

*“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” – Ephesians 3:14-19*

When was the last time I knelt before the Father? Why did I kneel before Him? Was I suffering, struggling, or overwhelmed? What are some reasons that “drive me to my knees” before God? Paul the Apostle says that he kneels before the Father in prayer for the disciples in Ephesus. Paul says something interesting about “the Father” here as well, pointing out that from God, “the Father”, “every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.” God’s will is supreme, he dictates all of existence and all life itself. There is no naming of/concept of family for – not just us humans – but all creation apart from God, the Father. It is no wonder then why Paul “kneels” before the Father when he’s praying about the family of God. Amen, so should we!

We should examine each part of Paul’s prayer here so we have an understanding of how we could pray for all the disciples, their children, and their families, that are in our bible talk.

## #1 Out of His Glorious Riches

*“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,”* (Ephesians 3:16) First, we must recognize God’s “glorious riches.” The phrase “glorious riches” shows up in Colossians 1:27 as well: *“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* We can see plainly from Colossians 1:27 that the “glorious riches” is Christ in us and that Christ in us gives us “the hope of glory.”

Paul writes about the impact of Christ (living) in us in Romans 8:9-11:

*“You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not*

*belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."*

Christ living in us puts us in the realm of the Spirit. A spiritual mindset/worldview. Christ living in us signifies and solidifies that we belong to Christ. The Spirit (of Christ) is the seal that marks us. He (the Spirit) is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance and that we are God's possession. These are eternal and "*glorious riches*" indeed!

[Eph 1:13-14 NIV] 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Look carefully at how Romans 8:9-11 describes "*the Spirit*." We can see that "*the Spirit of God*" and "*the Spirit of Christ*" are used interchangeably. We can also see that just "*the Spirit*" is also used contextually the same way as "*the Spirit of God*" and "*Christ*." This contextual equivalency can be easily remembered as "*the Spirit*" = "*the Spirit of God*" = "*the Spirit of Christ*." To have "*the Spirit*" living in us is indeed "*glorious riches!*"

"*The Spirit*" gives us life and is the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. (Romans 8:10-11 above) This scripture emphasizes another aspect of the "*glorious riches*" we have in Christ – that we will be given new life by "*the Spirit*" during our life's journey and be raised by "*the Spirit*" on judgment day.

## *More On Having The Spirit Being "Glorious Riches"*

Let us consider the following passages:

[Rom 6:3-5, 8-11 NIV] 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ... 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he

died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[1Cor 15:42-45, 1Cor 15:51-52 NIV] 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; **the last Adam, a life-giving spirit\***. ... 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. \*A reference to Jesus!

[1Th 4:13-18 NIV] 13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

In this life, through the Spirit, we are raised to a new life through our faith at baptism.

In the beginning of the next life, judgement, resurrection day, the Spirit raises us just as it raised Jesus, from the dead. Romans 8:11 teaches us that *"he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."* So we understand that our eternal resurrection is *"out of His glorious riches!"*

## #2 Strengthening Your Inner Being

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." - Ephesians 3:16-17a*

The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is the one we are to pray others get power through. This power is for strengthening us in our *inner being*. This means it is not a physical strength, but a spiritual one.

The purpose of this power's strengthening in their inner being is so that Christ will dwell in them through faith. It takes spiritual power from the Holy Spirit in order for Christ to dwell in me through faith.

We put a lot of stock in our physical health and strength these days. Physical health and training is certainly valuable and can help our character and overall well being. 1st Timotny 4:8 puts it best: ***"For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."*** Our inner being's strength determines if we remain godly and hold onto the promises of God!

## #3 Rooted And Established In Love

*"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."* – Ephesians 3:17b-19

I must be rooted and established in love in order to access this spiritual power. The more love – from God, for God, and of God's people – the more power I have with "all the Lord's holy people" to understand how wide/long/high/deep is the love of Christ. This understanding of the love of Christ is something we do together. This is not an understanding I can come to all by myself. There is a "together with" here – meaning, I have to invest in the disciples around me. I can't just "do bible talk" and "do church" and think that's investment. "Going to meetings" is not this kind of depth. Intentionality.

[1Th 2:8 NIV] ...so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

This kind of love is not about how much I know, or we know, or some sort of esoteric knowledge of the bible or our intellect. This is a love that is even greater than that. This is a love that fills us with the very fullness of God. This is worth fighting for. This is another layer of what it really means to *"love one another!"*

This is what Paul prayed about for the disciples in Ephesus. He wanted them to truly make every effort – and that takes energy, that takes power and strength in our inner being!

## #4 Summary – the Parts of an “Ephesians” prayer for others

*Kneel – “For this reason I kneel before the Father”*

*Pray God may strengthen them – with power through his Spirit – in their inner being*

*So that Christ will dwell in their hearts through faith.*

*Pray for them to be rooted and established in love together with all God’s holy people.*

*Pray for them to have power to grasp how wide/long/high/deep is the love of Christ*

*Pray for them to know love that surpasses knowledge and be filled with God fully!*