

Ephesians

More than a Makeover

Experiencing God

Ephesians 3:14-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-20

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / November 17, 2024

I. You Need To Experience The God You Say You Know

In **Ephesians 3:14-21**, Paul is telling us that there's something available to us that we're not even asking for. We're not seeking it, so we're not experiencing it.

He's saying there's a feast in the next room and you have to know it could be yours, you have to want it to be yours, and you have to cry out to God to give it to you!

Ephesians 3:16-19 "...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."

Paul is talking about something happening on a heart level in your inner being that is so powerful you'll need God to strengthen you when He gives it to you, otherwise you would crumble under the magnitude and weight of it.

His first prayer in **ch. 1** was aimed on a heart level also because Paul knows there are things we know in our head and things we know in our heart. When you know it on a heart level it changes you forever!

Ephesians 1:16-19 "...I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe..."

The key word in the prayer in **Ephesians 3** that helps you understand the distinction between cerebral knowledge and a heart-felt experience of truth is the word "comprehend" in **v. 18**.

Some translations use the word "grasp" because it's the Greek word "Katalambano" that means to understand something because it exploded and landed on you in a way it never had before. It means to be overwhelmed, amazed, and thunderstruck by a truth that knocks the wind out of you so that you'll never be the same.

A. You Should Pray For God's Word To Explode In Your Heart

Think of your heart as a combustion engine with cylinders that need the truth of God's Word to ignite them and when it does you'll never be the same and you'll never be satisfied with anything less.

B. You've Got To Slow Down For God's Word To Affect You

“Be much alone with God. Do not put Him off with a quarter of an hour morning and evening. Take time to get thoroughly acquainted. converse over everything with Him. Unbosom yourself wholly,— every thought, feeling, wish, plan, doubt,—to Him. He wants to converse with His creatures; shall His creatures not want to converse with Him? He wants, not merely to be on ‘good terms’ with you, if one may use man’s phrase, but to be intimate; shall you decline the intimacy, and be satisfied with mere acquaintance? What! Intimate with the world, with friends, with neighbors, with politicians, with philosophers, with naturalists, or with poets; but not with God! That would [be] folly! Do not shrink from being alone [with God].”

~ Horatius Bonar, *“Christian: Be Much Alone with God”*

The answer to Paul’s prayer starts with God’s Word. It will never happen apart from God’s Word. But to see this prayer answered in your life you’ve got to get something out of it when you read it.

The best way to do that is through meditation. Meditation is simply taking the extra time to chew on it, ponder it, and pray it into your life.

That starts by asking questions about the text. Take 5-10 extra minutes to scan over the passage, asking questions that will help you engage with God’s Word and get it from your head down into your heart.

II. That Heart Experience With God’s Word Will Move You To Live Radically Different

When the truth of who God is settles down in you so that you experience intimacy with Him, it changes what you love and how you live because it affects you on a heart level so that what you prize, treasure, and live for most is radically altered.

A. You Start Living For Something Bigger Than You

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that One has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised.”

When God begins to answer that **Ephesians 3** prayer and you begin to experience the breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ’s love for you that surpasses knowledge, it begins to control you and compel you to live for Him!

If you want to be blissfully happy, ask God to help you grasp the love of Christ for you and you’ll start living for Him and experiencing joy like you’ve never had before.

B. You Start Telling Others What He Can Do

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us...”

III. Experiencing God On A Heart Level Will Stir You To Keep Asking For More

Paul gets down on his knees to thank God for what He's done, but he begins to sing and soar about what God might yet do!

Ephesians 3:20-21 “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 the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Paul was moved to take it to the next level as he closed his prayer because he was overwhelmed with the fact that the power of God goes beyond what we can imagine. And the love of God goes beyond what we presently experience. You have never grasped all the love of God for you and you'll never exhaust the power of God for you! In other words, there's so much more that He has for you!

“When the massive weather front of God's love meets the massive weather front of God's power in the heart of a believer, it produces a hurricane of confidence called 'Gloria'—a powerful doxology: 'To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.'”

~ John Piper, excerpt from sermon *“Far More than You Think”*

How to Experience God in Your Life

Every Day for 30 Days Pray for Yourself the Way Paul Prayed for Christians (Personalize Ephesians 3:16-19)

“Oh, God, according to the riches of Your glory
strengthen me with power through Your Spirit in my inner being,
¹⁷so that Christ would dwell in my heart through faith –
so that I would be rooted and grounded in love,
¹⁸and have the strength to comprehend or grasp
(*be thunderstruck, amazed, astonished*) with all the saints
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
so that I might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Every Day Read Your Bible and Take 8-10 Extra Minutes to “Chew on It” or Meditate by Asking One or More of the Following Questions:

1. What does this tell me about God?

What does it reveal about Him? I want to see God through this truth.

2. How should I praise Him in light of this verse?

What does this verse tell me that helps me adore Him? How can I adore Him through the verse?

3. How can I humble myself before Him through this verse?

What does it show me about me? What kind of sin do I need to confess?

4. What difference should this particular truth make in how I live today?

If He's really like this, what difference should this make as to how I live today? What's coming up in my day? Who am I going to see? What am I going to be doing? If I hold this truth in front of me all day, what difference would it make?

5. What wrong behavior, harmful emotion(s), or wrong attitudes show up in me when I forget what these verses are saying?

- 6. How would my neighborhood, my family, my co-workers, my church, and my friends be different if they understand this?**

How would it change my network of relationships if this was really understood and practiced?

- 7. How consistently do I remember and live out these truths in the “trenches” of my “real” day?**

- 8. “Lord, what are you trying to tell me about You, and why do You want me to know it now?”**