

Forerunners for Christ Los Angeles

January 10, 2024 – Praying the Apostolic Prayers – Erlinda Cruz

Paul's Prayers in Ephesians 3:14-19

Ephesians 3:14-19 is a prayer to experience more of God and also gives insight into Paul's approach to discipling young believers. Paul presented four stages in our growth in God as indicated by the four times he used the word "that," designating four distinct aspects of spiritual growth.

"...I bow my knees to the Father... from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell [manifest His presence] in your hearts... that you... may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ... that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:14-19

We Will Be Experiencing Growing in the Inner Man (Four Stages of Spiritual Growth in Ephesians 3:14-19)

- Stage #1 (3:16) - We pray that the Spirit strengthens our inner man (mind and emotions) to enable us to love and obey Jesus. It takes God's power to love God and to understand His heart.
- Stage #2 (3:17) - Jesus dwelling in our heart or manifesting His presence on our hearts.
- Stage #3 (3:18) - We receive a greater capacity to comprehend how He sees and feels about others.
- Stage #4 (3:19) - We are equipped to walk in the fullness of God's purposes in each season of life.

In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul used different terminology when presenting the same truths that Jesus taught in John 15:5 when He called believers to "abide in Christ" and promised to "abide in them," which empowers them to "bear much fruit" that is expressed in loving and ministering to people. Jesus is the vine, or the source of life, and we are the branches, the expression of His life.

"I am the vine [source of life]; you are the branches. He who abides in Me [talks to Me], and I in him [I talk to him], bears much fruit..."

John 15:5

Abiding in Christ:

This involves talking with God, applying His promises, and obeying Him.

Forerunners for Christ Los Angeles

January 10, 2024 – Praying the Apostolic Prayers – Erlinda Cruz

1. Talking with Jesus: Talking with God is the core activity of abiding. It starts here but includes more. This corresponds with “praying for the Spirit to strengthen our inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). Jesus allows us to set the pace of the conversation. If we start the conversation, He will continue it as long as we do. Abiding in Christ involves an ongoing conversation with a Person that consists of many 10-20 second exchanges, strengthened by longer prayer times.
2. Applying His Promises: Applying the promises of His Word empowers us to bear fruit. Shame, fear, and rejection rise up to challenge what He says about loving, forgiving, healing, providing for us, etc. We apply the promise of the Word to our hearts by confessing the truth and resisting lies against it when we feel shame (Romans 8:1; 10:10). Applying His promises is an expression of praying or “talking to God” by agreeing with what He says about us.
3. Obeying His leadership: Obedience is an expression of our love for Him. We talk to Jesus with a “spirit of truth” by intending to obey what we talk to Him about—it is not empty talk.

“He who... keeps [My commands], it is he who loves Me...”

John 14:21