

**BIBLE STUDY
QUESTIONS**



Ephesians 3: 14 - 21

Begin by reading Ephesians 3: 14 - 21

In Chapter 1 verse 15, Paul begins *“for this reason . . .”* and he starts this section the same way. The whole of the first three chapters of Ephesians has been described as Paul praying for the Ephesians. Paul is praying for “the big things of God” to be real in their lives. In this final study, we will think about how we can understand and pray for the important things in our lives, as well as our daily needs.

- **Paul begins this section with “for this reason. . .” What is the basis of Paul’s confidence in praying such a mighty prayer?**
- **Look at Hebrews 4: 14 – 16. How do these verse echo what we have seen in Ephesians?**

We thought about the things we might pray for back when looking at Paul’s first prayer in chapter one.

- **What are the things that Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians?**
- **How often do we pray these kind of prayers for each other?**
- **What are the things that stop us from praying these kinds of prayers?**
- **Has your prayer life changed as a result of reading Ephesians?**

Paul is clearly motivated to pray for the Ephesians, as their unity is crucial to the witness of the Gospel. Yet the same is true for us today. If the church is the vibrant and united community that Paul speaks about, think what a witness that would be to our society.

- **What motivates you to pray for others?**
- **Do you think you need to change the way you pray for others? What would best enable you to do this?**

Look again at verse 16

The work of the Holy Spirit is key. It is the work of the Spirit to open our eyes to see and know that Jesus Christ is Lord. However, there will be many things that will seek to challenge our faith and trust, and many things that will try and take us away from the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. The Holy Spirit strengthens us.

- **What are the areas of your life that need strengthening? Will you allow others to pray that God’s power works in you?**

DOES GOD ASK FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE?

It's really easy to read Ephesians and get excited at the vision for The Church and God's people that it contains. Then we look at our own church with the mess and the muddle; the difficult people, our resistance to doing evangelism and our reluctance to integrate new Christians, the factions, failure to forgive, and the fact that we find it easier to criticise than find something to praise. Looking at the local church community, we begin to ask if the wonderful picture of church that we see in Ephesians can ever become a reality.

That is why the ending of this passage is so important, as it points us back to God and what he can do, not what we can do.

Paul has made it clear that God has already done immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. When dead we were made alive, when alienated we were reconciled, A new humanity, made in the image of Christ, namely the church has come into being.

The reality is that we are a work in progress, with who we are still being worked out in our midst. It will take some working out, as we understand how to be what we are (the following chapters will help us with this), but we can be confident because God is able (and willing) to do immeasurably more.

Take a look at Ephesians 3:20 - 21.

Have you ever wondered why so many Christians don't pray? There are two principal reasons. The first is that we too readily accept that the way we are is good enough, and that even if we did try to change, we know we wouldn't. So we live with ourselves, justify ourselves, and try hard, without ever the belief that anything about us will change.

The other principal reason is that we think that God won't change us either. If we asked him, he might be able to (and we're not sure), but even if he couldn't he probably won't as it is asking for too much, and really it doesn't matter anyway.

Yet what we read here is that not only does he, but he has already and will continue to do more. He's not asking us to do the impossible but offering to do the impossible for us. Does that encourage you to pray more, for yourself, for me, for the church? I hope it does.

Before looking at verse 17, read Matthew 13: 1 - 9

It is easy to think v17 is about trying to love more, but that is not the case. The parable of the sower is a helpful illustration. The seeds that were thrown in stony ground did not grow and survive. Those that were in good soil did. It is the quality of the soil and where the roots are that determine the growth.

- **Paul talks about being rooted and grounded in love. How are we rooted in love?**
- **What characteristics would you expect to see of someone rooted and grounded in love?**
- **Plants grow and adapt to their surroundings. How have you grown and developed in Christ?**

The enormity of the love of God in Christ is absolutely true. There are times though, when things are hard and challenging, when it feels as if God has abandoned us. Think of people like Terry Waite for all those years in captivity in Beirut. We believe it is true, even if we are struggling to feel it at particular moments in time.

- **Why do you think we need to try and comprehend the enormity of the love of Christ, rather than simply experience it?**
- **What are the things that would help you better grasp it?**
- **What effect do you think it would have on the church if the prayer that we all grasp the love of Christ, be answered?**

Now look at the last part of verse 19

- **How exciting is it to know that we can be filled to the measure of the fullness of God?**
- **What might be the things in our own lives that hinder our experience of the fullness of God brought by the Spirit?**

This brings us nicely back to where we begun the study, and the central theme of Ephesians, namely that we are not dependent on our own ability, but that it is God, because of his grace and mercy that will do it for us.

- **Does this encourage you to pray “thy kingdom come?”**
- **Is it encouraging you to pray big prayers for our church?**