

The Church, God's Plan for this Age: Intercession for Christian Maturity

Ephesians 3:14-21

August 2, 2020

1. The Grounds for Intercession for Christian Maturity – “For this cause I bow my knees” (14-15).
 - a. God's grace should drive us to our knees in humble gratitude and submission (14; cf. 3:1-13; 2:1-22).
 - i. God's grace in redemption (2:1-11)
 - ii. God's grace in reconciliation (2:12-22)
 - iii. God's grace in revelation of the mystery of the church (3:1-13)
 - b. Our acceptance in the family of God should draw us to prayer (15).
 - i. Our God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Our God is our Father of all who've believed in His Son (John 3:7).
2. The Requests of Intercession for Christian Maturity – “That he would grant you...” (16-19).
 - a. Intercede for inner strength – “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (16)
 - i. Each of these requests focus on the believer's spiritual strength rather than the physical; we are in desperate need of God's strength.
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 12:9 “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
 - iii. God supplies His might “according to the riches of His glory” which shows us the proportion of the power available to His children!
 - iv. God supplies His enablement through His Holy Spirit – “Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).
 - b. Intercede for spiritual intimacy – “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (17a).
 - i. We receive God's power as we act in faith upon the Word of God (cf. 5:18; Colossians 3:16).
 - ii. When we live by faith, we make Christ “at home” in our hearts.
 - iii. When we refuse to walk by faith, we do not enjoy intimate fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:4-7).
 - c. Intercede for apprehension of Christ's love – “That ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (17b-19).
 - i. We must be rooted in the love of Christ (17b).
 1. The believer must intentionally root himself in the love of God just as a tree sends its roots downward into the soil in search of nutrients (Psalm 1:1-3).
 2. The believer who is rooted in God's love can withstand the droughts (Jeremiah 17:5-8).
 - ii. We must be grounded in the love of Christ (17c-18).
 1. Christ's love must be the foundation upon which we build our lives.
 2. Before you can build a building you must lay a foundation; the taller the building, the deeper the foundation.
 3. The storms of life often reveal the shallowness of our foundation (Matthew 7:24-29).
 - iii. We must experience the love of Christ (19a).
 1. Christ's love is so vast, that we will never be able to fully comprehend it.
 2. The vastness of His love for us should give us an insatiable desire to know more of it!
 - d. Intercede for filling with the fullness of God – “that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (19b).
 - i. We understand the fullness of God to the degree that we apprehend Christ's love for us.
 - ii. If we are not very secure in God's love, we also miss out on a fuller understanding and fuller experience of God in our lives.
 - iii. We have all the resources we need to know God's love and live in close fellowship with Him, but we enjoy only the grace that we apprehend by faith (Matthew 9:29).
3. The Result of Intercession for Christian Maturity (20-21)
 - a. God receives praise for His ability to do extravagantly more than we ask or think (20).
 - i. God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts.
 - ii. God rarely answers the way we pray, but His answer is always so much better than anything we could have ever dreamed up on our own!

- b. God receives eternal glory in the church by Jesus Christ (21).
 - i. What Christ does through the church in this short age will bring God glory for all eternity!
 - ii. When you are transformed by God's love now, you bring glory to God now and you'll celebrate what God enabled you to accomplish for all of eternity!
 - iii. When you spurn God's love, you deprive yourself right now, and you miss out on storing up treasure that glorifies God in eternity.

Conclusion:

1. What is your response to the grace of God?
2. What is your response to being part of God's family?
3. Are your prayers for others focused primarily on spiritual strength and maturity or physical needs?
4. Are you rooted in the love of God? If not, it will be hard to intercede for others.
5. Are you enjoying the fullness of God as you live His Word by faith?
6. Are your prayers bringing great glory to God?
7. Is your participation in the church bringing greater glory to God?