

Encouragement to Engage in Ministry

Ephesians 3: 14-19

Some of you are probably like me when it comes to technology. I am certainly not an expert in the field of computers and programming. I am unfamiliar with all that goes into writing code, software, and the development of apps on my phone. However, a lack of in-depth knowledge does not prevent me from using my phone to accomplish several important tasks each day. Wouldn't it be ridiculous to have great knowledge in technology, have a phone, pay the monthly fees, and yet never use the phone for its intended use?

The same could be said for Christians today. We have been saved by grace, filled, and equipped by the Holy Spirit, disciplined in the faith, and possess an understanding of the core doctrines within the Bible. It would be a tragedy to possess such knowledge and giftedness, and yet never use that knowledge and giftedness for the advancement of the Kingdom.

Our text today reveals a prayer that Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. His prayer was focused on the church being enabled to use the knowledge and gifts they possessed to share the gospel and reach the unsaved. This prayer remains relevant for the modern church as well. As we examine the [elements](#) of this prayer, I want to consider: [Encouragement to Engage in Ministry](#).

I. Paul Prayed for Strength (16) – Paul was committed to the spiritual development of the believers at Ephesus. He knew if the church was to continue prospering, she needed continual growth. Paul was well aware of:

A. The Source of their Strength (16a) – [That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.](#) Paul prayed that the church would be strengthened by the power of God. He did not look to the political, social, or economic systems of the world to provide strength for the church. He called upon the Lord to provide through the riches of His glory.

- Many churches are stagnant and dead spiritually because they are depending upon the wrong things. Their focus is not where it should be. Many place more emphasis on self-gratification instead of the gospel, on presentation rather than power, and on works rather than worship. Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to experience an outpouring of God's glory!

B. The Supply of their Strength (16b) – [That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.](#) Paul sensed a great need among the

church. He was concerned about the struggles of the inner man. Life in Ephesus was not easy for the church. They were not surrounded by multitudes who sought to serve the Lord. If they were to survive spiritually, they had to become strong in the inner man. They needed the Holy Spirit controlling their lives instead of the desires of the flesh.

- We too face a hostile environment spiritually. This world does not embrace or encourage our faith. They are not concerned with our spiritual well-being or our relationship with the Lord. If we are to survive and prosper spiritually, our only hope is to be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit. Pray that God would develop us through the outpouring of His power and that we might be strengthened by the blessed Holy Spirit.

II. Paul Prayed for Stability (17) – In order for the church to prosper in a hostile environment, she would need spiritual stability. Paul prayed specifically for this as well. He mentioned:

A. Their Desire (17a) – [That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith](#). Paul was concerned with what they allowed to abide within their hearts. The term dwell speaks of a permanent dwelling, not just a brief visit. He desired the church to allow the Lord to have preeminence in their lives at all times. He prayed they would rid their hearts of the cares of the flesh and make room for the Lord.

- As believers, we are filled with the Spirit and Christ abides in our hearts. However, if we aren't careful, we can allow sin and lustful desires in as well, hindering the Lord's presence in our lives. We must ensure that our hearts are continually filled with spiritual truth and a desire to fellowship with the Lord. Such an endeavor will only be achieved through obedient submission to the Lord and faith in Him alone. [Gal.2:20 – I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.](#)

B. Their Devotion (17b) – Paul reveals a desire that they be [rooted and grounded in love](#). They were to literally build their lives and the church upon that foundation. This was an essential element that must exist if the church was to prosper and continue. Without a commitment to love within the foundation, the church would eventually crumble and fall when trials arrived.

- Would you not agree that our churches need more love? We do pretty well with those whom we choose to associate, our close friends and family, but God has called upon us to love all people as He loves them. [Mat.22:37-39 – Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.](#) I pray we will

be rooted and grounded in love, loving others as Christ loved us. Where would any of us be had someone not loved us?

III. Paul Prayed for Sensitivity (17b-19a) – that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;^{19a} And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Paul prayed regarding their sensitivity to spiritual matters, their discernment. This could be applied to wisdom in general, and we certainly need wisdom, but the focus is the love of God. Paul wanted them to fully comprehend and embrace the love of God for humanity. He wanted them to see and understand love from every angle.

- The love of God is greater than our feeble minds can comprehend. Its **breadth** reaches beyond the secular and social boundaries than we often put up. The **length** of God's love is never ending. There is not a soul so far away that God's love cannot reach. There is not a one who has gone so far that God's love cannot draw them unto salvation. The **depth** of God's love permeates even the hardest of hearts and brings about new life. It reaches to the lowest depths and calls out to those in need. The **height** of God's love could never be measured. It extends beyond the highest heights. There is nowhere that we could go to escape the love of God.
- We as God's people need a better understanding of such love. We need wisdom concerning the love of God in order to show and share that love with the world around us. I am convinced the average Christian hasn't even scratched the surface of the abundance of God.

IV. Paul Prayed for Sufficiency (19b) – that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Paul had experienced the fullness of God. He knew what it was to abound in the Lord. He genuinely desired the saints at Ephesus to experience that fullness as well. Fullness has the idea of "*a ship that has been filled with all its cargo and completely manned for the journey with sailors, rowers, and soldiers.*" Paul didn't want them to make the trip without all they needed. He didn't want them to struggle and barely survive. He wanted them to enjoy the fullness of the trip. He wanted them to experience the fullness of God's grace and power!

- We desperately need that fullness in our day. There are too many who are just coasting along. They are going through the motions, making their way through life, but there is a lack of joy and power. We can have the fullness of God in our lives. **John 10:10 – The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

- Let us pray that this congregation might know and enjoy the fullness of God. We don't have to just barely survive. We don't have to live in defeat. We don't have to come and endure the services, never experiencing the power and presence of God. We can have His fullness.
- Wouldn't it be great to leave here filled to the brim with God? Wouldn't it be great to look forward to another opportunity to serve the Lord? That is possible when we are full of Him.

Conclusion: Through a prayer Paul recorded in the letter to the Ephesian believers, we discover many of the desires he had for them. As a part of the church, you are obligated to pray for the church. It would benefit us all if we all decided to make that commitment to pray for one another.

How is your prayer life concerning the church? I know that prayer is an area that I could improve upon. Are you concerned about the needs of our church and its future? If so, the best thing you can do is learn to pray for the church and commit to do so daily.

If you are yet unsaved, you haven't experienced the love and fullness available in Christ. You don't know the peace that comes through His abiding within your heart. I urge you to look to Christ by faith, repent of your sin, and believe in His finished work for your salvation.