

**Praying for Spiritual Strength/Enablement
To be What God Designed/Desires
For His Church
Week 4**

The Church in the Post Pandemic Times

The Bible Lays-Out High Standards the of True Christian
Discipleship

Jesus Himself Taught High Standards of True Christian
Discipleship.

Christian Discipleship is A Rigorous/Continuous Challenge.
There are no Concessions for the Flesh.

Whenever you have High Standards, there will always be
Alternatives Available on the Market.

Matthew 7:13–14

[13] “Enter by **the narrow gate**. For the **gate is wide** and the way
is easy that **leads to destruction**, and those who enter by it are
many.

[14] For the gate is narrow and **the way is hard that leads to life**,
and those who find it are **few**.

Many people Embrace the Broad/Wide Gate that leads to
Destruction because it is an Easy Way.

The Narrow Way is a Hard Way, but it leads to Life.

The Church in these Post – Pandemic Times must be careful that
we don’t allow difficulties/challenges cause us to attempt to come
up with Alternatives to Jesus’ Design/Desires for His Church.

One of the Alternatives the bible tells us about is in
John 6:66–69

[66] After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer
walked with him.

[67] So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”

[68] Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have the words of eternal life,

[69] and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are
the Holy One of God.”

Challenging/Difficult Situations Will Expose Your True
Dedication!

The Terms/Standards/Condition of True Discipleship are Settled
Jesus says, FOLLOW ME

Matthew 16:24

[24] Then Jesus told his disciples,

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up
his cross and follow me.

The Church has been/is Being Built according to the
Designs/Desires/Directions of Jesus Christ.

The Church Must Keep Steady Pre-Occupation with Jesus Christ
because He Alone has the Words of Eternal Life.

The World lowers/alters their Standards to increase Participation.

The Church Must Remain Faithful to the
Design/Desires/Direction of Jesus Christ regardless of the
Situations/Circumstances we Face.

The Terms/Conditions/Standards for True Discipleship for the Christian Church

Luke 14:25–33

Discipleship Comes at Great Cost:
The Cost of Discipleship

[25] Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said
to them,

[26] “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and
mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and
even his own life, **he cannot be my disciple.**

Family Cost

[27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me
cannot be my disciple.

Executing Cost

[28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit
down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

[29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to
finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

[30] saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”

Considering Cost

[31] Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will
not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten
thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty
thousand?

Figuring Cost

[32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Surrendering Cost

[33] So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Concluding Cost

[34] “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

[35] It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Embracing Cost

Ephesians 3:14–21

[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.

What is Your Hearts Desire for the Church?

We Should be Praying for the Church' Spiritual Strength/Enablement, which Displays His Power/Glory.

Our Prayers are a Direct Reflection of the Priority of Our Own Heart and are also a Direct Reflection of Our View/Theology of God.

I hope the Statement helps us to see the Significance of Prayer. Our Prayers demonstrate what we Truly Believe about God.

This is Paul's 2nd Prayer in the Book of Ephesians.

His 1st Prayer

(1:15-23) for the church in Ephesus was that they will *Comprehend/Understand/ Grow in the Experience of Knowing God*, what God has already done for them in Christ.

In order to Comprehend/Understand/Grow, we need the

Illuminating Power of the Holy Spirit

He prays that the church would have a Spirit of Wisdom/Revelation in the Knowledge of God.

1st: Paul Prayed for an Increased Illumination/Intimacy in their Knowledge of God Centered in Christ (v 17).

2nd: Paul Prayed for an Increased Strength/Power for Spiritual Vision/Understanding (vv 18-19).

1st Prayer is a prayer for them to have the Eyes of their Heart Open to **Know God Intimately Better** so that they might further know three things.

- ➔ **The Hope of God's Calling v.18**
- ➔ **The Riches of God's Glorious Inheritance v.18**
- ➔ **The Immeasurable Greatness of His Power v.19**

**The Description of the Power is Resurrection Power
Eph. 1: 20-23**

Paul's desire is for the Church is to Deepen their Relationship with God who has richly blessed them with every spiritual benefit (1:3-14) and to Experience/Enjoy in a deeper way those benefits.

Paul wants the Church to Know and Have Spiritual Illumination Intellectually/Experientially of the Blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus.

In the context of (3:14-21), the focus of prayer is that the Church Strengthened/Empowered/Enabled to Know Christ Love which surpasses all Knowledge.

Prior in this chapter Paul developed the Doctrine of the Mystery of the Church/Ministry for the Church, where Jew/Gentile believers are POSITIONALLY "One New Person" (2:15), in the Body of Christ.

He now is praying that the Church be
Strengthened/Empowered/Enabled to Comprehend
Experientially in Christ's Love.

There are 3 Divisions

1st The Cause/Confidence of His Prayer 14-15

2nd The Core/Content of His Prayer 16-19

**3rd Praise to God for His Power/Glory throughout all
Generations 20-21**

Paul's Cause/Confidence in His Prayer (3:14-15)

→ An Account for Prayer –
Mystery He Revealed 2:11- 3:1-6,
Ministry He was Given 7-13

[14] For this reason **I bow my knees before the Father,**
[15] from whom every family in heaven and on earth is
named,

→ An Appropriate Posture in Prayer – bow
my knees is more about the posture of the heart
than the posture of his body. Bowing my knees is
conveying worship/submission.

→ An Assured Answer in Prayer – Heavenly
Father. Notice not a Distance Deity but a Loving
Father.

➔ **An Appropriate Object in Prayer – “God the Father” The ‘Father.’**

A Term of Intimacy/ Dignity/ Authority

- The God whom he approaches is *Powerful/Loving*. He approaches the Father with reverence, yet confidence/boldness because of what Christ has done (**Read v 12**).
- This ‘Father’ is viewed as the Creator and Lord of all – ‘from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name.’
 - Note a reference to the church, as the family of God (=contra NIV), but human families, family groupings, including the angelic hosts.
 - God’s greatness and power and authority in both heaven/earth are stressed. He is viewed, as the sovereign One – the only One.
 - To Him and Him alone do we go and lay out our petitions and requests – praise.

➔ **An Awesome Ability of his Object of Prayer– Creator/Re-Creator/Name/Ruler**

It is to The Sovereign God of the Universe that Paul Prays!

The Core/Content of Paul’s Prayer (3:16-19)

[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.

Dimensions/Petitions of Paul's Prayer

[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,

1. Strengthened with might Through his Spirit in the inner Man/Being.

V.16

a. **Non-Surface Request**-Inner Being - Heart - The Core of One's Existence - This is not a Paint Job. 2 Cor. 4:16, Rom. 7:22.

b. **Non-Physical Request** – this is a Spiritual Request for Power

c. **Non-Helpless Request.** Strengthen used 4x in other places and 2xs used of Jesus Luke1- 2 Grew in Holy Dependence on the Spirit. How much more to we need Holy Dependence upon the Spirit. Paul is praying for the church to be strengthened enabled by the Spirit. Notice the Purpose, so that Christ might Dwell in Our Hearts through Faith – that you being rooted and grounded in love.

Ephesians 3:18–19

[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.

2. **Comprehend Christ' Love** - Know the Love of Christ which Surpasses Knowledge. V.18-19

[18] may have **strength to comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

a. Breadth How Wide the Love of Christ is.

b. Length – Not Temporal How long has God Loved us. From eternity to eternity.

c. Depth What was the Depth of His Love – How deep does His Love go for us. He Suffers for us endure pain sorrow. He dies

d. Height What does His Love do for us. 1 John 3:2-3.

We love knowledge/doctrine/teaching, but His love surpasses knowledge what does this mean? Paul is not Diminishing Knowledge He is Maximizing the Love of Christ. It Surpasses What Can be KNOWN!

3. **Filled with the Fullness of God** – What could this Possibly Mean? Filled with the Fullness of God? What could be greater than this? Not that we become little gods.

What does it look like to be filled with the fullness of God?

a. **Mind** - In your thinking dominated by God.

Philippians 2:5

[5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

b. **Affections** - Affections are Satisfied in Him. Matthew 5:6

c. **Will** - Will is being conformed to His Will. Acts 20:28 Lost in the Will of God.

When think about OURSELVES this seems so out of Reality, because we Recognize how Weak/Fragile we are. Paul is not focusing Our Deficiencies but our God-Given Capacities.

Paul Focus is Not on us at all but on GOD!

What He has Done/Doing/Will Do

May God Bless us to at least Desire.

- ➔ **Strengthened with might Through his Spirit in the inner Man/Being.**
- ➔ **Know the Love of Christ that Surpasses all Knowledge**
- ➔ **Filled with the Fullness of God**

Let's make this Our Desire/Prayer for the Church in these Post Pandemic Times!

Where do you get the Desire/Power for this type of Transformation?

The Close/Culmination of Paul's Prayer (3:20-21)

Notice Paul closes His Prayer with Doxology Praise!

Where do you get the Desire/Power for this type of Transformation?

Ephesians 3:20–21

[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.

Notice He doesn't say WE Are Able,
But Now unto HIM Who Is Able!

- ➔ Source of Our Ability - Him
- ➔ Sort of His Power - He is All Powerful!
He has Power beyond our request beyond our thoughts.

God's Power is

- a. Undeniable
- b. Unexplainable
- c. Unimaginable

- ➔ Station of His Power – at work in us

God's Power working in us is Pictured synonymously in 2 Awesome Events

- Creation

- Resurrection
 - a. Available in us
 - b. Resides in us
 - c. Operates in/through us
- ➔ Summation of His Power - to Him be glory in the church and in Christ. God delights to have His Glory Displayed in His Church and in Christ.

**His Power/Ability far Exceeds all we can
Verbalize/Imagine
Our God has Infinite Power nothing we can
Ask/Think is Above/Beyond His Ability.**

So, Ask God

- ➔ **Strengthened with might Through his Spirit in the inner Man/Being.**
- ➔ **Know the Love of Christ that Surpasses all Knowledge**
- ➔ **Filled with the Fullness of God**

Our Prayers are a Direct Reflection of the Priority of Our Own Heart and are also a Direct Reflection of Our View/Theology of God.