



Ephesians 7 Power, Love & the Power of Love



TEXT: EPHESIANS 3:14-21 → *“When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray”*
... We’re going to need all of chapters 1-3 in order to do all of chapters 4-6.

WHAT DOES PAUL HEADLINE?

N.B. The focus is INWARD PROVISION not OUTWARD ... Spiritual, not material ... What God offers rather than the world ... Things above, not things below.

- * Above all we need INNER strength, a HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS soul and core STABILITY (3 John 2).
- * This HAS BEEN provided graciously by God the FATHER, through the finished work of the SON ... Now we need it to be INFUSED by the inner workings of the HOLY SPIRIT.

→ *Why is this prayer such a powerful precedent? How can we use it in our prayers?*

POWER & LOVE

If God only LOVED us and didn’t have the POWER to hold us up, we might be ENCOURAGED, but we would FAIL.

On the other hand, if God only had POWER and didn’t LOVE us, we might be DELIVERED but we’d feel CRUSHED in heart.

TOGETHER, love and power are an UNBEATABLE COMBINATION.

→ *What are the dangers of power without love? What about love without power? Why is the correct balance / combination so powerful?*

POWER ... AMP: *strengthened and spiritually energised with power*

5 THINGS THIS STRENGTHENING GIVES US

- a) GRACE to TOLERATE things you couldn’t otherwise ENDURE (1 Pet 1:2, 2 Cor 12:9)
- b) WISDOM to KNOW things you wouldn’t otherwise KNOW (James 1:5)
- c) STRENGTH to CARRY things you otherwise couldn’t (Phil 4:13, Eph 6:10, Rom 16:25).
- d) RESILIENCE to KEEP GOING when everyone else has GIVEN UP (Coo 1:11).
- e) ABILITY to PERFORM TASKS that would otherwise be OUT of RANGE (Ex 35:31, 1 Cor 12:10 (NLT)).

→ *Do you know that power? Have you experienced any of that list of five? Any you could really do with?*

CHALLENGE OF WORLDLY MISDIRECTION → The world’s system / culture / media focusses almost exclusively on OUTWARD things → Possessions, position, status, title, prestige, popularity, fitness, body beautiful, bulging bank accounts

- * If suckered into that, Christians inadvertently NEGLECT the INTERNAL / SPIRITUAL ... These worldly things feed all sorts of desires, but do not produce inner strength.

- * Therefore, it’s possible to remain SPIRITUALLY WEAK, malnourished, immature, under-resourced.

DANGER = Drawing from well of HURT, FRUSTRATION, LACK + FAILURE (Jn 6:63). We have an **INVITATION** to draw on well of HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT, ENRICHMENT, ABILITY (v16).

→ *Under normal circumstances whose strength + resources do you rely on? Are you stoically self-sufficient? I can cope, down to me, my mess my problem. Are you needy/clingy (it’s everyone else’s responsibility to solve your problems, meet your needs, tickle your ego)? From what resource bank do you routinely draw? → Are you able to resist the temptation to lean on your own strength, ability, ideas? If you’re honest, are you mostly filling your life only with worldly, material, fleshly? Do you know how to ask for, draw from, lean on His strength + power? → What does it look like to be inwardly strong? How can we be sure that God’s power rather than our strength is working through us?*

LOVE (1 Cor 13)

Cold, hard fact = Your love is INSUFFICIENT, IMPERFECT, limited.

- * Though well-MEANING, full of good INTENTIONS, SIN and WEAKNESS get in the way (Self-serving, raw nerves, past hurts, impatience, prejudice).
 - * But we now have access to the REAL DEAL; The selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love of a perfect Father, who wants us to RECEIVE, UNDERSTAND, EXPERIENCE + WALK in His perfect supernatural love (see v17-19).
- *Why is understanding + experiencing God’s love the key to wholeness, fullness + power (see v19)? How / in what ways do we or can we experience His love?*

LOVE ENABLES US TO REALLY BE (v19)

- i) WHO God INTENDS us to be.
- ii) ROOTED and GROUNDED, SECURE and CONFIDENT.
- iii) KIND, GIVING + STABLE in our relationships.
- iv) SERVE effectively, sacrificially and joyfully.

God’s love is the lens through which we’re intended to see ... the framework upon which our lives are to be built ... The force that heals, restores + protects us.

Why are so many believers today starved of love of God?

ANS: Because we’ve bought into # of false premises

1. Love must be earned
 2. Love must be deserved
 3. Love must be in return for something
 4. Love will be like love we’ve grown up observing
 5. Love is warm, gushy feeling
 6. Love is weak, makes you vulnerable, doormat
 7. Love can be turned on + off, depending upon whim, mood + your performance
- *Have you bought into any of those false premises? Why is it so easy to do so? What are the dangers of doing so?*

TD Jakes: "The church puts up a sign that says 'All hurting people are welcome here,' but when these broken, wounded, tattered + torn people who have never fully known the unconditional love of another human being come walking through the front doors, the first thing the church tells them is the rules of their doctrine, the words to their hymns + the commandments God expects them to obey. We rarely wrap our arms around the loveless, broken, wounded + hurting and say, 'God loves you + I love you too.'

The wounded in our midst rarely open up to bare their secrets for fear of being rejected, ostracised or left out again. They may participate in the life of the church in various capacities, but deep inside they are bleeding, hurting + aching. And the only thing that can satisfy that longing + that pain in their hearts, is the unconditional, infinite, unending love of God. The breadth + length + depth + height of the love of God is what they need the most + often what they receive the least.

We bring hurting ones to Jesus + tell them that God is their Father, but their only image of a father is linked to abuse.

We say 'Welcome to the family,' but family is where they were rejected + alienated.

We teach them about authority, but authority to them is stained with pain.

We tell them to submit to their mentors, but in their hearts submission is linked to a total lack of value.

Hence, they fear God's presence ... fear His knowing their innermost thoughts ... fear He'll never love them ... fear they'll never be good enough, clean enough, talented enough or valuable enough to be accepted by Him"

WOW! What a shame ... Is that you? Hence, Paul's prayer → That our roots would grow down deep into God's love ... that we'd understand, grasp, really get width, length, height + depth ... that we'd experience His love in all its strength, mystery + power ... that we might be made full, whole, complete in Him

BIG QUESTIONS

→ *Do you KNOW His LOVE? Are you FULL or STARVED?*

→ *Have you ALLOWED His WORD under the ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT to PENETRATE your heart, CHANGE your thinking and RESTORE your soul?*

→ *Which kind of life are you living? Weak or strong? Natural or supernatural? Flesh or Spirit? World or Word?*

OUR RESPONSE is to pray Romans 5:5 and Luke 24:49 with Ephesians 5:18-20.