

Praying for Spiritual Growth.

Part 2

By Nick Bibile

Ephesians 3:16-17 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.

We are going to continue on Ephesians as we are going through on praying for spiritual growth. As we said last time there are so many Christians their prayer requests are for immediate problems they face. I am not saying that we should not pray for these situations but what I am saying is we neglect the most important issue that is praying for our spiritual growth.

Let us see the contrast, the worldly view, the fleshly way and what exactly the scriptures are saying.

Verse 16. The worldly or the fleshly way is that our outward man and all other things we see will be strengthened by the might of this world.

Verse 17. So the world will live in our flesh as we walk by sight that and we will do whatever to get things done our way.

The result is when there are problems that comes my way, I will get into the flesh, I may get angry, fight with someone, I will be mad, mad, upset yes, really upset, moody, very moody.

On the other hand the Christians are to be spiritually strong then we can overcome by the grace of God the problems we face. Many are walking by sight as they see the problems. We need to walk not by sight as we do not know what will happen tomorrow, we need to walk by faith in God.

Mt 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

We see apostle's Paul's prayer for the believers is that they will be strong in the Lord. When we are strong in the Lord, the results are amazing as it gives glory to God. People in the world see that we are different as we can face problems and overcome them. Even the unbelievers will come to us for help, asking for prayer as they see our character in the Lord. This can open doors for witnessing. Now let's go verse by verse the prayers of Apostle Paul for the church.

Eph 3:16 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 is praying in his knees to the believers. That God will give according to his rich and abundant

glory that our inner man may be strengthened with might. God is rich in wisdom and knowledge.

Ro 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

Again we see it is God who grants or gives the strength according to his glorious riches. God is Spirit and gloriously abundant in spiritual riches which he can bestow to his believers by his grace.

Eph 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

What do you mean by the inner man. If there is an inner man there is an outer man. The outer man is our body, this flesh where we can see and the inner man is your soul. Lot of times we pray for our body and for outward things. Men and women spend great amount of money for their outward deteriorating bodies which is on the way to the grave. We want to be strong in our bodies, look good and handsome outside, and spend a lot of time on the outward. Look at your photos when you were young and compare them to now. Do you see a difference? Yes, you have grown old outside but the soul remains the same. One day this flesh will perish but the soul will live. God sees the soul and the apostle prays for the soul to be strengthened. The outward man the flesh will get older and older but in the true Christian the soul will get stronger and stronger as he grows in the Lord.

2Co 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

The word strengthened in Ephesians 3:16, the Greek word *krataioō* means to be strong, increase in strength and grow in strength. It says strengthened with might. The word might in Greek here is *dunamis* our English word dynamite comes from it; this shows the inner power of the true Christian. We take all kinds of vitamins, foods and exercise so we become physically strong. But even the most physically strong person can be weak and powerless and become food for Satan if he is weak spiritually. You know what happened to Goliath? It is a true physical story to show the power of the spirit that wins the battles. The true Christian, who prays for spiritual growth daily, is always hungry for God more and more. They will have incredible inner power and strength in the Lord.

Apostle's prayer is so they might not faint at the as we in Christ need fresh supplies of strength to enable us to exercise grace, to work in the ministry, to resist Satan and his temptations, to oppose ungodliness, corruptions, and to bear the cross, and undergo afflictions cheerfully, and to hold on and out to the end. But as I said many are not praying for their spiritual growth so they remain the same because they are more concerned of worldly things for the flesh but God wants you to be strong in the spirit and bless you abundantly with spiritual blessings, if you ask him for spiritual blessings, will he turn a deaf ear? Don't ask just once, if you are hungry you will keep on asking.

Mt 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Next verse

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.

The word dwell is to live permanently. God is said to dwell in the temple. But the Christians are the temple of God and God the Holy Spirit dwells in us permanently and by faith we know this. This faith is not a blind faith but the truth that is revealed in the Bible. If Christ lives in our hearts permanently the outcome is that we are rooted and grounded in love. The Greek word for rooted is *rizoō* which means to establish and the Greek word for grounded is *themelioō* which means that settled and stable.

Col 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Remember the story Jesus gave the difference between the foolish man building his house in the sand and the wise man building his house on the rock. The true Christian builds his home on the rock, on Jesus.

Lu 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

But Ephesians 3:17 says when Christ lives in our hearts we will be rooted and grounded in love. Yes, in love. What do you mean?

The Bible says God is love. We are not talking of emotional worldly or sexual love here. We are speaking of a divine love we can have in Christ. God's love is the perfect love with the exclusion of sin. In his love there is no sin. True love always proceeds with action. This love is perfect when we are in heaven as there is no sin in heaven. This love is the perfect conduct and behavior.

Christ Jesus portrayed the perfect love of God in his life and behavior. When Christ lives in our hearts as we grow in God our inner man the soul becomes strong that we too can exercise the true love of Christ in our conduct and behavior.

We will have calmness in our soul and bring rest to our spirit. The world is like a raging sea, like a stormy sea, with selfishness, greed, envy, malice, jealousy, anger, quarrelling, there is no rest to the soul. The soul is always restless as the world is like a restless sea. There are waves of sin, waves of pride and anger dashing to shore with fury.

Mt 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Mt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Yes, God wants to give you the riches of his glory so your inner man will be strengthened with power, but you need to take his yoke and learn of him. To take his yoke means to join to him, connected to him, binds to him. Yes, realize that Christ lives in your heart you are connected and joined to him, you will learn of him become like him.

Once you have the love of Christ you God by his grace can give you the strength and the power so you will not burst under pressure. You will be able to show God's love to the world. God's love is perfect.

The world says, if someone makes you angry fight back. But Christ said:

Mt 5:39 But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Mt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Only a true Christian who has a lot of power and strength in God can do this. Yes, if you are in the flesh there is no way you can do this, but if you are walking in the spirit, praying for spiritual growth, studying God's word, asking for his grace, mercy, wisdom and knowledge and even though the storms are raging you can sleep in peace just like how our Lord slept peacefully in the storm while the disciples got in to the flesh as they walked not by faith but by sight. (Read Mark 4:35-41)

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