

## **“Powerful Prayer”**

*Ephesians 3:14-21*

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After discussing at length the mystery of the Church—that Jews and Gentiles now compose one new man in Christ—Paul concludes his discussion by praying for Christians to live in light of that truth in a practical manner...by loving one another with the fullness of Christ’s love. In his prayer, Paul models an exemplary pattern of how all believers should approach God as they come before the throne of grace:

1. Paul prayed with reverence to a Holy God (3:14)  
“I bow my knees before the Father”
2. Paul prayed with awe to a Living God (3:15)  
“Who names every family in heaven and on earth”
3. Paul prayed with confidence to a Giving God (3:16-17)  
“that He may grant you according to the wealth of His glory”
4. Paul prayed selflessly to a Loving God (3:18-19)  
“that you...know the love of Christ”
5. Paul prayed with praise to a Omnipotent God (3:20a)  
“to Him who is able to do infinitely beyond all that we ask or think”
6. Paul prayed expectantly to a Personal God (3:20b)  
“according to the power that works in us”
7. Paul prayed with the right priorities to a Worthy God (3:21)  
“to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus”

## **STUDY NOTES:**

(3:14): **“the Father”** — God is called Father only 15 times in the OT; but is called Father 245 times in the NT. This is true because Jesus came to reveal the Father in a more personal, intimate way.

(3:16): **“glory”** — the reflection of the essence of one’s being; the summation of all of one’s attributes.

(3:16) [3:20 2x]: **“power”** — three times in verses 14-21 Paul mentions “power” and uses the Greek word *dunamis* (δυναμις), from which we get our English word “dynamite”; *dunamis* refers to God’s supernatural enabling power that is accessible to all believers by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(3:16): **“the inner man/inner being”** — the inner person is the heart or mind of the believer, whereas the outer person is the physical body that is wasting away; the inner man entails our will, thoughts, beliefs, desires, emotions, spirit, attitudes and conscience. It is in these areas that God wants to mold us into Christlikeness.

(3:17): **“may dwell in your hearts”** — can literally be translated “be at home in your hearts” or “settled down” and the idea is that Christ would be the controlling factor in our attitudes and conduct at any given moment. Christ already dwells in every believer at all times, but Christ is not always settled down and at home in believers if they are being disobedient. When Christians are in sin, they are stifling the indwelling Christ and resisting His influence; so this phrase is synonymous with what Paul refers to later as “being filled with the Spirit” (5:18), or “walking in the Spirit.”

(3:18): **“how wide and long and high and deep/the breadth and length and height and depth”** — this refers to the vastness of Christ’s love for us, which is beyond measure (cf. Romans 8:39).

(3:19): **“the fullness of God”** simply refers to complete spiritual maturity; moral excellence.

(3:20): **“works/is at work”** — the word for work here is from *energōs* (ἐνεργός) which is where we get the English word “energy”; and the word is used as a participle by Paul in the present tense signifying “ongoing, continual activity” — meaning that God’s power is continuously working inside every Christian...if we would only submit to it and appropriate it.

(3:21): **“Amen”** — the well known emphatic liturgical response to spiritual truth. It is a transliteration from the Hebrew OT; used 129 times in the NT, 15 times by Paul and almost exclusively at the end of his doxologies as he does here; it means “let it be; truly; it is so” — it is an emphatic “yes!”