

Small Group Guide: Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Growth
Ephesians 3:14-21

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the depth of His love and to grow in spiritual maturity through this study.

Introduction

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 is one of the most profound prayers in Scripture. It reveals what spiritual maturity looks like and how we can experience the fullness of God in our lives. This passage challenges us to move beyond surface-level Christianity into a deeper, more transformative relationship with Christ.

Key Scripture

Ephesians 3:14-21 (Read aloud together)

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **What stands out to you most in Paul's prayer? Why do you think this particular aspect caught your attention?*
2. **Paul prays while kneeling (v.14). What does this posture tell us about the nature and importance of this prayer?*
3. **Paul addresses God as "Father" and references "the whole family in heaven and on earth" (v.14-15). What does this reveal about our identity and connection to other believers?*

Inner Strength and Christ's Dwelling

4. **Paul prays for believers to be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being" (v.16). What does "inner strength" look like practically? How is it different from external or emotional strength?*
5. **What does it mean for Christ to "dwell in your hearts through faith" (v.17)? How would you know if Christ is truly dwelling in your heart versus just being acknowledged intellectually?*

Comprehending God's Love

6. **Paul prays that we would "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (v.18). Why do you think he uses four dimensions to describe God's love? What might each dimension represent?*
7. **Verse 19 says this love "surpasses knowledge." If we can never fully know it, why should we still pursue understanding it?*
8. **Paul emphasizes doing this "together with all the Lord's holy people" (v.18). Why is community essential for understanding God's love? How have others helped you grasp God's love more fully?*

Being Filled with God's Fullness

9. **What do you think it means to "be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (v.19)? Does this seem possible? Why or why not?*
10. **How does being "rooted and established in love" (v.17) relate to being filled with God's fullness?*

God's Power at Work

11. **Paul concludes with a doxology about God's power working within us (v.20-21). When have you seen God do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" in your life or in someone else's life?**

12. **What is the relationship between God's power and our prayers/imagination? What limitations do we often place on God?**

Key Takeaways

- **Spiritual growth requires inner strengthening by the Holy Spirit**, not just external religious activity.
- **Christ dwelling in our hearts is the foundation** for all spiritual maturity and transformation.
- **God's love is incomprehensibly vast** and requires a lifetime of exploration with the community of believers.
- **We are called to be filled with God's fullness**, which is possible through His power working in us.
- **God's power at work within us exceeds** anything we can ask or imagine.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

1. **Pray Paul's Prayer Daily**: Read Ephesians 3:14-21 each morning and pray it for yourself and one other person. Journal about any new insights you gain.
2. **Identify Your Inner Weakness**: Reflect on one area where you need inner spiritual strength (not just external change). Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit's power in that area.
3. **Explore One Dimension of God's Love**: Choose one aspect (width, length, height, or depth) of God's love and meditate on what it means. Find Scripture passages that illustrate this dimension.
4. **Share Your Story**: Tell someone this week about a time when God did more than you could ask or imagine. Encourage them with the testimony of God's power.
5. **Community Connection**: Reach out to another believer and ask them to share how they have experienced God's love. Listen and learn from their perspective.
6. **Audit Your Prayer Life**: Evaluate whether your prayers reflect belief in God's immeasurable power or if they are limited by your imagination. Write out a bold prayer that stretches your faith.

Closing Reflection

Personal Reflection (2-3 minutes of silence):

- Where am I in my spiritual growth journey?
- What is one specific way I need to experience Christ dwelling more fully in my heart?
- What is limiting my understanding of God's love?

Group Sharing:

Invite members to share one insight or commitment they are taking away from this discussion.

Closing Prayer

Pray Paul's prayer together as a group, personalizing it for your group members. Consider having different people pray different sections of the passage.

Additional Resources

- Memorize Ephesians 3:20-21 as a group over the next month
- Consider reading a book together on spiritual growth or the love of God
- Plan a time of extended prayer as a group, focusing on inner spiritual transformation

****Leader Tip****: This passage is rich and deep. Do not feel pressured to cover every question. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion to where your group needs to focus. The goal is transformation, not just information.