

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Lesson 12

Chapter 3:14-21, The Study "The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret"

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REVIEW

Our Condensed Outline to Date:

GOD' SPECIAL SECRET

- I. CHAPTER 1 - The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. CHAPTER 2 - The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret 3:6-13

The first 13 verses of Ephesians 3 demonstrate some ideas that Paul wants believers to grasp and place into their hearts.

The last verse in the earlier study was 3:13, and we should notice the focus of the verse is for the Ephesian body of Christ is encouraged to "not lose heart." Christianity was a brand-new thing and Paul's letters were firmly placed in the Asian continent, Anatolia, the home of "the 7 Churches of the book of Revelation." A world of international people who settled along the major trade routes of that ancient world. The word "pagan" comes to mind when we think of any single individual living in this area. Paul tells his audience, "Do not lose heart" in their lives among these people.

3:13 [Mac]

"This is the reason I am asking you not to lose heart over my trials on your behalf, seeing they are in your honor." Paul had spent years traveling and teaching in this area. Now he was imprisoned in Rome arguing his rights as a Roman citizen and the rights of the newly

formed "Christian" churches to exist as legitimate religious entities in the Roman provinces. He doesn't want his audience to "lose heart," because of his trials and tribulations. His message is clear, "My sufferings for you... are your glory and to your honor." Paul's labor is absolutely not in vain.

THE STUDY, 3:14a

GOD' SPECIAL SECRET

- I. CHAPTER 1 - The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. CHAPTER 2 - The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret 3:14-21
 - 1. Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15
 - a). The Cause Resident in the Long-Concealed Secret 3:14a

3:14a [Mac]

For

This cause

3:14 [NASB]

For

This reason

COMMENTARY

Paul was a man of prayer. He prayed over each and every church, and believer in each church. We would do well to take note of the content of His prayers. "The whole passage is often referred to as Paul's second prayer in Ephesians. The first was 1:5-23."¹

His opening remark is our verse refers back to the revelation of "God's Special Secret," the birth of the church body built upon revealed faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, as one's forgiveness, justification, and salvation. For Paul, the process of beginning and maturing the local church amongst the international population was the "Cause" spoken of in this first part of the verse.

THE STUDY, 3:14b

GOD' SPECIAL SECRET

- I. **CHAPTER 1 - The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. **CHAPTER 2 - The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. **C HAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
 - A. A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret
 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret 3:6-13\
 - C. **The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret 3:14-21**
 - 1. **Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15**
 - a) The Cause Resident in the Long-Concealed Secret 3:14
 - b) **The Attitude of the Dispensing Steward 3:14b**

3:14a [Mac]

I

bend **my** knees
toward the **Father,**

3:14 [NASB]

I

bend **my** knees
before the **Father,**

COMMENTARY

Back before the foundation of all of creation God, father, son, and spirit, planned to create a people upon this earth who would honor His son. Part of this plan fell upon the shoulders of this Jewish radical who had persecuted God's Son disbelieving who He was. When it was revealed to him, he completely changed his life and became refocused upon bring the revealed gospel to the "Gentiles," the other nations of the world.

The heading for this verse is “the Attitude of the Dispensing Steward.” This title is not referring to Jesus or His heavenly Father. It is referring to Paul. His love of Jesus and the gospel was so forceful that it became a great burden to him and it is his love of those around him (saved and unsaved) that makes up this “attitude.”

Because of this burden, Paul became a man of prayer – for the people of these nations’ need to respond to the grace of God – and believe in God’s crucified Son, who was crucified on their behalf.

In order to properly understand this part of the verse I need you to imagine yourself, so loving an individual who does not know or understand the gospel that you become burdened with the desire to do anything you can to bring that individual to Christ – perhaps an unsaved brother, sister, mom, dad, wife, or husband. Now consider Paul and his burden to the church of Ephesus, and further, the churches of Anatolia, even further, the world.

Now picture yourself with that burden on your shoulders and standing before Almighty God – what would that feel like? Paul says, “**I bend my knees toward the Father.**” MacCorkle says, speaking of Paul’s first words, “I bend my knees, does not indicate a ceremonial posture [like the NASB looks like] but a back bending spiritual load of responsibility for the dispenser of the open sacred secret to a dispensation’s people who are unavoidably and completely illiterate about it.”ⁱⁱ There is Paul, standing with the enormous weight upon his shoulders in a spiritual face-to-face with God, with his legs bowed wide from that weight – there Paul is bringing this burden to His loving heavenly Father – on behalf of those he is burdened for.

It is interesting that Paul uses “toward,” a Greek word (pater) which indicates a face-to-face situation. “Paul bent his knees toward the Father knowing He cared and would respond. He was the One and only One to turn to for such a heavy request as that which follows.”

ⁱⁱⁱ

THE STUDY, 3:15

GOD' SPECIAL SECRET

- I. **CHAPTER 1 - The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. **CHAPTER 2 - The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. **CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret 3:14-21
 - 1. Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15
 - a) The Cause Resident in the Long-Concealed Secret 3:14
 - b) The Attitude of the Dispensing Steward 3:14b
 - c) The Jurisdiction of the Father 3:15

3:15 [Mac]

From whom

Every Family
In heaven and
on earth
is named.

3:15 [NASB]

From **whom**

**every family
in heaven and
on earth
derives its name,**

COMMENTARY

It is not usual that people put verse 14 and 15 together, so let me take the last two words from verse 14 and add them here. **"The Father,** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." He is the Father of the world of men and women. He is the Father of all of heaven and its contents. He has revealed Himself as "Father." He describes Himself as loving, kind, graceful, forgiving, redeeming,

justifying, and so many wonderful, good things – as He reveals himself to all of mankind. He reveals Himself as “Our Father.” I have no knowledge of, read about, heard about, any such other “god” in the universe. This God is revealed to all as a loving Father.

He has created it all. He is all powerful. He reveals Himself to mankind in His Word as our loving Father. I learned a very long time ago that... While God loves everyone, the choice to accept or reject that love is considered to be in the individual’s hands. “No man (woman, child) goes to Hell unloved, only unsaved by their own choice.”

The unity of the family of God – here on earth is another idea to consider when considering a loving heavenly Father. We as believers are taught by God’s Word, and encouraged by God’s Holy Spirit, to love one another as we are loved by our heavenly Father. That love is tailor made to bind us together, one believer to every other, in such a way as to love each other as we are loved by Him.

THE STUDY, 3:16a

GOD' SPECIAL SECRET

I. CHAPTER 1 - The Church AS The Body of Christ

II. CHAPTER 2 - The Church AS The Temple of Christ

III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret

- A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret 3:1-5
- B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret 3:6-13
- C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret 3:14-21
 - 1. Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15
 - 2. **The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17**
 - a. **A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a**

3:16a [Mac]

I Pray

COMMENTARY

MacCorkle adds these two words to clarify the meaning of this part of the verse as this part of the chapter deals with Paul and His prayer. This verse introduces us to Paul's petitions of his prayers that will be defined further in vss. 16-19.

I hear "pray, prayer, intercession," and a lot of other prayer-based words in my Christian church family. But prayer is so much better defined when we use the terms "I pray, or I pray that..."

Then there is that often-heard promise, "I'll pray for you," and oh how often do we fall away from our promise to pray for them. Make "good-on-you" promises to pray for another. Paul is emphasizing the UNITY of the body of Christ here on earth in the local church and its outreach. Pray for each other, pray for your family, your neighbors, your neighborhood, town, city, state, country, and neighboring places in the world. Your prayers can be powerful... if you remember to pray.

THE STUDY, 3:16b

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. CHAPTER 3 – The Church AS God’s Top Secret**
 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - 1. Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15
 - 2. The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17
 - a) A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a
 - b) A Primary Spiritual Need 3:16b

3:16b [Mac]

That

He might cause

You all

To be strengthened

With power

3:16b [NASB]

that

He would grant you,

according to the riches

of His glory,

to be strengthened

with power

COMMENTARY

Strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit in many more ways than we can initially imagine – that’s Paul’s prayer. This power is not to make you more worldly powerful. It is not to make you more physically powerful. As we’ll see developed in the verses ahead, prayer is the method God uses to make your relationship to Jesus, the Anointed, The Christ, the very Son of God... more real and powerful in your life for His purposes to bring Glory to His heavenly

Father. We've said it before – It is not about YOU. It is about the Glory of God the Father, through the glory of the substitutionary death of God the Son on the Cross in bringing millions upon millions of human men and women into the family of God for all of eternity – because that is what God the Father loved to do from all of eternity.

THE STUDY, 3:16c

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
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 - 2. The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17
 - a) A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a
 - b) A Primary Spiritual Need 3:16b
 - c) A Divine Spiritual Operation 3:16c

3:16c [Mac]

By

**Means of
His Spirit’s operation**

3:16c [NASB]

through His Spirit

COMMENTARY

How the Holy Spirit exercises His power upon both unbelievers and believers.

In the case of the unbeliever, the Holy Spirit of God can come upon them in order to influence their actions. He can come upon them to encourage belief and faith. He may visit an individual many times over a lifetime in His efforts to persuade the unbeliever to secure biblical knowledge or develop a relationship with a believer that may

bring forth true belief and faith. He is not required to "dwell" with an unbeliever. He comes and goes at will.

In the case of the one who believes, He may have already visited many times – or even just a few times – until the visited person has begun to believe the information that is revealed to him. It then becomes a more often visit which results in belief becoming faith. Then it is the function of God's Holy Spirit, upon that established belief and faith, to "indwell," to set up residence within the human body and mind. In the Old Testament God would dwell with His people – in a physical tabernacle or temple. With the death, resurrection, and ascension, God's Holy Spirit comes to "Dwell" within the bodies of God's chosen believing people. We become His residence here on earth.

It is from inside us that God, in person, dwells within His people, the Church, using us to bring others to faith in Jesus Christ, bringing righteousness to the world around us, and to bring Glory to Almighty God through our lives and our activities... living for Him – in the Name of Jesus.

THE STUDY, 3:16d

I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ

II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ

III. CHAPTER 3 – The Church AS God’s Top Secret

- A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
- B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
- C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - 1. Basic Statement of the Father's Control 3:14-15
 - a) The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17
 - b) A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a
 - c) A Primary Spiritual Need 3:16b
 - d) A Divine Spiritual Operation 3:16c
 - e) A Divine Standard for Enablement 3:16d

3:16d [Mac]

In

The Inner Man

All in

A manner

**Equal to the wealth
Of His Glory –**

3:16d [NASB]

in the inner man;

COMMENTARY

You will notice that MacCorkle extends his translation in this last part of this verse. Yes the Holy Spirit comes upon us, helps us to believe God’s Word, helps us to see the truth about Jesus the Son of God. It’s then up to us to say “Yes” or “no” to this opportunity granted to each of us to become members of God’s household, as His children. MacCorkle wants us to understand the amazing excellent value of God’s offer through the work of the Holy Spirit, in

bringing you the opportunity to “Believe” and have “Faith” in God’s Son Jesus. God Almighty, the creator of the universe (More than 100 billion stars in our galaxy, more galaxies than stars in our galaxy) offers **you** the opportunity to be **His son or daughter**. And to continue in that relationship in His household... for eternity! It’s not that you’re so wonderful, it is that He is so wonderful – What He has done for the believer is done in “A manner Equal to the wealth of His Glory! MacCorkle closes out his commentary on verse 16 saying that instead of visualizing Christ with a halo around His head, “We should see a three-fold (3x3) divine Brilliance of Intellect, Emotions, and Will... also considering His Glory, Love, and Power”^{iv}

THE STUDY, 3:17a

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 - a) A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a
 - b) A Primary Spiritual Need 3:16b
 - c) A Divine Spiritual Operation 3:16c
 - d) A Divine Standard for Enablement 3:16
 - e) A Divine Settlement of Believers' Hearts 3:17a

3:17a [Mac]

So that Christ

May develop **His** home

In your hearts

Through faith

3:17a [NASB]

so that

Christ may dwell

in your hearts

through faith;

COMMENTARY

The believer’s Love of Christ Part-1 starts in your heart. Depending upon who you are and your experiences pre-faith, you will exhibit your emotions in different ways. Some may jump up and down at

the name of Jesus, and others may experience simple quiet joy. Paul's life demonstrated an urgency to tell the world about Jesus and literally spend his life doing so.

Because of his special ministry, he feels specially led to pray for them. As you review these verses keep your eyes open for these things:

1. The cause for his; prayer 14-15
2. The petitions of his prayer 16-19

That **they** (the Ephesian Church) may be strengthened

to appropriate what is theirs in Christ, 16

That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, 17a

That Positionally He does dwell in our hearts - but what beggars we often are, though all the riches of heaven are at our command! So, don't miss the opportunity to have God dwelling in your physical body, and the love of Jesus the Christ dwelling in your heart. Don't forget that experiencing His loving presence is a matter of definite appropriation by faith. Simply put, continue to seek the love and power He offers and appropriate it to do His commands.

We are to recognize His residence in us, a daily miracle and joy. We are to make Him feel "at home" in our hearts.

That they may be able to apprehend the fullness of Christ's love
17b-19a

THE STUDY, 3:17b

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 - a) A Legitimate Object of Intercessory Prayer, 3:16a
 - b) A Primary Spiritual Need 3:16b
 - c) A Divine Spiritual Operation 3:16c
 - d) A Divine Standard for Enablement 3:16
 - e) A Divine Settlement of Believers' Hearts 3:17a
 - f) A Divine Soil of Godly Love to Stand In 3:17b

3:17b [Mac]
 As **you**
 Stand
rooted and
 grounded
 in Godly love.

3:17b [NASB]
and that
you,
 being **rooted** and
 grounded
 in love,

COMMENTARY

The believer's Love of Christ is what should drive you into and through personal ministry for Him. This may come quickly, or it may take years to develop, but He has work for you to do – and it should be His love for you that motivates you to love Him in return by responding and doing His desires for your life inside and outside your church family. There is a whole world out there that needs what you may have for them. Seeing that YOU are continually being rooted and grounded in His Love... He should be seeing YOU respond in the manner in which He develops you to minister to, and for, others.

THE STUDY, 3:18a

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 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - 1. The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17
 - 2. Basic Statement of Spiritual Purpose Involved 3:18-19
 - a) Believers to be Strengthened to Grasp the Dimensions of this New System of Divine Grace 3:18a

3:18a [Mac]

The purpose is:

**First, that you,
With all set apart people,
Might be strong enough**

3:18a [NASB]

may be able to **comprehend**
with all the saints

COMMENTARY

This is only part of verse 18. It is separated so that you would see that, like all things in our human world, doing it right requires comprehension, knowledge, and hard work.

For many years I worked in the technical field of television production. As an administrator I was required to “keep up” with hundreds of technical details and the equipment that contained

those details. It seemed that every day something new entered my field of work and I became responsible for knowing how to use it teaching others how to do the same.

Our Spiritual lives require the same "keeping up" with the Word of God, "keeping up" with the lives of those around me where prayer and action were needed. I've been witness to thousands of Christians who come to church on Sunday morning... and that is the end of their participation in the world of Faith in Jesus. Many are so focused on using their minds, powers, resources, etc., for their work or social positions that they neglect their spiritual responsibilities to themselves, their families, and those around them – Don't let that be you. Take what Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father have freely given to you... go to waste. Read, Study, Learn and put it to use among other believers, friends and family, the world around you. Honor what God has done for you... by doing His work every day.

Yielding your power to the power of God will bring strong change in your life and you will be honoring Almighty God, bringing Him Glory for doing His will.

THE STUDY, 3:18b

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 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - 1. The Basic Holy Spirit Dynamism in The Inner Man, 3:16-17
 - 2. Basic Statement of Spiritual Purpose Involved 3:18-19
 - a) Believers to be Strengthened to Grasp the Dimensions of this New System of Divine Grace 3:18a
 - b) The Need to be Strong 3:18b

3:18b [Mac] To grasp for yourself

COMMENTARY

Yes, Your part in all this. “To grasp for yourself,” MacCorkle says. Our outline says that you, the believer, “Need to be Strong.” This world can be a terrible place. Oh yes, there are wonderful moments, but over a lifetime there is trouble, dishonor, rule bending and breaking, penalties, sickness, heartbreak, and certain death. Paul tells the Ephesians that His suffering is to be considered Glory for them. Their suffering will bring Glory to God, because of their faith in Him in both the short and long run of their lives. That’s true in our lives as well.

Use the strength of your will for the things of God. Grasp your love of God, and His love for you, and plow through the fields of this trouble world – in order to plant and water faith and belief and bring forth multiplying yields of belief and action.

THE STUDY, 3:18c

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 - 2. Basic Statement of Spiritual Purpose Involved 3:18-19
 - a) Believers to be Strengthened to Grasp the Dimensions of this New System of Divine Grace 3:18a
 - b) The Need to be Strong 3:18b
 - c) The Four Dimensions of Grace

3:18c [Mac]

To grasp for yourself

**What is the
Breadth,
Length,
Dept, and
Height.**

3:18b [NASB]

what is the
breadth and
length and
height and
depth,

COMMENTARY

The Four Dimensions of God’s Grace.

As we consider God's Grace we'll start off by saying that it is, after all, grace that saves, sanctifies, and glorifies a believer and the Church to which he belongs. I love the age-old acrostic – GRACE - God's Riches at Christ's Expense. The Son of God's voluntary willingness to follow the desires of His Father in acquiring a human family as His other children. This Son loved His Father so much, that He would go through the earthly process of birth to death in order to accomplish this for His Father.

The end result is grace for the one who chooses to believe. Because of what Christ has done for His Father, the Father gives positional sonship to every believer, a full inheritance, and a guarantee that their end would be as His children, living in His heaven, for His eternity.

Find it hard to grasp? All are expected to grasp grace – And all are expected to be strengthened by God in order to grasp His Grace.

As we look at these four dimensions of grace, we must first understand that they are supra-human dimensions. Chapter 3 has been proclaiming the "Open Sacred Secret," The newly established Body of believers, "The Body of Christ," better known to most as "The Church." The Universal church – the worldwide collection of those who believe by faith. It is this "Body" that have been endowed with the gifts of God's Holy Spirit who works in each believer to understand God's Word and ways.

Grace is made up our of God's Love transferred into our lives as Faith, Hope, and Love. So, here are the four dimensions of God's Grace direct from MacCorkle's book.^v

I. I. Breadth – The Wide View – Positional Truth

Like Romans 6:1-10 – not a thing are we asked to do until... the basic operation has been done by Another. Positional truth is what Bible doctrine states God has done for us and from which we must get caught up by growing in grace, 2 Peter 3:18. It is the broad base of all operations by God and by us. This is a major part of the

secret of the Lord. This dimension assures us of a solid and sure footing.

II. II. Length – the Long View – Perspective Truth

Like Philippians 3:9ff. We need to ask how much horsepower we have under our spiritual hoods. The answer is, "How long a trip are you taking?" and "How rugged is the territory you will travel through?" A long view signifies a full vision of where major things are going, without which vision people perish. A long vision sees the whole and looks for the parts to fall into place. This is a major part of the **secret** of the Lord. This dimension assures us of spiritual shoes that will not wear out.

III. III. Depth – the Deep View - Penetrating Truth

Like Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5;16-17. A deep life is measured by its new spiritual drives. It avoids being shallow or superficial. Someone has said, "A lot of trees, yesterday, decided to dig deeper that they might live longer." This is a major part of the **secret** of the Lord. This dimension assures us of spiritual roots that go to the heart of God's Things.

IV. IV. Height – Prophetic Truth

Like Ephesians 2:6ff. The reasons for the fourth dimension is explained by 2:6, we were raised up to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ. This is life above the clouds, not in them, and not under them. This is a rarefied spiritual atmosphere. This dimension assures us of a vantage point that becomes an advantage point, giving us God's perspective of everything.

Or we may look at it experientially this way:

- A. **A.** Grace living is broad-based – Believers must take a broad-based view of life in the Body of Christ.
- B. **B.** Grace-living is long-lived – Believers must take a long view of life in the Body of Christ.
- C. **C.** Grace-living is a deep-seated life – Believers must take a deep view of life in the Body of Christ.
- D. **D.** Grace -living is a high-life – Believers must take a high view of life in the Body of Christ.

A really Christian life is not meant to be only deep or merely long; but it is meant to be a balanced dimensional experience of all that is in the grace of God. God's goal in us is that we might be made mature and complete, James 1:4.

THE STUDY, 3:19a

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
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 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - D. Believers to Come to Know the Fullness God Provides for All 3:19
 - 1. Knowledge-excelling Love of Christ for Us

3:19a [Mac]
Second,
That you all
might come to experience
the knowledge-excelling love
of Christ for us.

3:19a [NASB]
and
to know the LOVE of Christ
which surpasses knowledge,

COMMENTARY

The Mac translation is amazing for us. Verse 18 says:

The purposes (of God’s grace upon you) are 1) that **you, with all the set apart people, might be strong enough to grasp for yourself what is the breath, length, depth, and height... of it. and 2) Verse 19 says: that **you** all might come to experience the knowledge – excelling love of Christ for us. And 3) that **you** might be filled up to all the fullness God provides.**

Just think of all the things that you have knowledge of – everything you have ever known or ever will know and then **compare** it to the knowledge that **God's love** excels every bit of knowledge that is in your, or ever available to you on this earth in your lifetime.

Verses 16-19 give us God's intended results in Christ. **1)** The intention that the riches of His glory might strengthen all believers. **2)** The intention that Christ's indwelling might develop all believers' hearts. **3)** Well, that's the next part of this verse...

THE STUDY, 3:19b

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
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 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - D. Believers to Come to Know the Fullness God Provides for All 3:19
 - 1. Knowledge-excelling Love of Christ for Us
 - 2. Heart-filling Fullness from God

3:19b [Mac]

Third,

That **you all** might be
Filled up to all the fulness
God provides

3:19b [NASB]

that

you
 may be **filled up**
to **all the fulness**
of God.

COMMENTARY

3) The intention that all believers might be filled up to the fullness of God.

Do you remember your first love – how filled you were? Learn to fill your heart like that with Him. The end result of allowing yourself to know and be filled up with God’s love... is that you might be filled up to the fullness of God.

THE STUDY, 3:20

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. CHAPTER 3 – The Church AS God’s Top Secret**
 - A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
 - B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
 - C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
 - D. Believers to Come to Know the Fullness God Provides for All 3:19
 - E. Basic Salute to the Father's Brilliant Execution of His Purposes 3:20-21
 - 1. His Unlimited Capacity 3:20

3:20 [Mac]

Now to

Him

Who is able to work

in a way that is beyond all measurement,
even far beyond everything

we

ask or

consider asking,

in keeping with His power

which operates among us,

3:20 [NASB]

Now

to Him

Who is **able**

to do

exceeding

abundantly

beyond all

that we ask or think,

according to the power

that works
within us, (the holy Spirit).

COMMENTARY

This is obviously one of the greatest blessings in the Bible. Now to Him Who is able (that is beyond all measurement!) (beyond our every thought... ever!).

He is our Father. His Spirit is our Power. His Son is our voluntary and willing savior and brother.

Paul's knowledge of these three persons and their plan of the ages prays that you and I, all believers, might be **filled up to all the fullness God can provide.**

"Beyond all measurement" says it all!

You are a part of His purpose in you – He is unlimited in His ability.

THE STUDY, 3:21

I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ

II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ

III. CHAPTER 3 – The Church AS God's Top Secret

- A. The Description of the Original Gift of the Secret, 3:1-5
- B. The Definition of the Revealed Secret, 3:6-13
- C. The Dynamic of the Open Sacred Secret, 3:14-21
- D. Believers to Come to Know the Fullness God Provides for All 3:19
- E. Basic Salute to the Father's Brilliant Execution of His Purposes 3:20-21
 - 1. His Unlimited Capacity 3:20
 - 2. His Unending Glory 3:21

3:21 [Mac]

To Him

be the **glory**

in the Church and

in Christ Jesus

into all the generations of **eternity**. Amen

3:21 [NASB]

to Him

be the **glory**

in the church and

in Christ Jesus

to all generations

forever and ever.

Amen.

COMMENTARY

To God the Father be all the Glory. This has been the thrust for the whole book of Ephesians so far. We can see His administrations where He is the Father, His Son which we know now as Jesus, co-eternal shows us the Love which His Father showed in Him, and

then the Love His Father showed through Him to us. And His third person The Spirit of God we know as His Power and Communication. The Scriptures call upon us to bring praise and Glory to each one, but when it comes to the plan and development of the Church as the New Body of Christ – all praise and Glory belongs to The Father.

This last verse in chapter 3 calls upon the Church which is in and through Jesus Christ to be those who should be constantly praising and glorifying God the Father for all ages to come, and that glory is to be shared with Jesus Christ and done so through the power of The Holy Spirit of God.

Learn to focus upon giving Him "Glory."

**HOMEWORK:
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
3:14-21**

Look at the question and ignore the answer. Then study the answer!

3:14-21

3:14

“For this cause I bend my knees toward the Father,”

I. What is the “Cause” Paul refers to?

Paul’s reference refers back to the revelation of “God’s Special Secret,” the birth of the church body – specifically to the process of beginning and maturing the local church amongst the international population.

II. What was Paul’s emotional attitude toward the work that had to be accomplished in the origination of local churches – in the land of the Gentiles?

Paul’s attitude toward this new work was one of bringing every concern before his heavenly Father. He felt like he was coming there with a heavy load that made him bend his knees carrying it. It wasn’t a complaint. It was an observation of the massive size and responsibility of the task that he was willingly taking on.

3:15 “from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”

I. What is Paul saying here?

As he is writing to the members of this Ephesian church, he is placing in their minds a picture of the “Jurisdiction of the Father.” It is not Paul who is starting up these new churches. It is God the Father, in Jesus Christ, through the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit. It is He, God the Father, who is the creator of all who live in

heaven and earth.

II. If God is all powerful, why doesn't He just appoint new believers in an eternal plan?

His plan is eternally much more powerful and selective than that. His plan was to place human beings into a situation whereby they would have to make a choice as to whether or not to willingly, without hesitation, based upon God's revelation, make the choice of choosing Him as their God, or either not choosing Him or choosing some other entity. Those who voluntarily and willingly chose to love Him and commit to Him as their God would be acceptable to His plan.

3:16 "I pray that He might cause you all to be strengthened with power by means of His Spirit's operation in the inner man – all in a manner equal to the wealth of His glory –"

I. Describe the content of this verse.

In our study this verse was divided up into four parts. First was that Paul was praying. That's the beginning basis upon all our relationships with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is our way, and our only way, to communicate with our God in any ordinary day. Paul is both letting the Ephesian church that he believes in effective prayer, and He is sharing the content of his prayers, and they are for these believers as they learn and grow in Christ Jesus.

II. What is the initial content of Paul's prayer for them?

His prayer for them is that God might cause them all (not just a few, but all) to be "Strengthened with power." III. Who is the operational director that Paul mentions? This administration of power to these believers will be communicated and enacted through God's Holy Spirit – the very administrator of God's power. IV. Who is the beneficiary of this new Strength? It's You, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ! This new strength comes to you via God's Holy Spirit – as you yield to Him your "strength."

3:17 “so that Christ may develop His home in your hearts through faith, as you stand rooted and grounded in godly love.”

No comment needed here!

3:18 “The purpose is: first, that you, with all set apart people, might be strong enough to grasp for yourself what is the breadth, length, depth, and height.”

I. What is Paul’s line of thinking for you to grasp?

Paul’s prayer is for believers to understand that the power to be effective in your calling for the Gospel comes through submission to God’s indwelling Holy Spirit and through that Jesus Christ may find hand have a new home in YOUR heart. That change should affect you greatly as it has great “Breadth, length, depth, and height.”

3:19 “Second, that you all might come to experience the knowledge-excelling love of Christ for us. Third, that you all might be filled up to all the fullness God provides.”

I. What does Paul mean by “Knowledge-Excelling” love of Christ for us?”

The more you know about Him and what is has done and doing for you... increases the more you will know about His love of you. That love goes way beyond any love you have ever known before – for His love for you is eternal in its quality and nature.

3:20-21 “Now to Him Who is able to work in a way that is beyond all measurement, even far beyond everything we ask or consider asking, in keeping with His power which operates among us, to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus into all the generations of eternity. Amen!”

^{vi} MacCorkle, Douglas, *God's Special Secret*, MBM Books, Cocoa Beach, Florida 1993, p. 134

^{vii} *Ibid.*

^{viii} *Ibid.* p. 135

^{ix} *Ibid.* p. 137 (edited for length)

^x *Ibid.* p. 139 (edited)

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