

YES, NO & MAYBE

Part I: SEATED

DIG DEEPER

1. I grew up in a wealthy home.
2. If not for the other people in this room, I would not be able to grasp God's love.
3. You must be internally strong before you can fully experience love.
4. It is impossible to truly know the extent of God's love.
5. We limit God by our short-sighted imaginations and requests.

« When you were younger, what parts of God's love did you question or doubt?

Paul's Prayer For Spiritual Growth

➤ READ Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

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

20 Now 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, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

» I kneel

• (Vs. 14) - This is not a common posture for prayer in Paul's day. Standing or lying prone was the custom. This may be a signal not only of deep reverence but also of emotional intensity.

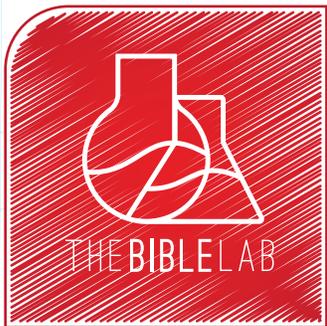
» strengthen you with power

• (Vs. 16) - The verb "strengthen" (krataiōthēnai) speaks of being made strong or capable. Paul is praying here that God the Father would strengthen you so that you would be capable of containing the power (dunamis) of the Holy Spirit, so that your inner being would be a comfortable place where Christ may dwell (Vs. 17) The word "dwell" is katoikēsai (κατοικησαι), made up of oikeō (οικεω), "to live in as a home," and kata (κατα), "down." The expanded translation is; "that Christ might finally settle down and feel completely at home in your hearts."

« This first prayer request requires all three members of the Godhead. What do you see here that is interesting to you about this concept?

» rooted and established in love

• (Vs. 17) - "Rooted" is agricultural, and "established" (literally, founded) is architectural. Like trees, our lives are to send down roots deep and wide into the soil of love. Like buildings, the edifices of our lives here on earth are to have deep, solid foundations of love.



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

» **may have power**

• (Vs. 18) - **power** (exischysēte, “have inherent strength”). It takes inherent strength, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

« Why do you think it is necessary to have this kind of power within you to fully grasp the dimensions of Christ’s love?

1) A love which is wide enough to embrace the world. John 3:16 tells us, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

2) A love which is long enough to last forever (1 Corinthians 13:8). As Spurgeon said, “It is so long that your old age cannot wear it out, so long your continual tribulation cannot exhaust it, your successive temptations shall not drain it dry; like eternity itself it knows no bounds.”

3) A love which is high enough to take sinners to Heaven (1 John 3:1, 2).

4) A love which is deep enough to take Christ to the very depths to reach the lowest sinner (Philippians 2:8).

» **to know the beyond knowable**

• (Vs. 19) - **know this love that surpasses knowledge** - The words “**to know**” are the translation of ginōskō (γινώσκω) which speaks of knowledge gained by *experience*. The apprehension of verse 18 is conceptual knowledge. In verse 19, this conceptual knowledge passes into experiential knowledge as the saint experiences in his life that comprehension of the love of Christ for him in the sphere of his earthly life. The word “**surpasses**” is a participle of huperballo (ὑπερβαλλο), “to throw over or beyond, to transcend, exceed, excel.” This love surpasses knowledge, gnōsis (γνώσις), “experiential knowledge.” That is, no matter how much the saint experiences of the love of Christ, there are yet oceans of love in the great heart of God that have not been touched by his experience.

« How have you experienced God’s love in a way that has surpassed people’s knowledge of His love?

» **immeasurably more**

• (Vs. 20) - **immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine** - “**immeasurably**” - *huper panta* (ὑπερ παντα), literally, “above all things,” thus, “in a measure exceeding all things, beyond all things.” “**More**” speaks of Him as able to do *huper ekperissou* (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ). The word is made up of perissos (περισσος), “exceeding some number or measure, over and above, more than necessary,” ek (ἐκ), which is perfective in force here, intensifying the already existing idea in the verb, here adding the idea of exhaustlessness, and huper (ὑπερ), “above.” The compound word is a superlative of superlatives in force. It speaks of the ability of God to do something, that ability having more than enough potential power, this power exhaustless, and then some on top of that. Thus, Paul says that God is able to do super-abundantly above and beyond what we ask or think, and then some on top of that.

« Why is this aspect of God’s character so important for us to apprehend internally in today’s environment?



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MY PRAYER...

1. How am I asking the Father to strengthen me, the Spirit to empower me, and Christ to dwell in me this week?
2. What might be some of my limiting thoughts when I ask God to do something in prayer?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?

