

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Ephesians 3:14-17

Ephesians 3:14-21 records Paul's second pastoral prayer for the Ephesian believers. If Paul's first prayer in chapter 1:15-23 is a prayer for spiritual enlightenment, his second intercession in chapter 3 is essentially a prayer for spiritual enablement. Paul's attitude as he brings this petition to God is one of reverence, earnestness and confidence (Eph. 3:14-15). Paul is so passionate and fervent in his prayer because he understands that only God could grant this gift of divine power to the believers of Christ. As we reflect on the petition of Paul for spiritual strength, let's consider the four components of this prayer.

- 1. The _____ of our Spiritual Strength**
Paul prays that God would grant the Ephesian believers spiritual strength in the inner being (Eph. 3:16). The inner person which is the epicenter of who you are (your mind, heart and soul) is the focus of God's strengthening work. Paul's primary concern is that God would strengthen believers in the inner person because: (a) our inner person is the domain of our being which prepares us for heaven (2 Cor. 4:16; Psalm 73:6; 2 Tim. 4:6-8); (b) our battles as Christians are fought in the inner being (Mark 7:21-23; Eph. 4:22-24; 6:12).
 - 2. The _____ of our Spiritual Strength**
The source of our spiritual strength is the riches of God's glory (Eph. 3:16). The glory of God is the sum of all of His attributes such as His power, holiness, righteousness, love, grace and mercy. The particular divine attribute which applies to Paul's petition is the glory of God's power (Eph. 3:16; 1:19-20; Col. 1:11; 2 Cor. 4:7-9). The power of God energizes believers to be strong and formidable. Since God is infinitely rich in glory, He will never run out of divine resources to supply spiritual strength to His people.
 - 3. The _____ of our Spiritual Strength**
The gift of divine power is mediated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16). The Holy Spirit alone can strengthen believers in their inner being so as to empower them to overcome sin, live a life of holiness and cultivate the fruit of godliness (Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16, 22-25). The Holy Spirit uses means to energize and strengthen believers such as prayer to God, the Word of God and the people of God (Eph. 3:16; 6:18; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:17; Psalm 19:7; 119:11,28,107; Heb. 10:24-25). If we neglect these means that the Holy Spirit employs, then we will miss out on the blessing of spiritual strength.
 - 4. The _____ of our Spiritual Strength**
The purpose of Paul's prayer for spiritual strength is "so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17). At the moment of our conversion, Christ begins to dwell in our hearts. But in terms of our progress in sanctification, Christ must be comfortably at home in our hearts (John 14:23; Eph. 4:30). This dwelling of Christ in our hearts is experiencing the joy of intimate communion and deep fellowship with Christ as we honor and submit to His Lordship in every aspect of our lives.
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