

Ephesians 3:14-21
Getting More Joy From The Gift Of The Son

Leader's Guide

December 16, 2018

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21 to familiarize yourself with the passage.

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened
with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted
and grounded in love,
18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and
length and height and depth,
19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be
filled with all the fullness of God.
20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or
think, according to the power at work within us,
21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
forever and ever. Amen.

2. Read Ephesians 3:14-16.

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened
with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

A. Paul prayed the Ephesian church would be strengthened in their inner being. What is the inner being?

A. The inner being is someone's heart. The real person they are on the inside as opposed to who they are in public. It means the soul. The inner person.

B. What happens when a Christian is spiritually weak?

A. They are vulnerable to sin. They are easily swayed by temptation and the pressure of culture.

- A. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 2 Timothy 3:6 – Here is an example of someone easily led astray because of a weak inner being.
- B. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (ESV)
- B. Pastor Kurt mentioned the Word of God as one of the primary resources God uses to strengthen our inner being. In the follow verses, what resources is God using to strength the inner being of His people?**
- A. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105 (ESV) – God’s Word builds us up and teaches us to make wise choices.
- B. I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11 (ESV) – God’s Word builds us up and directs us away from sin.
- C. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” Luke 21:36 (ESV) – Pray provides spiritual strength and builds us up and strengthens us to handle spiritually challenging times.
- D. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:21-22 (ESV) – God uses good spiritual teachers to build up our faith.
- E. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. Acts 16:4-5 (ESV) – This is another example of God using good spiritual teachers and decisions of church leaders to build up others faith and strengthen their walk with Christ.
- F. Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word! Psalm 119:169 (ESV) - God gives understanding by His Word.

G.BONUS – And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32 (ESV) - This is another example of God's Word building people up.

3. In what ways are growing physical strength and spiritual strength similar? In what ways are they different?

A. Physical strength and spiritual strength are develop over time and by hard work. Even though spiritual strength is something we work to develop, at its root it is a gift from God, not our own strength. Physical strength goes away over time but spiritual strength continues to improve with age.

A. for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8 (ESV) – This verse affirms the importance of physical training and that it does have value. The difference is training and spiritual discipline for godliness have more value. It doesn't just make a difference for this life but it lasts into the next life.

B. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 2 Corinthians 4:16 (ESV) – While our outward body and strength waste away over time, God renews our inner being and grows that strength over time.

4. As Jesus matured, in what ways did he he need to work to develop more than just his physical stature so he would be fit to be our savior?

A. Jesus went through all the hard work of developing spiritual maturity in our inner being that we do. This means Jesus probably rose early or stayed up late to travel to the local synagogue so he could read and learn God's Word, which was the only place he would find it. He had to work hard to memorized the Word of God. He had to make time to pray. We see if was hard for him to rise early for prayer.

A. And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. Luke 2:39-40 (ESV) – God obviously showed favor to Jesus as his Son but Jesus still needed to grow and seek wisdom.

B. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:52 (ESV) - Jesus increased in wisdom and in favor with God, not just in favor with men. This means Jesus went through a process of learning God's Word, just as we need to learn God's Word.

C. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:17 (ESV) – Jesus was like us in every way. He was not insulated from needing to do the hard work of learning to grow in his inner being.

5. Paul prays that Christ would feel extremely at home in our hearts. What would make Christ feel unsettled in someone's heart?

B. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7 (ESV) – A husband that is harsh with his wife grieves Jesus and it will influence the effectiveness of his prayer life.

C. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:30-32 (ESV) – Someone that leans into conflict, gossip, breaking relationships in the church, and bickering grieves God's Spirit and leaves Christ unsettled in their heart.

6. Paul talks about the four dimensions of God's love for us that are beyond our knowledge and ability to comprehend. The only way to understand the amount of love God has for us is for the Holy Spirit to supernaturally expand the comprehension of our heart. How does knowing that God loves you that much change the way you feel about yourself?

1. It should leave us humbled and grateful to know God loves us so much in spite of our sin.

2. How does it change the way you feel about the trials we face?

1. When we face trials, we shouldn't feel alone. God is with us. He loves us. We also know God has a good purpose in our trials, even though we can not understand God's purpose, we can trust him because he loves us more than we can imagine.

2. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 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. Romans 8:35-39 (ESV) – No matter what we face, nothing can separate of from Jesus and his love for us.