRAYS TO GOD THE FATHER (3:14-16a)

The only way God can be our Father is by being born spiritually into His family. The Bible says, But to all who have received Him —those who believe in his name —he has given the right to become God's children — children not born by human parents, or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God (John 1:12-13 NET). We become children of God by believing on Jesus Christ. Have you received him as your savior?

The apostle Paul wrote, For in Christ you are all sons of God through faith (Galatians 3:26 NET). The only thing God requires is that you believe or trust in Christ. The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God (John 3:18 NET). A few verses later John concludes, The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him (John 3:36 NET).

Some of God's children are in heaven, and some of us are still here waiting to be called home. Are you one of His children? Have you been born again? You can know if you are His child (1 John 5:13).

The Bible does not teach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind. That idea is far from biblical truth. Only individuals who have put their faith in Christ are his legitimate children (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

God answers prayer according to the wealth of his glory. What are these riches of his glory ?

There are no limits to God's resources. He is no pauper.

His glorious riches are revealed in his perfect character and attributes. He is infinite in glorious riches. His glorious attributes are what make him God.

The LORD God is God and there is none other. When the Jewish person spoke the LORD'S name, there was nothing else to be said. He had said it all.

We pray knowing the LORD can provide our every need. Jesus was teaching his disciples to trust in God for all of their daily needs. He concluded saying, "But above all pursue his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33 NET). If we put God's kingdom and righteousness first in our lives He will meet our deepest and most important needs. The apostle Paul had experienced this in his life. "And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19 NET). The riches of his glory are always available to his children.

This is the one to whom the apostle bows his knees in prayer.

PAUL PRAYS THAT WE BE STRENGTHENED WITH SPIRITUAL POWER (3:16)

I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant to you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person (Ephesians 3:16 NET).

There is never a day that goes by that we do not need the power of the Holy Spirit working deep within our inner person. The daily toil, temptations, frustrations, pressures from people, etc. saps our spiritual energy.

When we were born spiritually, the Holy Spirit took up residence within us in what the Bible calls our inner man or inner person. This is our inner most being that responds to God and communes with him through the Holy Spirit.

The inner person is that part of us that we call the personal, rational self or the moral I that has experienced regeneration by the Spirit of God. It is the part of us that was born again. "

We were dead in trespasses and sins and God made us alive together with Christ and saved us by his grace. He raised us up with him and seated us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6 NET).

The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. When you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation) —when you believed on Christ —you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:13-14 NET). We were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. He is the seal and the down payment that every true believer in Christ has received.

What is this incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe ?
It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. It is resurrection power (v. 20). The supernatural power of God is working in his children through the indwelling Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is at work in the inner person or inner man (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16). The human spirit of the spiritually regenerated person responds and communes with the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual life and well being of every true believer depends on this vital communion with God.

We need to pray for daily spiritual renewal. We need the inner person strengthened throughout the day. We need not despair because our inner person is being renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16b NET).

Paul prayed that he would know Christ in the most personal knowledge of the power of his resurrection (Phil. 3:10-11).

Here in Ephesians 3:16 Paul wants to know the wealth of his glory [that] he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner person (NET).

That is the power we need to live the Christian life every day of our lives.

What is the state of your inner person? Do you experience this spiritual power daily?

Paul encourages the believers at Corinth saying: For indeed he was crucified by reason of weakness, but he lives because of God's power. For we also are weak in him, but we will live together with him, because of God's power toward you. Put yourselves to test to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize regarding yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you —unless, indeed, you fail the test! (2 Corinthians 13:4-5 NET).

I pray that you will be strengthened daily by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and I pray that Christ will settle down and make himself at home in your heart.

PAUL PRAYED FOR SPIRITUAL PERMANENCE (3:17)

How restless we become in our spiritual lives. Instead of Christ being at the center and priority in our lives, we tend to push him aside. We fill our hearts with things that ought not be there. These attitudes, imaginations, objects of affection, clutter our inner person and Christ does not feel at home.

Paul prayed, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . . (v. 17 NET).

Christ dwells in our hearts through His Spirit. The Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit is the same person, the Second person of the Trinity. Romans 8:8-9 reads, Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him (NET).

The apostle stated the greatest mystery, kept secret down through the ages, and revealed by divine revelation when God wanted to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is

when God wanted to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27 NET).

That indeed was truly amazing. The God of the Jewish people taking up residence in us Gentiles! That is our glorious hope, Christ in you and me. Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20). The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God.

Paul has in mind a settled, permanent abiding in the inner person. The original word for dwell has the idea of settling down and feeling completely at home as a permanent residence.

Have you made Christ feel completely at home in your heart? Does he have free access to every room in your home? Does he take charge of your TV remote, your computer, the Internet, your work, the activities during your free time at school, etc? Do you take every imagination, thought, attitude, and feeling in subjection to Christ? Do you take every thought captive to make it obey Christ? (2 Cor. 10:5 NET).

Is there anything in the inner closet that needs to be taken out of your life? Do you drag every flash of thought, attitude, and imagination into the full intense light of Christ and subject it to him? Cleanse out everything in your temple so Christ can have 100% of your heart.

We go from faith to faith in our spiritual growth. Christ lives in our hearts by faith. I place my trust in Him throughout the day. Have you learned to talk to him as a lover speaks to his beloved? Do you entertain intimate moments with the Master throughout the day?

PAUL PRAYS FOR OUR SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION (3:17b-19a)

The apostle Paul prays that we will be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge . . . (vv. 16-19a NET).

Are you being rooted and grounded in love? We have come to know love by this: that Jesus laid down his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians (1 John 3:16 NET). There is no greater demonstration of love than that shown at Calvary when the Son of God died as our substitute. He was God's atoning sacrifice for our sins. He never experienced personal sins in his entire life. Yet he took our place and died in our stead. That is love, so amazing, so divine.

Moreover, we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him (1 John 4:16 NET).

Do you have that kind of relationship with God? Have you placed your trust in Him? Have you experienced His love? Is it a growing experience?

Do you have intimate conversations with God? Are you aware of his presence during the day? Do you sense his quiet leading, directing, convicting, cleansing, comforting, and encouraging presence? Do you give him the freedom to break in upon you any moment of the day? Do you ask him for wisdom, grace and strength?

The problem is most of us aren't quiet enough for God to speak to us. We rush about with agendas filled with activity and no time to be quiet and listen for those intimate moments with the Master.

How broad is the love of God? It is as broad as the whole world. God's love reaches out to every individual, every tribe, every nation, indeed the whole universe. It is his love that causes the Jewish people and non-Jewish to enjoy the riches of his inheritance. He makes us all become one in Christ.

How long is his love? It stretches from eternity to eternity. We were chosen in Him before the foundations of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Eph. 1:4). He predestined us to the adoption as his children. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (Romans 8:35 NET). Nothing! Nothing! I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv. 38-39 NET).

How deep is the love of God? It is deeper than the deepest depravity! It is deeper than the deepest sin you have committed. It reached us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins and made us alive together with Christ. He reached down in the depths of our pit and rescued us.

How high is his love? It reaches the heavenly places, above the principalities and powers. The apostle proclaims in exaltation: God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11 NET).

Have you bowed to the name of Jesus? One day every person will bend his or her knees and hearts to him. There will be no choice then.

PAUL PRAYED FOR SPIRITUAL PLENTITUDE (3:19b)

Paul's prayer continues to climb until it reaches the unthinkable. So that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God (v. 19b NET).

Have you ever prayed that part of the prayer? Does it frighten you to do so?

No, we are not god nor are we becoming gods. There is only one true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6-8; Jn. 17:3; 1 Tim. 2:5).

In Christ all the fullness of God dwells.

For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, Paul wrote in Colossians 2:9. The second person of the Godhead is forever the God-man. It is a permanent dwelling.

When the disciples looked into the eyes of Jesus Christ, they saw God dwelling in their midst. He is the absolute and perfect God.

In the person of Jesus Christ, there is continually and permanently the fullness of absolute deity.

Moreover, the apostle Paul tells us and you have been filled in him who is the head over every ruler and authority (Colossians 2:10 NET). In Jesus Christ you have been made complete. In our vital union with him, we have been filled in him.

We are so complete in Christ that in God's sight we lack nothing. In God's sight we are absolutely perfect.

We are so complete in Christ that in God's sight we lack nothing. In God's sight we are absolutely perfect. That is our eternal unchanging position in Christ.

As Christ dwells in us, the fullness of God is in us. Christ is living in me right now. Christ is living in you right now if you have put your trust in Him as your savior. He takes his earthen vessel and fills it with himself. We have this treasure in clay jars, so that the extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us (2 Corinthians 4:7 NET).

I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me . . . (Galatians 2:20 NET). The life that I now live in this physical body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Are you available to God? Have you let him fill you up with himself? To have Christ dwelling in us is to be filled with all the fullness of the love of God.

God predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29 NET). In Ephesians Paul says we are to be filled to the fullness. That is God's eternal purpose for our lives. One day we will be perfectly like him (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:10).

The wonder of God's saving grace is that he enables us to know something of the unknowable. Grace reaches down and allows us a foretaste of what it will be like when we see Christ face to face in glory for the first time. This knowledge of him comes only in fellowship with him. This fullness flows from him, and he communicates it to us.

Jesus said, Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48 NET). Absolute perfection is the standard God has set before us. One day in glory it will be true of each of us but not before then. That perfection will consist of our being full of God in his dwelling in us.

Today we are to grow to the stature of Christ. Ask God to fill you with his presence and increase your desire for more of Him. We never ask too much! Our problem is we ask very little when it comes to what he wants to do in us.

Lord Jesus, fill me up with your fullness and increase my desire for more of you.

Christ in you. You in Christ. I in you . . . you in Me. What more could we ask?

No wonder the apostle Paul breaks forth with a rising crescendo of praise to the LORD God. Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all the ages, world without end (Ephesians 3:20-21 KJV).

He is conforming us to the image of Christ by the power that is working within us (v. 20a NET). The Spirit of Christ working within us is able to do far beyond all we ask or think (v. 20b NET).

What God is doing within us does not depend on us. It depends on God as we make ourselves available to him in obedience to his Word.

Paul can't find the words to express what he cannot contain. His thoughts rush ahead of his words.

Now unto him

Now unto him
Now unto him who is able
Now unto him who is able to do
Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly
Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly over and above and beyond
even superabundantly, and over and beyond, all that we ask or think.

I don't know what you have thought about grace before, but this causes my heart to exclaim praise to him be all the honor and glory in the church and in Christ to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:21 NET).

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

Index to this Series on the Letter to Ephesians

Title:

Series:

Message by Wil Pounds (c) 2006. Anyone is free to use this material and distribute it, but it may not be sold under any circumstances whatsoever without the author's written consent.

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/>. All rights reserved.

Wil is a graduate of William Carey College, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S., and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

Didn't find what you wanted on this page? [Search this Website Here](#)

**[HOME](#) | [BIBLE STUDIES & SERMONS](#) | [ABIDE IN CHRIST](#)
[SEARCH](#) | [PERSONAL GROWTH](#) | [LINKS](#) | [LATEST ADDITIONS](#) | [FEEDBACK](#)**

[MAKE ABIDE IN CHRIST YOUR START PAGE](#)