

**Welcome to the  
Common Ground Café!**



**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

**Praying for the Inner Being  
A Study of Ephesians 3:14-21**

**[www.hillcrest.church](http://www.hillcrest.church)**



Describe someone who has inspired you by how they maintained a great attitude while enduring a tough situation.

In what ways is our attitude more important to our well-being than our outer circumstances?

When we pray for others, do we tend to focus on their outer circumstances or their inner qualities of faith and character?

Our focus today is Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3. But first, read verses 8, 9, and 16 in 2 Corinthians 4, and then answer these questions: (1) How did Paul describe his outer life and how did he describe his inner life? (2) Since he valued **his own** inner life in 2 Corinthians 4, how do you think that influenced him to pray for the inner life of **others** in Ephesians 3?

In Ephesians 3, Paul prayed two requests.

**First Request:**

**Ask God to give others the power they need to make their lives a proper dwelling place for Jesus.**

Read Ephesians 3:16-17.

He prays for something to happen so that Christ may "dwell" in them. Does that mean they weren't already Christians? (Hint: Ephesians 1:15.)

Pastor Tom said there's a big difference between merely occupying a house and *dwelling* in a house. What's the difference?

For Jesus to find our lives a fitting and proper "dwelling" what things do we need to "evict" from our lives? What things should "furnish" a dwelling if Jesus is going to live there?

Paul prayed for God to grant his “power” so that we can make our lives a “dwelling” for Jesus. Isn’t our own power enough? Explain how you depend upon God’s power to get you through.

**Second Request:  
Ask God to give others the power they need  
to experience the unmerited love of Jesus.**

Read Ephesians 3:17-19.

In verse 17 he describes them as already “rooted and established in love.” And then he goes on to ask God to help them to “grasp” and to “know” God’s love. Let’s compare this to marriage:

- ❖ What is the difference between the love a couple has at their wedding ceremony and the love a couple has at their 50th wedding anniversary?
- ❖ How does the phrase “rooted and established in love” illustrate what it means to be a new believer?
- ❖ If you are a believer, describe how you “grasp” and “know” God’s love better now than when you first came to faith.

Read Ephesians 3:18 and then Psalm 139:8-10. How does Psalm 139:8-9 help us better understand Ephesians 3:18?

*“Can't anyone  
teach me  
how to pray?”*

*Flannery O'Conner,  
in her journal*

If you have a mobile device, look up the lyrics to the song, “Lord, I’m Amazed by You.” What lines from the song remind you of Ephesians 3:18?

Read Ephesians 3:19. In verse 18, he prays they will “grasp” God’s love and in verse 19 he prays they will “know” God’s love. What’s the difference between these two words?

In Ephesians 3:19 he prays they will “know” that which “surpasses knowledge.” This means that without God’s help we won’t grow in our knowledge of God’s love for us. Our human knowledge of love is based on our experiences with human love. Our experiences of human love both help and hinder our ability to understand God’s love. How?

### **Closing Questions**

These two prayer requests belong together. What would happen if just the first request was fulfilled and not the second? What would happen if just the second request was fulfilled and not the first?

Read Ephesians 3:20-21. How does Paul describe God’s ability to work in the lives of those we love? In light of this, have you been praying bold enough?

#### **Take Five**

Describe your experience with the “Take Five” exercise last week. There’s a new “Take Five” exercise at the end of your sermon notes for this week. Take five minutes for the next five days to pray for five others.



Close with praise reports and prayer requests