

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Colossians 1:9

I Bow My Knees

Jim Ward

Store In My Heart

Leviticus 27:34

These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.

As we continue the story of God's chosen we find that a new law has been given. Bringing Israel out of Egypt demonstrated the power of God to all, but it took the giving of the law to make them a special people for God.

This book reveals the rules and regulations that would keep this people clean before God. Much of it is centered on the ceremonies and sacrifices performed by the priestly tribe of Levi. They were set apart for this service by God and were to be the only priest in the nation. Even of them only certain of one family could enter the Tabernacle.

Reading this book will help us better understand the ideas of "separate and apart" and "sanctified and holy." Read it.

Brotherly love is one of the greatest privileges and challenges of being in Christ. Peter said, *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in (or unto) sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart" (1Peter 1:22).*

One way of showing this love is by praying for each other. Epaphras demonstrated love by *"always laboring fervently...in prayers" for the Colossians, that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the Will of God" (Colossians 4:12).* Is our praying for each other too casual? Has it never occurred to us to pray often and hard for each other?

Paul, too, was a hard praying man. Let's consider his prayer for the Ephesians: *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever, Amen" (Ephesians 3:14-21).*

Notice that Epaphras and Paul did not pray for material and physical things, though this certainly is permissible (cf. **Matthew 6:11; 3John 2**). They were concerned with the greater matters of the spirit. Paul prayed for four things, though we mustn't think of them as separate and distinct from each other, but rather as so inter-related that each grows out of the others.

Paul prayed that the Ephesians might *"be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man."* This would be a magnificent blessing, indeed, for it would be *"according to the riches of (God's) glory."* Paul spoke of such strength given him by the Lord that he might fully preach the gospel (**2Timothy 4:17**).



Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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For Our Information

John Jackson is recovering nicely. He is doing physical therapy at home for now. He should get the staples removed Tuesday.

Joyce Venable is doing a little better.

Ricky Ragsdale is back home and doing better.

The Simpson family is out of town.

Tonight we will pick back up in Ruth 2:8 at 5 pm.

Wednesday night we will start with 2Corinthians 4:13.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

The word might is from *dunamis*, often used of miracles and the power to work them (**Acts 6:8; 8:13**), but not always (**Matthew 25:15; 2Corinthians 1:8**).

This power works in the inner man, the heart or the spirit of a person. There is little to slow the decay of the body, and nothing that can stop death. But God renews the inner man of His people "*day by day*" (**2Corinthians 4:16**). The ravages of time cannot touch the inner person guarded and nourished by the Spirit of God.

The Colossian parallel speaks of the purpose of this inward might: it was "*for all patience and longsuffering with joy*" (**1:11**). The Jews and the Romans were formidable foes. God's might was the only defense against the Romans.

Paul prayed that Christ might dwell in the hearts of the Ephesians through faith. This continues to speak of the profound and ever-deepening relationship that it is possible for Christians to have with their Savior. Observe again, just as the strength of God's might is within us, so the habitation of Christ is in the heart, the inner man.

To His saints God has at last revealed the "*riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (**Colossians 1:27**). Since Christ resides in us by faith it is no wonder that "*without faith it is impossible to please God*" (**Hebrews 11:6**).

Paul prayed that the Ephesians might comprehend the love of Christ: -- Did you catch the paradox in this thought? They are "*to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.*" Is Paul's brain scrambled? How can this be anything other than nonsense? I take his meaning to be that as we are "rooted and grounded" in God's redeeming love for us, we will come to experience the love of God in our lives. We will have a powerful sense of the source of our blessings. Christ's love may remain immeasurable, but we will know that it embraces us. And in turn, we will love Him "*because He first loved us*" (**1John 4:19**).

Finally, Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be filled with the fullness of God: -- As we noted earlier, these four requests are not isolated from each other. Each one leads to the next. As God fills our inner man with strength, we will experience a deeper relationship with Christ, which will enable us to "know" the "unknowable" love of God, which leads to our being filled with the "fullness of God."

To steal the U.S. Army slogan, Paul is praying that the Ephesians might be "all they can be." In **4:13**, he speaks of coming "*to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" That is the goal of God's people everywhere.

Brothers and sisters, let us not crawl into the shell of self-absorption. Let us "labor fervently in prayer" for each other, just as Epaphras did for the Colossians and Paul did for the Ephesians.

And as much as we care for each other's physical well-being, I hope our uppermost concern will be for spiritual health and vitality.

Let us pray hard for each other to resist Satan and to grow up into the fullness of God.

(Such prayer is needful if we are to help one another through this life. PRAY DLH)

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

