

What would it take to rekindle the love you first felt towards God? Share with your group what you were saved from and where you would be without Him.

Ephesians 3:19-20 NLT - 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

We can be filled to brim with God's incomparable love. Don't settle for less than what God has for you. Don't allow anything else to displace God and His power in your life. That is why Jesus came.

John 10:10b NIV – 10b...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

What do you think might change in your life if God filled you to the brim with infinitely more than we might ask or think?

WRAP-UP

Paul knew the Ephesian church was facing challenges to their faith. But he didn't pray for the circumstances to be changed, and he didn't pray that they would have more faith. He prayed that God would strengthen them through the Holy Spirit. And that strength comes as we experience God's limitless love. As we face challenges in life that test our faith, let's not rely on our own strength but rather draw from God's love and allow His Spirit to empower us.

Memory Verse

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. - Ephesians 3:16 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge: Spend some time in God's presence with one goal- to experience His love. Let it fill you to the brim.

“The Spirit Makes You Stronger” “Power of the Holy Spirit” #2

INTRODUCTION

We know as Jesus left His disciples, He told them it was better that they have the Holy Spirit living in them. One reason it was better was because the Spirit brings us the power necessary for us to live the Christian life. Paul wrote to the young church of Ephesus, encouraging them and praying for them. He was intensely passionate as He prayed that they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What are some of the most memorable demonstrations of physical strength that you have seen?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Ephesians 3:14-19 NLT - 14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

1. What Trips Us Up

The Ephesian church was probably established less than 10 years prior to when Paul wrote this epistle. He had a particularly close relationship with the believers there and had spent three years living amongst them. So, it isn't surprising that he is passionate as he prays imprisonment might cause them to lose heart. He knew when they for

them in Ephesians chapter 3. He was concerned that his witness what he was going through their faith would be challenged.

Ephesians 3:13 NLT - 13 So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

What are some things that can challenge our faith and trip us up?

How have you seen these situations test someone's faith: difficult circumstances, disagreements between believers, frustration with ourselves?

Paul's concern was that the Ephesians' faith would stay strong. But he didn't pray that they would have more faith and he didn't pray for the circumstances to improve. It's doubtful that would have been effective.

How do you react when someone tells you that you need more faith for your prayers to be answered or for your situation to improve?

Paul recognized that we cannot maintain a strong faith in our own power against all the challenges we face.

2. Paul's Prayer

Ephesians 3:14-16 NLT - 14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.

Paul starts by recognizing the one he is praying to is the Creator of everything with limitless resources to draw from.

What is the difference between praying that God would strengthen them and praying that the Ephesians would have more faith?

We tend to ask God to calm the storm when we should be asking Him to steer the boat. We will all go through trials in life, but those trials allow us to experience and witness to Christ's power, if we keep our eyes on Him and not the storm.

Can you think of examples where we pray for "the storm to cease"

but should be praying for God to steer the boat instead? How can we look beyond the surface of the problem to the root of the problem?

3. Your Heart- Christ's Home

Ephesians 3:17a NLT - 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him...

It is the Spirit who empowers us, and it is Christ who takes up residence in our hearts. He is available to us in an instant because He is always present.

Pastor David likened keeping our focus and destination on Jesus being like a locked in GPS. No matter whether you are just starting your trip with God or you have been traveling down the road for some time, you need to check in with where you are right now in your journey- not where you have been but where you are headed.

This might not have been the route you expected, but God has put you in this place at this time, so don't waste the crisis. What are the unique opportunities He has given you in this set of circumstances? What has He called you to do right where you are today?

We need to stay focused on the destination of our life's journey – Jesus. Don't look inward focusing on yourself, or downwards in shame. Don't look backwards at who you once were. Keep your focus on who God is calling you to be right now.

4. The Limitless Love of Christ

Ephesians 3:17b-18 NLT - 17 ... Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

If you ask someone what they need to grow in their faith, they might say more prayer time, or more scripture reading or even more bible studies. But what Paul desires for the Ephesians is to experience more of God's love. If you have been a Christian for many years you may not feel that same intense love for God that you did when you first met Him. But being rooted in that love is what keeps us strong.