

Apostle Paul's 3 Gs of Powerful Prayer

No matter what our age, years of Christian service or maturity in ministry, we will always need to keep growing in the exercise and discipline of **prayer**. As you fulfill God's call on your life, I want to encourage you to be a person committed to powerful prayer.

The apostle Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 comes to mind when I think of excellence in prayer. This gives several insights into the preface, posture and petitions of powerful prayer.

Preface

Paul starts by saying, "*For this reason I kneel*" (Eph. 3:14, emphasis mine). What reason? What is the reason that drives him to prayer? It is a phrase he also uses in 3:1, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus ... " In some way, **Paul** connects the reason—the preface—to the entire prayer that follows. Paul joins that "reason" to the word **mystery** that occurs four times in Ephesians 3 (vv. 3, 4, 6, 9). The "mystery" is that the church—composed of Gentiles and Jews—would make known the many-sided, multifaceted wisdom of God to rulers and authorities in heavenly realms. In plain speech, Paul is saying, "Before I launch into my prayer, let me tell you what stands behind it. The church has God's name on it. We are the assembly of God. The church is His pride and joy."

Posture

In Jewish prayer, standing is the normal posture (Matt. 6:5; Luke 18:11, 13). Kneeling, however, is the more intense form of prayer. Paul says, "*For this reason I kneel*" (Eph. 3:14,

emphasis mine). This is a tip-off to the fervency of **effective prayer**.

One of the early church fathers put it this way: “By kneeling we demonstrate the full form of prayer. We ought not merely to incline our minds to prayer but also our bodies. We do well to lower our bodies lest we create an impression of elevation or an appearance of pride.”

What would happen in our lives, homes and churches if we fell on our knees and prayed more earnestly—going beyond the rote and routine of prayer to the fervency of prayer?

Petitions

The posture and preface to Paul’s prayer leads us into the intensity of three petitions he brings that we can summarize in three words: *grip*, *grasp* and *grow*.

1. Grip. Over the years, my daily prayer list has grown to more than 250 people. I laid Paul’s prayer over my list and realized how spot-on his prayer is because so many people on my list, including myself, need our grip strengthened with power through the Spirit.

2. Grasp. Paul not only prays for us to get a strong grip. He prays that we will also get a great grasp. Years before Paul wrote this Ephesian letter from a prison in Rome, he had planted and pastored the church in Ephesus for two and a half years. During that time, he sent letters west to the Corinthian church that was beset with all types of problems and pride. He told them in 1 Corinthians 13 what was missing in their community life. They were not rooted and grounded in love.

This is always a sobering word to the **Pentecostal** and **charismatic** church because in our desire for the restoration and presence of the *charismata*, we may be tempted to build on the gifts rather than the Giver, on the sensational above the

ethical or moral—on success and numbers rather than love. When we are rooted and grounded in love, then we can grasp the breadth, duration and extremity of His love.

3. Grow. Paul knew that being filled with the Spirit was not just a one-time “I’ve got it” experience. When you read the last two and a half chapters of Ephesians, you can see that these Spirit-baptized believers were still being pushed to grow.

No matter what our age, years of Christian service or maturity in ministry, we will always need to keep growing, because even if we are filled now, we are not yet filled with all the fullness of God. But that is not all. He ends with, “[He] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20). Great praying leads to great power—“He is able,” Paul says. And great power leads to great praise: “To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (v. 21).

The grip. The grasp. The grow. They all lead to *immeasurably more*. God is infinite and capable of giving more, and we are expansible and capable of receiving more.

Do you want to display the glory of the Father? Become a person who prays powerful prayers.

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