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**GET YOUR HANDS ON YOUR  
WEALTH**

Scripture text: **Ephesians 3:14-21**

# GET YOUR HANDS ON YOUR WEALTH

## Ephesians 3:14–21

This passage is the second of two prayers recorded in Ephesians, the first one being Ephesians 1:15–23. **In the first prayer, the emphasis is on enlightenment; but in this prayer, the emphasis is on enablement.**

It is not so much a matter of knowing as being—laying our hands on what God has for us and by faith making it a vital part of our lives. Paul is saying, **“I want you to get your hands on your wealth, realize how vast it is, and start to use it.”**

It is worth noting that both of these prayers, as well as the other prison prayers (Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:9–12), **deal with the spiritual condition of the inner man, and not the material needs of the body.** Certainly it is not wrong to pray for physical and material needs, but **the emphasis in these petitions is on the spiritual.** Paul knew that if the inner man is what he ought to be, **the outer man will be taken care of in due time.** Too many of our prayers focus only on physical and material needs and **fail to lay hold of the deeper inner needs of the heart.** It would do us good to use these prison prayers as our own, and **ask God to help us in our inner person. That is where the greatest needs are.**

## **The Invocation (Eph. 3:14–15)**

**The first thing that strikes us is Paul's posture:** "I bow my knees." (This must have been quite an experience for the Roman soldier chained to Paul!)

The Bible nowhere commands any special posture for prayer. Abraham stood before the Lord when he prayed for Sodom (Gen. 18:22), and Solomon stood when he prayed to dedicate the temple (1 Kings 8:22). David "sat before the Lord" (1 Chron. 17:16) when he prayed about the future of his kingdom. And Jesus "fell on His face" when He prayed in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39).

You have noticed, no doubt, **the emphasis on spiritual posture in Ephesians**. As lost sinners, we were buried in the graveyard (Eph. 2:1). But when we trusted Christ, He raised us from the dead and seated us with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:4–6). **Because we are seated with Christ, we can walk so as to please Him** (Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15); and we can stand against the devil (Eph. 6:10–13).

**But the posture that links “sitting” with “walking” and “standing” is “bowing the knee.” It is through prayer that we lay hold of God’s riches that enable us to behave like Christians and battle like Christians.**

Whether we actually bow our knees **is not the important thing**; that **we bow our hearts and wills to the Lord and ask Him for what we need is the vital matter.**

Paul's prayer was addressed to **“the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** In the Bible, **prayer is addressed to the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit.** This is the usual pattern, though you do find petitions addressed to the Son, and possibly to the Spirit (1 Thes. 3:12–13). In Ephesians 1:3, Paul calls the Father **“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

He was the “God ... of our Lord Jesus Christ” when Jesus was here on earth, for as man, **Jesus lived in total dependence on God.** This title reminds us of **Christ’s humanity.** But God is the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” because **Jesus Christ is eternal God; so this title reminds us of His deity.**

There is a sense, however, in which all men in general, and Christians in particular, share in the fatherhood of God. Paul states that “**the whole family in heaven and earth is named**” after the divine Father. That word family can be translated “fatherhood.”



Every fatherhood in heaven and on earth gets its origin and name from the Father. **He is the great Original**; every other fatherhood is but a copy. Adam is called “**the son of God**” (Luke 3:38), referring to his creation. Believers are the “**sons of God**” by rebirth (John 1:11–13; 1 John 3:1–2).

All men are not children of God by nature. **Instead, they are children of disobedience and children of wrath** (Eph. 2:2–3). As Creator, God is the Father of each man; but as Savior, **He is only the Father of those who believe**. There is no such thing in Scripture as the universal fatherhood of God that saves all men. **“You must be born again”** (John 3:7).

## **The Petition (Eph. 3:16–19)**

There are four requests in Paul's prayer, but they must not be looked on as isolated, individual petitions.

**These four requests are more like four parts to a telescope.** One request leads into the next one, and so on. **He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ.** This deeper experience will enable them to **“apprehend”** (get hold of) God's great love, which will result in their being **“filled unto all the fullness of God.”** So, then, **Paul is praying for strength, depth, apprehension, and fullness.**

**Strength (v. 16). The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life is evidence of salvation (Rom. 8:9); but the power of the Spirit is enablement for Christian living, and it is this power that Paul desires for his readers.**

*Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Jesus performed His ministry on earth in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38), and this is the only resource we have for Christian living today.

**Luke 4:1** And **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

**Luke 4:14** And **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

**Act 10:38** how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

As you read the Book of Acts, **you see the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church**, for there are some fifty-nine references to the Spirit in the book, or one fourth of the total references found in the New Testament. Someone has said, *“If God took the Holy Spirit out of this world, most of what we Christians are doing would go right on—and nobody would know the difference!”* Sad, but true.

The power of the Spirit is given to us “according to the riches of His glory” (Eph. 3:16). **Christ returned to glory and sent the Spirit from heaven to indwell and empower His people.**

**It is not necessary for us to “work something up.”**  
**The power has to be sent down.** How marvelous that God does not give the Spirit’s power to us “out of His riches” but “**according to**”—which is a far greater thing. If I am a billionaire and I give you ten dollars, I have given you out of my riches; but if I give you a million dollars, I have given to you according to my riches. **The first is a portion; the second is a proportion.**

**This power is available for “the inner man.” This means the spiritual part of man where God dwells and works.**

The inner man of the lost sinner is dead (Eph. 2:1), but it becomes alive **when that lost sinner surrenders to Christ**. The inner man **can see** (Ps. 119:18), **hear** (Matt. 13:9), **taste** (Ps. 34:8), and **feel** (Acts 17:27); and he must be “**exercised**” (1 Tim. 4:7–8). He also must be **cleansed** (Ps. 51:7) and **fed** (Matt. 4:4).

The outer man is perishing, but **the inner man can be renewed spiritually** in spite of outward physical decay (2 Cor. 4:16–18). **It is this inner power that makes him succeed.**

What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit empower the inner man?

It means that our spiritual faculties are controlled by God, and we are **exercising them and growing in the Word** (Heb. 5:12–14).

**Hebrews 5:12-14** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. **You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**



**It is only when we yield to the Spirit and let Him control the inner man that we succeed in living to the glory of God.**

**This means feeding the inner man the Word of God, praying and worshiping, keeping clean, and exercising the senses by loving obedience.**

**Depth (v. 17).** Paul uses three pictures here to convey this idea of spiritual depth, and the three pictures are hidden in the three verbs: “dwell,” “rooted,” and “grounded.” **The verb dwell literally means (and here I follow Dr. Kenneth Wuest) “to settle down and feel at home.”**

Certainly Christ was already resident in the hearts of the Ephesians, or else Paul would not have addressed them as “saints” in Ephesians 1:1. What Paul is praying for is a deeper experience between Christ and His people. He yearns for Christ to settle down and feel at home in their hearts—not a surface relationship, but an ever-deepening fellowship.

**Abraham’s life is an illustration of this truth.** God was going to bless Abraham with a son, so the Lord Himself came down and visited Abraham’s tent, and He brought two angels with Him.

**They came to the tent, they talked with Abraham, and they even ate a meal with him.** They felt very much at home, **because Abraham was a man of faith and obedience.** But the three guests had another task. They had to investigate the sins of Sodom because God planned to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot, a believer, was living in Sodom, and God wanted to warn him to get out before the judgment could fall. **But the Lord Himself did not go to Sodom. He sent the two angels (Gen. 18–19).**

**The Lord did not feel at home in Lot's house the way He felt at home in Abraham's tent.**

The verb rooted moves us into the plant world. The **tree must get its roots deep into the soil if it is to have both nourishment and stability**; and the Christian **must have his spiritual roots deep into the love of God**. Psalm 1:1–3 is a perfect description of this word, and Jeremiah 17:5–8 is a good commentary on it. One of the most important questions a Christian can ask himself is, **“From what do I draw my nourishment and my stability?”**

**If there is to be power in the Christian life, then there must be depth. The roots must go deeper and deeper into the love of Christ.**

**Grounded is an architectural term; it refers to the foundations on which we build.**

“Pastor, the most important part of this building is the foundation. **If you don’t go deep, you can’t go high.**” That sentence has been a sermon to me ever since.

The trials of life test the depth of our experience. If two roommates in college have a falling out, they may seek new roommates, for after all, living with a roommate is a passing experience. But if a husband and wife, who love each other, have a disagreement, the trial only deepens their love as they seek to solve the problems.

**The storm that blows reveals the strength of the roots.** Jesus told the story about the two builders, one of whom did not go deep enough for his foundation (Matt. 7:24–29).

**Paul prayed that the believers might have a deeper experience with Christ, because only a deep experience could sustain them during the severe trials of life.**

**Apprehension** (vv. 18–19a). The English words “comprehend” and “apprehend” both stem from the Latin word *prehendere* which means “**to grasp.**”

**Matthew 7:24-29** "Everyone then **who hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, **but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.** And everyone **who hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and **great was the fall of it.**" And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for **he was teaching them as one who had authority,** and not as their scribes.

We say that a monkey has a “prehensile tail.” That is, its tail is able to grasp a tree limb and hold on. **Our word comprehend carries the idea of mentally grasping something;** while apprehend suggests laying hold of it for yourself. In other words, **it is possible to understand something but not really make it your own.** Paul’s concern is that **we lay hold of the vast expanses of the love of God.** He wants us to live in **four dimensions.**

When God gave the land to Abraham, He told him to **“walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it”** (Gen. 13:17).



**Abraham had to step out by faith and claim his inheritance.** But we today have an inheritance in four dimensions: **breadth, length, depth, and height.**  
**God's fourth dimension is love!**

But there is a paradox here. Paul wants us to know personally the love of Christ “which passeth knowledge.” There are dimensions, but they cannot be measured. “The love of Christ which passeth knowledge” parallels “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). **We are so rich in Christ that our riches cannot be calculated even with the most sophisticated computer.**

There was once a cartoon that depicted a man chatting with a boat salesman. In the beautiful showroom were yachts and cabin cruisers that glittered with elegance. In the caption, the salesman is saying to the customer: **“Sir, if you have to ask how much they are, they are too expensive for you!”**

**No Christian ever has to worry about having inadequate spiritual resources to meet the demands of life. If he prays for spiritual strength and spiritual depth, he will be able to apprehend—get his hands on—all the resources of God’s love and grace.**

***Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*** And what is the result of all of this?

**Fullness** (v. 19b). It is said that nature abhors a vacuum. This explains why air or water will automatically flow into an empty place. The divine nature abhors a vacuum. **God wants us to experience His fullness.** “Filled unto all the fullness of God” is the more accurate translation. The **means of our fullness is the Holy Spirit** (Eph. 5:18), and the **measure of our fullness is God Himself** (Eph. 4:11–16). **It is tragic when Christians use the wrong measurements in examining their own spiritual lives.**

We like to measure ourselves by the weakest Christians that we know, and then boast, “**Well, I’m better than they are.**” Paul tells us that **the measure is Christ**, and that we cannot boast about anything (nor should we). **When we have reached His fullness, then we have reached the limit.**

**In one sense, the Christian is already “made full in Christ”** (Col. 2:9–10, where “complete” means “filled full”). **Positionally, we are complete in Him, but practically, we enjoy only the grace that we apprehend by faith.** The resources are there. All we need do is accept them and enjoy them.

Paul will have more to say about this fullness (Eph. 5:18–21), so we will reserve further comment until we reach that section.

### **The Benediction (Eph. 3:20–21)**

After contemplating such a marvelous spiritual experience, it is no wonder Paul bursts forth in a doxology, a fitting benediction to such a prayer. Note again the trinitarian emphasis in this benediction: Paul prays to God the Father, concerning the indwelling power of God the Spirit, made available through God the Son.

Perhaps the best way for us to grasp some of the greatness of this doxology is to look at it in outlined form:

Now unto Him that is  
able to do all  
above all  
abundantly above all  
exceeding abundantly above all

Paul seems to want to use every word possible to convey to us the vastness of God's power as found in Jesus Christ. He has ended each of the two previous chapters with praise to God for His great victory in Christ.

**He tells us that Christ's power is so great He arose from the dead and ascended far above all (Eph. 1:19–23). He teaches us that His power is so great He has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to each other, and to God; and that He is now building a temple to the eternal glory of God (Eph. 2:19–22). But in the paragraph before us, Paul shares the exciting truth that this far above all power is available to us! It is even “above all that we ask or think.” In other words, the power of Christ, like the love of Christ, is beyond human understanding or measurement. And this is just the kind of power you and I need if we are to walk and war in victory.**

The word “power” is again *dunamis*, which we met back in Ephesians 3:7; and “working” is *energeia* (energy) found in Ephesians 1:11, 19; 2:2; 3:7; and 4:16. Some power is dormant; it is available, but not being used, such as the power stored in a battery. But **God’s energy is effectual power—power at work in our lives.** This power works in us, in the inner man (Eph. 3:16).

**Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**



**It is the Holy Spirit who releases the resurrection power of Christ in our lives.**

Gas cap on a caddy story ...

Apparently this is what has happened to many Christians. They have been cut off from their source of power. Unbelief, unconfessed sin, careless living, worldliness in action or attitude—all of these can rob us of power. **And a Christian robbed of power cannot be used of God.** “Without Me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

# Why does God share His power with us?

So that we can build great churches for our own glory?

So that we can boast of our own achievements?

***No!*** “

**To Him be glory in the church!”** The Spirit of God was given **to glorify the Son of God** (John 16:14). The **church on earth is here to glorify the Son of God**. If our motive **is to glorify God by building His church**, then God will share His power with us. The power of the Spirit is not a luxury; **it is a necessity**.

But the amazing thing is that **what we do in His power today will glorify Christ “throughout all ages, world without end”** (*Ephesians 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*)

**The church’s greatest ministry is yet to come.** What we do here and now is preparing us for the eternal ages, **when we shall glorify Christ forever.**

He is able to do all—above all—abundantly above all—exceeding abundantly above all!

**Get your hands on your spiritual wealth by opening your heart to the Holy Spirit, and praying with Paul for strength for the inner man ... for a new depth of love ... for spiritual apprehension ... and for spiritual fullness.**

**Don't let these word be said about you**

**James 4:2** You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have, because you do not ask.**