

## HOT SPOT

### "FULL ACCESS"

#### EPHESIANS 3:17B-21

### This Week's Core Competency

**Identity in Christ** – I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God. John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Connectedness to God is important (Ephesians 3:14-17a). We need His resources, power and presence in our lives. But God is more than a connection. He is more than just energy, motivation or a positive mental self-improvement jolt in our lives.

Connections are only valuable and meaningful when they deliver something. Your smartphone or tablet can have the strongest of connections to your network and yet be useless without good content. A connected device that delivers no content is really a waste of energy.

What is the "content" delivered by a connection to God? God delivers to us daily a plethora of truth, hope, instruction and wisdom through His Word and Spirit. But the absolute greatest delivery that He makes in our lives, the thing greater than

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***Batter my heart, three-personed  
God; for you***

***As yet but knock, breathe, shine,  
and seek to mend;***

***That I may rise and stand. . .***

**– John Donne, Holy Sonnet XIV**

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His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence combined - is His love! Call it His omni-agapeness!

God loves you. Read those words again. God, the Father, loves you. Jesus, the Son of God, loves you. The Holy Spirit loves you. How is it that we so often forget this? Why is it that we often don't see this, don't feel this, and maybe at times, don't want this?

We learn from the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 3:17b-21 that the love of God for us is of an unfathomable dimension. The knowledge of it surpasses all other knowledge. There is no better prayer to pray for yourself, your friend or even your enemy, than the prayer for an understanding and experience of God's love.

In the hauntingly melancholy song "Hold On" by Nichole Nordeman, we are reminded that God's love is looking for us. It will find us when we are at the end of ourselves. The refrain soothes and challenges us - "So hold on, love will find you. Hold on, He's right behind you now. Just turn around and love will find you."

Our prayer is that we will be able to "turn around" and find God in all of his omni-agapeness, loving us into His glory, for ever and ever, Amen!

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# day 1

## ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

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, 17a so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

### Ephesians 3:17b-21

17b And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the

measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

**Record your initial impressions after reading the passage:**

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

- \*Box the words in verse 17b which modify love.
- \*Underline the word "together" and "holy people" in verse 18
- \*Circle the actions in verse 18
- \*Box each modifier found in verse 18
- \*Double underline the words "know" and "knowledge" in verse 19.
- \*Circle the words "love" in verse 19 and draw an arrow back to a similar idea in verse 18.
- \*Box the word "that" in verse 19 showing the desired result of knowing the love of Christ.
- \*Draw a line between "filled" and "fullness" found in verse 19.
- \*Connect "him" in Eph 3:20 with arrows to whom this reference is made.
- \*Draw a line between "able" in verse 20 to same root word "power" in verse 16.
- \*Circle "church" in verse 21 and draw an arrow to a similar idea in verse 18.

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## 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. Whose love is mentioned in verse 17b - our love for Christ or Christ's love for us?
2. Put "rooted and grounded in love" in your own words.
3. What is involved in "grasping" something (verse 18)?
4. Wide, long, high, deep—how do these descriptions help you understand God's love?
5. How is it possible to know something that surpasses knowledge (verse 19)?
6. Is being filled with God's fullness the same as knowing God's love or the result of knowing God's love (verse 19)?
7. How does the worship statement of verse 20 relate to the prayer of 3:14-19?
8. If God is so great (verse 20), do we need to even pray?
9. What does it mean to give glory to God (verse 21)?
10. Where do you see community in this amazing prayer (Ephesians 3:14-21)?

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## day 3

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

About this passage, in general, one author writes, Paul's prayers in the book of Ephesians set up the content of his teaching. His prayer in chapter 1 sets the stage for the redemptive work of Christ he describes chapters 2 and 3. His second prayer sets up his practical instructions found in chapters 4-6. One biblical scholar details the structure and purpose of this second prayer in Ephesians as follows:

"Before discussing the content of the second prayer, we need to view Paul's structure in this section. After developing the concept of the mystery of Jewish and Gentile believers who are united into one body in Christ (2:11-22), Paul prepares to pray (3:1), then digresses to explain further his role as administrator and dispenser of the mystery to the Gentiles (w.2-13). Finally, he returns to pray for their unity (v. 14). With 126 words this prayer is the fifth of eight long sentences (w. 14-19) in this epistle (cf. 1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:2-13, 14-19; 4:1-6, 11-16; 6:14-20). Three of these long sentences are in the form of prayer and/or praise (1:3-14; 1:15-23 3:14-21) As previously concluded, prayers, past and present are often composed of lengthy sentences. He ends this prayer with a doxology (w. 20-21) which serves as a transition from the doctrinal portion of the letter (chaps. 1-3) to the paraenetic portion (chaps. 4-6)." (Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians*, pg 472)

This long-sentenced prayer in Ephesians 3 moves through the work of the Godhead (Eph. 3:14-17a) to scale the majesty of God's great love for us (Eph. 3:17b-19). This love is so great that Paul concludes with an equally grand doxology, praising God who is beyond what we can even imagine (Eph. 3:20-21).

Paul finishes Eph 3.17 with the acknowledgement that we already have been "rooted and grounded in love." This love is from God (Eph 2) and is closely connected to Christ dwelling in our hearts (Eph 3:17a). This word picture of roots and foundations supplies us with the imagery of a stable and secure place on which to build. God's love described in chapters 1 and 2 of Ephesians supports this structural language, and connections can also be made to the new "holy temple" being built by the God of both Jewish and Gentile believers (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Paul's specific request in this section is that we would be able to "grasp" or "understand" something. This prayer is for a spiritual reality to be made known to and experienced by believers. This spiritual reality is so great that it would influence and provide motivation for all the practical matters discussed later in the book. The difficulties of disunity (4:1-16), worldliness and darkness (4:1-24), anger (4:25-32), immorality (5:1-19), marital strife and family problems (5:20-6:9), and even spiritual warfare (6:10-20) are all much easier to navigate if we can experience the answer to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:18-19.

He prays that we would first be able to grasp something that seems to surpass dimension. The "wide, long, high, deep" description made by Paul is so great, he leaves off the object of this description. It is almost as if Paul is so carried away with his accounting of something so grand that he forgets to finish his statement, lost in wonder! Theologians for centuries have tried to fill in what Paul left out. The simplest and best solution to this missing content is found in the next verse. The love of Christ is so grand, it is no wonder that Paul speech faltered in his description of it. Christ's love for us is everywhere and in every dimension. We need to pray that we would see Christ's love everywhere in our lives.

Paul continues and prays that we would not only grasp or comprehend this love, but that we would also know in a personal and experiential way the love of Christ which surpasses all other knowledge. I need to know and experience this kind of love. I need prayer to help me get beyond my own blindness. This "knowing" is equated to "filling" and the "fullness of God" as described in the end of Ephesians 3:19. This "filling" will be alluded to again in Ephesians 5.

So great is God's love for us that Paul finishes his prayer with an equally great praise (Eph 3:20-21). God will do "more and more and more" is the literal idea, and He will do so in His Church and throughout eternity. God's love, shared with others for all of eternity, is what He will showcase for the coming ages (Eph 2:7). I believe Paul's prayer is that we would begin this celebration now.

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## The Message of the Passage

*God's love is overwhelming. Trust it now. Seek it everywhere.  
Glorify God by sharing it. Pray for yourself and others  
to be fully active in his love, the industry of eternity.*

### 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?

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 17b **rooted and established** "The perfect tense, which emphasizes the resulting state, makes good sense for it assumes that they are rooted and grounded for the purpose of having the ability to comprehend the love of Christ which is mentioned next... The two metaphors here express the same idea by different figures, one is from agriculture and the other from architecture. ...In the present context Paul states that believers are grounded in love. This root and foundation of love refers to God having chosen them, predestined them, bestowed them in the beloved, redeemed them, made them a heritage, sealed them with the Holy Spirit, made them alive, raised and seated them in the heavenlies, and placed them equally in one new person in the body of Christ. Therefore, for the believer, the origin of this love is God's love." (Hoehner, pg 484)

v. 18 **grasp** "Properly signifies 'to lay hold of;' then, 'to lay hold of so as to possess as one's own, to appropriate.'" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary Strong's #g2638*) Used in the middle voice here, the action is more emphasized as personal and more internal; hence "comprehend" in many translations. This personalized and individualized understanding is kept in check with the mention of "together with God's holy people." Personal understanding shared with other like-minded believers.

v. 18 **wide, long, high, deep** Technically the object of these descriptors is not supplied. The phrase "love of Christ" is supplied by many translators and is borrowed from the immediate subject of the next verse/thought. These terms of dimension are expansive. Their comprehensiveness is for the effect of worship and awe. Personally "grasping" this four-dimensional description of God and His love that surpasses knowledge is the overwhelming apex of Paul's prayer. "The terms ... are introduced with no other purpose than the simple and consistent one of setting forth the surpassing magnitude of Christ's love for us. The power to comprehend that love in its utmost conceivable grandeur and its furthest reaching relations is what Paul prays." (W. Robertson Nicoll, *Expositors Greek Testament*, vol. 3, pg 315)

v. 19 **surpasses** "To speak of knowing something that 'surpasses knowledge' is to be deliberately paradoxical; but however much one comes to know of the love of Christ, there is always more to know: it is inexhaustible." (F. F. Bruce, *Ephesians*, pg 329) Knowledge is good but incomplete. The love of Christ for believers is something to be experienced by all, not just a select few. The love of Christ known and shared is more exhilarating and empowering than the loftiest of philosophies or disciplines.

v. 19 **filled/fullness** "In the present context to be filled up to God's fullness is to know the love of Christ. The fullness of the Godhead is only in Christ and only through him is a believer made complete (Col 2:9-10) . . . Hence, Paul's prayer in this context is that they may know the love of Christ and in knowing this might be filled with God's moral excellence, perfection, and power. It is then a combination of God's righteousness and God's love that must be experienced by believers." (Hoehner, 490-491)

v. 20 **immeasurably** "Expresses the transcendent conception by an adverb of his own coinage, vastly 'more than more,' in other words 'superabundantly; transcendently more;far excess.' This is one of Paul's characteristic outbursts." (Simpson and Bruce, *Commentary on Ephesians*, 84)

v. 20 **ask/imagine** "God is able to do far 'above what we ask,' for our asking is limited and feeble. John 16: 24. But there may be thoughts too sweeping for expression, there may be unutterable groanings prompted by the Spirit (Rom. 8:26); yet above and beyond our widest conceptions and most daring expectations is God 'able to do.' God's ability to answer prayer transcends not only our spoken petitions, but far surpasses even such thoughts as are too big for words, and too deep for utterance. And still those desires which are dumb from their very vastness, and amazing from their very boldness, are insignificant requests compared with the power of God." (John Eadie, *Commentary on Ephesians*, pg 261)

v. 21 **glory** The term 'glory,' (cf. 1:6, 12, 14, 17, 18;3:13,16) now appears for the last time in this letter. It conveys the reflection of the essence of one's being, the summation of all of one's attributes. In this context it specifically refers to God's splendor, power and radiance. Paul gives glory to God because of his essential character, a practice which should be observed by all believers. We have a tendency to petition God while we ignore his right to praise, not only for what he has done but also for who he is." (Hoehner, 494)

v. 21 **church** "Wording is unusual. It does not imply that 'the church' and "Christ Jesus" are placed on a level with each other. God is to be glorified in the church because the church, comprising Jews and Gentiles, is his masterpiece of grace. It is through the church that his wisdom is made known to the spiritual forces of the heavenly realm. 'The heavens declare the glory of God' but even greater glory is shown by his handiwork in the community of reconciliation. This community, moreover, consists of human beings who are united in Christ, members of his body, in whom Christ dwells: the glory of God 'in the church' cannot be divorced from his glory 'in Christ Jesus.'" (Bruce, 331)

v. 21 **generations/ for ever** "This remarkable accumulation of terms is an intensive formula denoting eternity. It is a period of successive generations filling up the age." (Eadie, pg 264)

## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Here's a good way to accomplish two tasks at one time. Tell your kids that you are going to have a family devotional time by pulling weeds! Go outside and pull up a few weeds in your yard and examine the roots. The weeds that are harder to pull up have longer roots. Roots are actually an amazing part of plants. They are the first part of a plant that begins to grow from a seedling. A healthy root system is important for a growing plant to thrive. Roots absorb water, anchor a plant to the soil and store nutrients necessary for the plant's survival. Take a walk around your neighborhood or in local park and observe the towering trees. Imagine what their root system must look like. Our spiritual lives need deep healthy roots too. We grow those roots when we are planted in Jesus. His love is the nourishment that causes us to grow. As we lean into Him, our roots stretch and become a firm anchor for our lives. When we are firmly planted in Him and His Word, we become fruitful, blossoming trees "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." I am praying for your family this week that you become a strong forest for His glory with roots that go deep into His love!

### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Eph 3:17b-21

Fill in the blanks: And I pray that you, being \_\_\_\_\_ and established in \_\_\_\_\_, may have the power together with all the saints, to grasp how \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is the love of Christ. (v. 17-18)

### What Do You Think

1. What does it mean to be "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God?"
2. How does knowing God loves us help us love others?

### What R U Going To Do

Draw a picture of a tree and put it somewhere your family will see every day this week. When you see it remember that we are rooted in Christ. A simple website to help you draw a tree is: <http://artprojectsforkids.org/how-to-draw-a-fall-tree/>

## 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](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).