

Ephesians 3:14-21

Week 6 - Praying Like Paul

Learning Objectives

- Prayer for God's strength through the Spirit
- Prayer for Christ to live in our hearts leading to lives rooted and grounded in love
- Prayer for comprehension and knowledge of Christ
- Prayer for the fullness of God

Prayer Reminder: God can do more than we ask or even think!

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read Out Loud: Ephesians 3:14–21 (NIV)

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

? This passage starts with Paul saying in verse 14, 'For this reason' - what is this reason?

Possible Answers: In verse 12, Paul says we can approach God with freedom and confidence. Because the things Paul is praying for are impossible without God. Verse 6 talks about a mystery so it would make sense to go to God to understand this mystery.

? In these verses, what is Paul praying for? What are the things you most commonly pray for or about?

Possible answers: That they may be strengthened with power through his Spirit, that Christ would dwell in their hearts, that they might be rooted and established in love, that they would have power to grasp Christ's love, that they would be filled with the fullness of God. He is not praying about circumstances, but for people to know God more.

? In verse 16, Paul prays that they would be strengthened. What is the strength he is talking about?

Why do we need to be strengthened?

Possible answers: It's not physical, but it's strength to have faith and strength to understand the love of Christ. There are so many other outside voices putting pressure on us, we need to be strengthened by his spirit. Apart from being strengthened by his Spirit, we cannot have faith or comprehend God's love.

? In verse 17 Paul highlights that being "rooted and grounded in love" will provide strength. What other verses in the Bible come to mind when you think of tree or vine imagery?

Possible Answers: Answers may vary, which will be great!

Leader's note: Highlight verses with Jesus as the vine and source of strength - John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Jeremiah 17:8 "They will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought, and never fails to bear fruit."

? Considering these verses and verse 17, what does it mean to be rooted and grounded in love?

Possible answers: Having Christ dwell in your heart and responding to him in faith. To depend fully on God's strength, not focusing on your "fruit" or circumstance but God as the source of love and provision of strength.

? Why does Christ's love surpass knowledge?

Possible answers: It's not something we can understand on our own. It goes beyond head knowledge - it's something we have to experience by God's grace. It's bigger and more powerful than anything we could imagine.

? Why is it so hard for us to grasp or understand God's love?

Possible answers: It is perfect love and unconditional. There is no other love like it. Often times we feel like we have to earn love, but that is not how God's love works.

? How can we go about knowing a love that "surpasses knowledge?" Are there parts of God's love that you know you don't "know?" How can you and/or your small group remind you of those parts?

Possible answers: answers will vary. Pray! Draw close to God and he will draw close to you. It would be good to talk about preaching truth to each other, praying for each other and being intentional during your accountability time together.

? If we actually believed that God can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, how would that change the way we pray and live our lives?

Possible answers: It would give us faith to pray for big things. It should strengthen our faith that our Father is in control and knows better than we do. It would give us hope.

? Has there been a time that God has done more than you asked or imagined?

Possible answers: Varies for each person. Maybe you saw a time God provided a friendship, healed a broken relationship or opened the door for a job. Have others seen ways God has worked through you or answered a seemingly impossible prayer answered in your life? Have you seen this in another's life?

For Discussion and Accountability

? What are seemingly impossible things you could be praying for right now?

? What are ways we can encourage you through this?

Use this passage to pray and root yourself in love this week: 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."