

Focus – O God, Answer Prayer

Pickup

by Major Anne Pickup –

The Prayer Summit, held on Commissioning weekend, was a time of learning, studying, worshipping and praying. Commissioner Edward Read (R), our instructor, highlighted two written prayers—the familiar Lord’s Prayer, and a prayer of Paul for Christians in Ephesus. It is the prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 that captured my attention and led to further study.

For this reason I kneel before the Father—The usual posture for prayer in Judaism was standing. Kneeling was rare and symbolized a great solemnity, a prayer of great importance. In our generation kneeling symbolizes submission to God and an utter dependence on him. Though not necessary to prayer, kneeling expresses deep admiration and reverence as we approach our heavenly Father. In my childhood kneeling during prayer was not unusual as it is now. At the Prayer Summit people knelt at their chairs to pray. I loved the sight. I wish I was bolder and knelt as often as my heart desires.

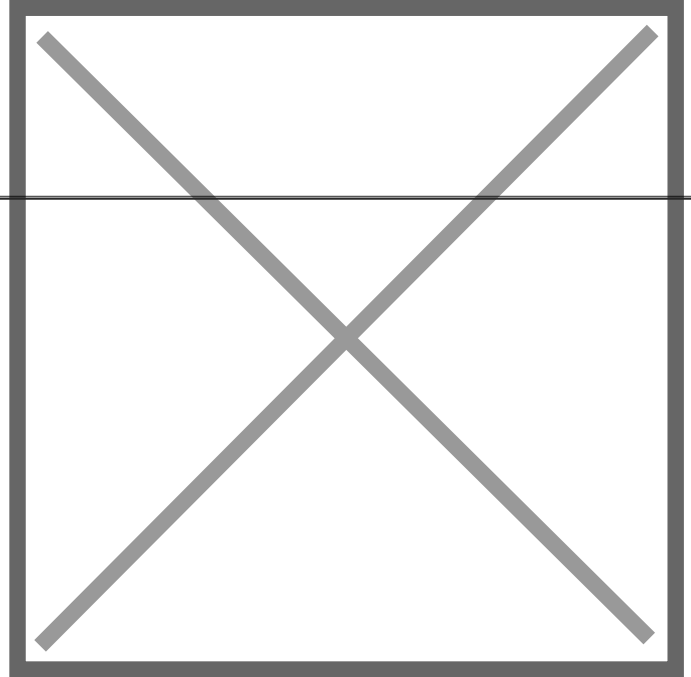
This important prayer of Paul had two distinct requests.

“I pray that he may strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit in your inner being.”

Christianity is not about outward conformity to a system, but about an inward transformation. God works in our inner being, our soul. God not only transforms us inwardly, but is in a constant process of strengthening us spiritually. Our spiritual strength is directly correlated to the amount of daily contact we have with God. It is spiritual strength which enables us to face difficulties or work under severe handicaps. It is spiritual strength which enables us to live a victorious Christian life regardless of the circumstances. To the Corinthian Christians Paul said, “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” Satan seeks to destroy, but God determines to build us up out of “his glorious riches.”

“I pray that you may have the power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”

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We understand the world in a three dimensional form. Paul, wanting to emphasize the totality of God's love, and wanting us to appreciate its vastness, added a fourth dimension. Dr. Nathan Wood called it "the cube of God's love" and outlined it with John 3:16 —

Breadth – God so loved the world
Length – he gave his only Son

Depth – that whosoever believes should not perish

Height – but have everlasting life

How vast is the love of God? It's broad enough to include every race, color and tongue. It's long enough to remove our sins as far as the east is from the west. Its depth is seen in the immeasurable distance between heaven and earth. It is high enough to lift every believer into the presence of God.

Have you ever stopped to think how God loves you? O it's as high as the sky and it's as deep as the sea And it's as wide as the world, God's love for you and for me. We can't escape his love, or take ourselves out of his care, So where could we hide from his love? His love is everywhere.

—John Gowans

God's extravagant love, in all its staggering dimensions, is knowable and available to be experienced! As Christ, the personification of love, dwells in us we *can* grasp that which is beyond our ability to grasp, we *can* know that which is beyond our ability to know. We can experience love beyond any human explanation.

When this prayer is answered the believer experiences being "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." O God, answer prayer!