

## **A Prayer for Strength Ephesians 3:14-16 (NKJV)**

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

As we come closer to the holiday season it seems that we need more inner strength than ever. It is hard to believe that the season that should bring the greatest peace often brings such turmoil.

There never seems to be enough time for the programs the parties, the decorations and time for ourselves.

But Paul knows the solution. It is found in the Lord.

He alone can give us the strength that we need to get through each trial and every temptation.

Paul knew the weakness that we have to deal with.

He knew the daily battles of our hearts and minds.

Let us look at this passage today and maybe we too will come to pray for ourselves and for others.

- I. To whom does Paul pray.
  - A. To the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
    1. We must first determine which father we are talking about.
    2. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
      - a. If someone says they have a father in heaven but their father is not the Father of OUR Lord Jesus Christ then they have the wrong father.
    3. Jesus is our connection to the Father.
      - a. Without Jesus we have no connection to God.
      - b. Jesus is the WAY, the only WAY.
      - c. He is the DOOR, the true DOOR.
      - d. Remember Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition.
      - e. It is through Jesus that we have been brought near to God.
    4. Jesus is our mediator.
      - a. Jesus is the one and only mediator.
      - b. We cannot approach God without God's HIGH PRIEST.

5. Jesus is entrance to the throne room of heaven.
  - a. Generally speaking prayer is to the Father through the Son and with the aid of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. We have access to the door of heaven but Jesus is the key and the Holy Spirit teaches us what to pray for.
- B. To the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  1. Unlike those before Him Jesus prayed and taught the disciples to pray to the Father.
  2. What a wonderful term, FATHER.
  3. Many may pray to the great creator.
  4. Others might pray to the covenant God.
  5. Still other my address God and the Holy God.
  6. But we can address Him as Father.
  7. A loving Father that cares for His children.
  8. A watchful Father that protects His children.
  9. A wise Father that gives His children wisdom.
  10. A benevolent Father that provides for all our needs.
  11. A caring Father that comforts our fears and heals our wounds.
  12. A faithful Father that keeps all His promises.
  13. A just Father that deals with us fairly.
  14. A merciful Father that although we may deserve punishment give us mercy.
  15. A concerned Father that corrects every child of His to make us what He knows we can be.
  16. A Father that guides us in the right paths, righteous paths.
  17. A Father that gives more than we could ask or think.
  18. A better Father than any earthly father ever was.
- C. The One from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.
  1. God's family did not begin in the New Testament times.
  2. But Adam and Eve were the first members.
    - a. Then Abel and then Seth but not Cain.

- b. Paul is here referring to God's spiritual family.
- 3. The Bible does not teach that all people are the children of God.
  - a. Jesus said that there were many who had the Devil as their father and He said that they would do the will of the Devil.
  - b. John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.
  - c. Jesus taught more clearly than any other person in the Bible that not everyone is going to heaven.
  - d. Mt 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.
- 4. But Paul is using this idea of the family of God to teach that all the saved are members of the same family.
  - a. There is not a Gentile family and a Jewish family.

II. The petition. "That He would grant you to be strengthened with might in the inner man."

- A. The inner man.
  - 1. The spiritual man as opposed to the man of flesh.
  - 2. Sometimes referred to as the soul.
    - a. 1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,
    - b. 2 Peter 2:8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)
    - c. 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.
  - 3. People are a tri-part being.
    - a. 1Th 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 4. It is possible to be healthy in body but very sick and weak in our souls.

5. The reason we have such a high rate of mental disorders is because we have rejected God's plan for mankind.
- B. We need strength in the inner man.
1. It is the inner man that controls what goes on on the outside.
    - a. Mark 7:18 . . . Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 "because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" 20 And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 "All these evil things come from within and defile a man."
  2. Many Christian books have been written on the subject of the battle for the mind.
- C. People often spend time in exercise and health.
1. I have seen mothers that will not allow children to drink the wrong drinks or eat the wrong food and all of that.
  2. But they will allow their children to consume garbage by the truck full from the TV or computers.
- D. Failure in the Christian life comes often times from a lack of strength in the inner man.
1. Time spent in prayer.
  2. Time spent in study of the Word.
  3. Time spent in worship.
  4. Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Now later Paul tells them the result of this strength in the inner man.

There are many benefits. But we cannot speak of them now.