

What Inner Strength Looks Like Ephesians 3:17-19 (NKJV)

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

I. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

- A. The first word, *katoikeo*, which Paul does use, means to dwell in the sense of settling down in a place and making a permanent residence there. As Stott points out, it is used for the fullness of the Godhead abiding in Christ and, as here, for Christ's abiding in a believer's heart and life. The prayer is that Christ might settle down in our hearts and control them as the rightful owner. *James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians: An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 110.*
- B. Christ has not come as a temporary visitor. He has come as a permanent tenant by means of the Spirit to live in our lives. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). *J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 247.*
- C. What Paul is praying for is a deeper experience between Christ and His people. He yearns for Christ to settle down and feel at home in their hearts—not a surface relationship, but an ever-deepening fellowship. *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 32.*
- D. Abraham's life is an illustration of this truth. God was going to bless Abraham with a son, so the Lord Himself came down and visited Abraham's tent, and He brought two angels with Him. They came to the tent, they talked with Abraham, and they even ate a meal with him. They felt very much at home, because Abraham was a man of faith and obedience. But the three guests had another task. They had to investigate the sins of Sodom because God planned to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot, a believer, was living in Sodom, and God wanted to warn him to get out before the judgment could fall. But the Lord Himself did not go to Sodom. He sent the two angels (Gen. 18–19). The Lord did not feel at home in Lot's house the way He felt at home in Abraham's tent. *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 32.*

II. That you, being rooted and grounded in love

- A. In the first case, love is pictured as something that nourishes us (which it obviously does), and, in the second case, it is pictured as a solid foundation (which it is).

James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians: An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 110–111.

- B. Jeremiah 17:5-8 (NKJV) 5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. 6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. 8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.
 - C. It is the love of God toward them—the love which has chosen them, which has predestined them, which has adopted them, which has made them accepted in the Beloved, which has redeemed them, which has provided an inheritance for them, which has sealed them by the Spirit, which has quickened them, and which has raised them and seated them in the heavenly in Christ Jesus. To be rooted and grounded in such love is to have entered sympathetically and understandingly into the measureless revelation of that love. *Lewis Sperry Chafer, The Ephesian Letter (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1935), 112.*
- III. May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height –
- A. “the love of Christ is ‘broad’ enough to encompass all mankind (especially Jew and Gentiles, the theme of these chapters), ‘long’ enough to last for eternity, ‘deep’ enough to reach the most degraded sinner, and ‘high’ enough to exalt him to heaven.” *Stott Quoted in James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians: An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 111.*
 - B. Could we with ink the oceans fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade—
To write the love of God above
Would drain the oceans dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.
James Montgomery Boice, Ephesians: An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 111.
- IV. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge
- V. That you may be filled with all the fullness of God
- A. This marvelous understanding and comprehending by a Spirit-strengthened inner man, and upon the plane of celestial glory, can result in nothing less than that those

thus enriched will be “filled with all the fulness of God.” *Lewis Sperry Chafer, The Ephesian Letter (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1935), 112.*

- B. Only one among all that ever dwelt on earth or in heaven has been really filled with all the fulness of God. In Colossians 2:9, 10, we read of Christ that “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” and that the believer is “complete in him.” *Lewis Sperry Chafer, The Ephesian Letter (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1935), 112.*
 - 1. Colossians 2:9-10 (NKJV) 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.