

HOT SPOT

"FULL STRENGTH" EPHESIANS 3:14-17A

This Week's Core Competency

Personal God – I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life. Ps 121:1-2

*1 I lift up my eyes to the hills-
where does my help come from?*

*2 My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth*

How well-connected are you? The answer to that question used to involve how many people of influence or power you knew personally. A well-connected individual used to be one who could reach out successfully to people of acclaim, people who could make things happen. "He's got connections" was a statement of relational clout.

Today, being well-connected has less to do with clout and more to do with count. You are well-connected today if you have a stack of mobile devices-cell phones, tablets, laptops, fit-bits, smartcards and wireless devices. To be connection savvy today you need Facebook, iTunes, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Netflix, Pinterest and LinkedIn. You need a username and password for your phone bill, utility bill, cable bill, bank account, insurance plan, fitness center and social networks. A

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

–2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)

multiplicity of connections is overwhelming us.

And look out, on the technological horizon the "internet of things" will increasingly connect us to "the Cloud." More and more of our appliances, automobiles, home security systems and even our toothbrushes will be "connected" and able to supply us with steady stream of data informing us of usage, effectiveness and need of maintenance. Already you are able to start your coffee, start your car and start your lawn sprinkler system from your smartphone.

But all of our modern "connectedness" is only as good as our power source. Lose power or drain your battery and your connectedness evaporates. I often tell people, "My life is a power cord."

Spirituality without divine power is like tapping on a dead smartphone. You may look "connected," impressing others with all your swipes and pinches, but nothing happens no matter how hard you tap if there is no power in your device. Power is essential to connection.

Spiritual power has little to do with how wide or diverse your devices and protocols may be. Better to have a single solid connection to God's power than to have dozens impressive gadgets or systems that have little or no power or connection to God. God is not anti-gadget. But He is far from the illusion of powerless protocol or empty religious activity.

We need God's power to be well connected to him!

day **1** **ENCOUNTER** – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Ephesians 3:14-17a

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

Record your initial impressions after reading the passage:

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- *Circle the word "reason" in verse 14. Write a verse reference above this word from Ephesians chapter 2 or 3 to which this "reason" refers.
- *Box the word "kneel" in verse 14. Draw an arrow from this word to the direction of this action.
- *Underline the word "Father" in verse 14. Draw an arrow to a related word in verse 15.
- *Draw a line between the word "pray" in verse 16 and the similar action in verse 14.
- *Double underline the words "strengthen" and "power" in verse 16.
- *Draw an arrow from "strengthen" and "power" to the words that show the source of this empowerment earlier in verse 16.
- *Circle the words "inner being" in verse 16 and "hearts" in verse 17.
- *Circle the words showing each member of the Trinity in this passage.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What does your posture say about your prayers (Eph. 3:14)?
2. What does Ephesians 3:15 contribute to a vibrant prayer life?
3. From what source does Paul pray that God will strengthen us with power?
4. Where does Paul suggest the Spirit empowers us? Describe what this is.
5. What do you think is the purpose or function of the power described in Eph 3:16?
6. What good is power if it only is experienced internally? Wouldn't more be accomplished if God's power in us were externally visible to others? Explain your thoughts.
7. How would life be different if you allowed Christ to fully dwell in your heart?
8. Are the "inner being" and "your heart" the same thing or two different parts of you?
9. If you prayed this prayer (Eph 3:16-17a) for yourself, how would you know when God answered your prayer?
10. Write out a prayer to God for a friend using the pattern of Paul's prayer found in Ephesians 3:14-17a. Does this pattern make prayer easier or more difficult for you?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Paul of Tarsus was a man of many accomplishments. He was a man of trade and commerce (Acts 18 and 1 Thessalonians 2). He was a religiously zealous Jewish Pharisee (Philippians 3) and a Greek-speaking Roman citizen. After persecuting the early Christian Church, he converted and became the primary organizing force for spreading Christianity to the non-Jewish world. He traveled on more than three extensive missionary journeys and planted numerous churches throughout the Roman Empire, training scores of Christian pastors, elders and leaders, both male and female. He was an Old Testament scholar and was able to debate with the most sophisticated of philosophers. He wrote 13 books of the New Testament and died a martyr in Rome. Many believe that after Jesus Christ, Paul may be considered one of the most influential people in Western Civilization.

On top of all of these accomplishments, Paul was a spiritual man. He was a man who prayed. Trailblazers, entrepreneurs and leaders often consider their strengths to be found in fields other than prayer. In all of Paul's correspondence, his written prayers show most clearly his heart and his dependence upon God. Paul's accomplishments paled in comparison to his connection with God. Writing about the place of Paul's prayers in the New Testament, W. H. Griffith Thomas observes of Paul's prayers: "There is no argument for or justification of prayer; nor even an explanation. It is assumed to be the natural and inevitable expression of spiritual life. Most of the Apostle's prayers of which we have a record are concerned with other people rather than with himself, and they thus reveal to us indirectly but very really what St. Paul felt to be the predominant needs of the spiritual life." (*The Prayers of St. Paul*, pg 4)

Perhaps most eloquent of all Paul's prayers are found in the book of Ephesians. Thomas continues, "If prayer for others is a barometer of our own spiritual life, we can realize what St. Paul felt was necessary for himself by his prayers for others. In Ephesians there are two petitions, and nothing fuller and deeper is found in any of the Apostle's writings. This Epistle represents the high-water mark of Christian privilege and possibility." (pg 91)

In Ephesians Paul prays for the believers to know the calling, inheritance and power of God (1:16-23). In Ephesians chapter three, Paul goes deeper and prays that the believers would move beyond a knowledge of God, to a full experience of God's triune power for inner strength (Eph 3:14-17a). This inner strength becomes important for the spread of the Gospel (Eph

6:19) and for living out a Christian life in a world of darkness (Ephesians chapters 4-6). So much of the struggle of life is internal. We often war more on our insides than we do with enemies on the outside. The power of God inside of me, changing internally my desires, passions, fears and emotions can be the strongest beacon of apologetic light for those in darkness. My inner connection with God can change my world.

Near the end of his ministry, Paul made his case for Christianity before the Roman Governor Felix (Acts 24). The Governor and his wife Drusilla called Paul into a private hearing, listening "as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus." (Acts 24:24) Paul explained the good news of "The Way" by discussing three distinct subjects. Paul spoke of "righteousness, self-control and the judgment that is to come" (Acts 24:25). The Good News of Jesus Christ makes believers righteous before God. The Gospel makes believers ready for the judgment that is to come. And most amazingly, the good news of Jesus Christ can make a believer's life now one of self-control. This was too amazing for Felix to accept. Out of fear Felix quickly dismissed Paul and his message (Acts 24:25). A study of Felix's life shows that he had a number of things out of control.

God performs this powerful inner work of self-control in believers through the fullness of His triune Self. In Ephesians 3:14, Paul identifies God the Father as the all powerful (the generator and "namer" of all generations) One who has the resourcefulness of glorious riches. (Eph 3:14-16a). Paul's prayer to the God the Father showcases the limitless source and provision for life changing power. God the Father in his abundant benevolence is able to "grant" or "give" the power we need to change (Eph. 3:16).

Paul continues to pray that his readers would be strengthened "with power through His Spirit" in their inner being (Eph 3:16). This strengthening is a process initiated by God with a power (might) that is supplied by Him. God's power, and not our own, is the instrument that strengthens us. It is God the Holy Spirit who is the agent producing this internal change of reigning over our inner appetites, angers, jealousies and fears. The focus or destination of this power is our inner being. The New Testament uses a variety of words to describe the immaterial part of us that affects so much of our lives. This "inner being" is our soul, our heart, our mind, our hope. A believer strong on the inside with the supply and agency of God's Spirit can resist temptation, overcome hatred, and love even

enemies toward the kingdom of God.

The Father richly granting and the Spirit powerfully strengthening the inner being allow for the fulfillment of Jesus Christ dwelling extravagantly in our hearts (Eph. 3:17a). Paul prays for Jesus to reign, command, control, occupy, take possession of and live large in our hearts. The term for "dwell" here is the term for habitation. Literally Paul prays that Jesus would live "in the house" of our hearts. Jesus at home in my heart fills voids that other

occupants cannot.

All of God providing all of His power for all of my internal struggles, with Him occupying my heart with His presence is what I need more than any external validation or fulfillment. Like Paul, I need to pray for this in my own life. I need to pray this for others. The Gospel is delivered best by this type of empowered, connected believer.

The Message of the Passage

All of God—Father, Spirit and Son—desires to richly empower you inwardly. The inner work of God in you is more important than your external circumstances. Pray and depend upon all of God for this ongoing change in yourself and others.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 14 **this cause** The sentence begun at 3:1 and interrupted at ver. 2 is now taken up again. The "for this cause," therefore, refers to the great statement of privilege in the latter part of the previous chapter (Eph 2). The ideas that came to expression in the digression in 3:2-13 are also no doubt in view in some measure. The thought of the new relations into which the Ephesians had been brought by grace toward God and toward the Jews—the reconciliation of the Cross, peace effected where once there was only enmity, the place given them in the household of God gave Paul cause for prayer in their behalf. (W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositors Greek Testament*, vol 3, pg 311)
- v. 14 **kneel** Literally "bow my knees." Paul does not state specifically that he is praying in this section (Eph 3:14-17). The words "I pray" supplied in verses 16 and 17 are added by translators to capture the spirit of reverent supplication as indicated by the "bowing" mentioned in verse 14. The bowing would also indicate earnestness of the prayer and the humility of the one praying and the greatness of the one to whom prayers were offered.
- v. 15 **family** Play on words referencing "Father" in verse 14. "Father/the fathered" "Pater"—vs 14 and "patria"—vs. 15. "God the Father is the One who creates (3:9) and thus names every family in heaven and on earth. He is a God who is alive and acting in the present time, rather than a god who has died and is no longer active in history. God's ability to create and name every in heaven and on earth stresses his sovereignty and his fatherhood." (Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians*, pg 476)
- v. 16 **riches** "It is no exaggeration, for He gives like Himself, not grudgingly or in tiny portions, as if He were afraid to exhaust His riches, or even suspected them to be limited in their contents. There is no scrupulosity or anxious frugality on the part of the Divine Benefactor. His bounty proclaims His conscious possession of immeasurable resources. He bestows according the riches of His glory - His own infinite fulness." (John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, pg 243)
- v. 16 **strengthen/power** "Two words for power are used here. The first is 'dunamis' which has the meaning of 'power, ability, capability of acting,' denoting capacity in view of its ability as already defined in 1:19 (cf. also 1:21; 3:7). The dative is instrumental thus translated 'with power.' The second word is . . . from 'krataiow'. . . In the NT it is used only four times and always in the passive voice: Luke 1:80 and 2:40 state that Jesus grew and became strong" in spirit and wisdom; in 1 Cor 16: 13 Paul exhorts believers to stand firm in the faith, be courageous, 'be strong'; and in the present context Paul prays that God may grant the Ephesians 'to be strengthened with power or ability.' The passive voice reinforces the idea that it is God who gives the strength; it is not self-endowed." (Hoehner, pg 478)
- v. 16 **inner being** "The 'inner man' is that portion of our nature which is not cognizable by the senses, and does not consist of nerve, muscle, and organic form, as does the outer man . . . But the phrase is indeed a natural one—one that is not the coinage of any system of psychology, but which occurs at once to anyone who wishes to distinguish easily and broadly between what is corporeal and external, and what is mental and internal." (Eadie, pg 245)
- v.17 **dwelt in your hearts** "The strengthening of the inner person results in the deep indwelling of Christ by means of faith and this takes place in the hearts of believers. This demonstrates both the work of God's Spirit in strengthening the believer and the subjective means by which the believer obtains this. However, it is not a reference to Christ's indwelling at the moment of salvation (Rom 8: 10; 2 Cor 13:3, 5; Gal 2:20; Col 1:27). Instead, it denotes the contemplated result, namely, that Christ may 'be at home in,' that is, at the very center of or deeply rooted in believers' lives. Christ must become the controlling factor in attitudes and conduct. The 'heart' is the core of a person and is synonymous with the "inner person" in verse 16." (Hoehner, 481)

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I really admire people who have the gift of hospitality. One weekend my family traveled to the Hill Country to visit some friends. My friend asked about our family's favorite meal, and when we arrived that evening it was beautifully prepared on the table. In the guest rooms, our friend had put out extra toiletries and fresh flowers. She even brought a late night treats that she knew we loved to our rooms before bed and picked up magazines she thought we would be interested in. It was a wonderful visit and we all felt very welcome. This family seemed genuinely honored to have us stay with them. I remember thinking how special I felt that she had gone to so much effort to make us feel at home. In our passage this week we are reminded that Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. He actually takes up residence in our hearts! I wonder how prepared I am for him. Is my heart a welcome place for him or are there others things I'm preoccupied with. Am I making room for him or do I throw him a blanket and tell him to find a place wherever he can. Paul tells us that through faith in Christ our hearts will be a beautiful place for Jesus to dwell.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Ephesians
3:14-17a

1. Who is Paul praying for in this passage?
2. Fill in the blanks: "I pray that out of his glorious _____ he may _____ you with power through His _____ in your inner being." (v. 16)

What Do You Think

What does it mean for Christ to dwell in your hearts by faith?

What R U Going To Do

Ok, I know this is going to be a bummer for some of you but this week take some time and really clean your room. Go through your closet, under your bed, and clean your toybox. As you do, think about the ways we keep our hearts clean for Jesus. List some ways we do that.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Memory Verse

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC _____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade _____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.