

A. GOD'S LOVE

- Paul prays that the Spirit will give us inner strength as Christ makes His home in our hearts: Eph 3:14-20-- For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.
- With each new experience of God's power inside we find ourselves more and more at home with Him. Our capacity to trust Him and lean on Him grows as a result.
- Paul is praying that his own life purpose will become the experience of every believer: Phil 3:10 AMP-- [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power out flowing from His resurrection
- The apostle knows that if we experience God's love we will know and understand Him more: 1 Jn 4:8—God is love.
- God's love is bigger than anything that we will encounter in life. It is as infinite as God Himself is infinite. There's no direction or distance too far for it to reach.
- Our lives become more secure as we begin to know the love of God. Our roots are planted and our foundations are fixed on something infinite and unchangeable.
- We gain a greater grasp of His love by inviting Him to take possession of more and more of our lives: Jn 3:30—He must increase and I must decrease.
- Experiencing His love far surpasses mere knowledge: 1 Cor 8:1 AMP-- Mere knowledge causes people to be puffed up (to bear themselves loftily and be proud), but love (affection and goodwill and benevolence) edifies *and* builds up *and* encourages one to grow [to his full stature].
- Paul's use of the phrase "with all the saints" implies that there are aspects of God's love that can only be experienced in relationship with other believers: 1 Jn 4:7-- Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God
- We need "the whole people of God to understand the whole love of God, all the saints together, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old, black and white, with all their varied backgrounds and experiences." (John Stott)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Holy Spirit, I ask You to bring to mind a time when I was encouraged, made more secure or prodded to greater maturity because I experienced Your love (directly from You or through another person):

Enable me to yield to Your love in every dimension of my life so that I might know You more deeply and intimately. Reveal the areas I haven't yielded to Your love:

- Insights:

B. GOD'S FULLNESS

- Paul prays for us to be filled up with the fullness of God. This implies that there will be times we feel empty and dry.
- When we are not enjoying the fullness of God we experience symptoms of spiritual hunger and thirst:
 1. Lack of joy: Neh 8:10—The joy of the Lord is your strength
 2. Physical and emotional exhaustion: Ps 31:9 MSG-- I've cried my eyes out; I feel hollow inside. My life leaks away, groan by groan; my years fade out in sighs. My troubles have worn me out, turned my bones to powder.
 3. Fear, worry, lack of courage: 2 Tim 1:7 EXB-- God did not give us a spirit [or the Spirit] that makes us afraid [timid] but a spirit [or the Spirit] of power and love and self-control [self-discipline; or good judgment].
 4. Sense of distance from God: Ps 63:1 ERV-- God, you are my God. I am searching so hard to find you. Body and soul, I thirst for you in this dry and weary land without water.
 5. Reverting to old fleshly ways: 1 Cor 3:3 MSG-- As long as you grab for what makes you feel good or makes you look important, are you really much different than a babe at the breast, content only when everything's going your way?
- In our unsatisfied state, we often pursue things that can never fill us up. Examples include achievement, control, status, money, possessions, and even relationships.
- Only the Spirit filling us and pouring God's love out within us can relieve our thirst.
- LISTENING QUESTION:
Spirit, please reveal anything I have been leaning on besides You in an attempt to satisfy my inner thirst:

Lord, I pray that You would bring me to the point of being willing to limit or eliminate the things that have left me thirsty for the sake of having my deepest needs (being seen, known, and belonging) met by You. Thoughts:

- Jesus invites us to come to Him whenever we are empty, exhausted and unsatisfied: Jn 7:37-38 KJV-- In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)
- Jesus issued this invitation during the Feast of Tabernacles. This celebration was a reminder of how God provides for His thirsty children, both physically and spiritually.

- He promises to send His Spirit to spring up out of our “belly.” This word literally means, “hollow place.” He is speaking of the core of our being that is made for God.
- Coming to Jesus in our emptiness expresses our belief in His ability to satisfy what we lack and our willingness to yield to His provision.
- He sends His fullness to our inner man when we drink of Him. We need a constant supply of Living Water just as our physical beings require constant hydration: Is 58:11 NLT-- The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.
- Insights:

C. GOD’S ABUNDANCE

- God is able to fill and satisfy us abundantly with His water of life: Jn 4:14 AMP-- Whoever drinks the water that I give him will never be thirsty again. But the water that I give him will become in him a spring of water [satisfying his thirst for God] welling up [continually flowing, bubbling within him] to eternal life.”
- Leaning Through Prayer leads us into a lifestyle that exceeds our capacity to imagine: 1 Cor 2:9 ESV-- As it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”
- This leaning lifestyle becomes our experience when we learn how to get full and stay full more and more consistently:
 1. Prayerfully develop a plan for drinking of God that works for your life circumstances.
 2. Limit the stressors that are draining, remembering that your calls are best fulfilled from a place of abundance vs. emptiness.
 3. Identify leaks. Notice frequent triggers and over-reactions and use the listening prayer model to address root causes.
 4. Let the Spirit reveal to you what part(s) of your being are experiencing emptiness (think of those core needs: (Being seen, heard, understood, accepted, valued, loved, taught, protected, provided for, adequate, and engaging in play/recreation)
 5. Ask the Father for a fresh filling with the Spirit (Luke 11:13)
 6. Ask Jesus for a “word that sustains the weary” that is a personal word for these needs.
- Spiritual “hydration”/fullness will yield amazing benefits. The Spirit will produce His fruit in us and overflow it to those around us as well. (Gal 5:22-23)
- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

• ONE THING

The One Thing that I’d like to take away from today’s class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse stood out to you this week? Write it out below and take some time to review it often. Be still and expectant in God's presence, alert for new insights. Write it down.

- PRAYER

Take your One Thing and your verse and turn them into a prayer:

"Lord, where do You want to apply these truths to my particular life circumstances?" How?

- PRAISE

Praising God in song is a great way to practice His presence and drink of His fullness.

PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider these questions, asking the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal His pathway for growth. Keep a written record.

God's Love

- The more you know God, the more of His love you'll know and recognize in your day-to-day life circumstances.
- Ask the Lord to make Phil 3:10 true of you. *Lord, I pray that:*
 - *My heart's main purpose would be to know You more*
 - *My relationship with You would grow in depth and intimacy*
 - *My spiritual eyes would have greater ability to recognize You in the moments of my days*
 - *My understanding of You would grow in accuracy and clarity*
 - *My faith would rise to meet Your resurrection power so that my life could not be explained my own abilities and efforts*
- Phil 3:10 AMP-- [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power out flowing from His resurrection
- Pray that you would have your security grounded in God's love:

- *Fix my foundations on Your solid, unchanging love that is larger than any problem and greater than any other place I have put my security.*
- *Enable me to yield to Your love in every dimension of my life. Reveal the areas I haven't yielded to Your love:*

God's Fullness

- Ask for God's insight and revelation as you do an inventory of your life. Assess your degree of fullness vs. emptiness based on the following questions:
 - What is my joy level in the key areas of my life?

 - What's the typical state of my physical, mental and emotional reserves?

 - How much of my head space is occupied with worry and fretting? How often am I enjoying peace, love and self-control?

 - What's my sense of proximity to and intimacy with God?

 - To what extent am I defaulting into coping behaviors vs. leaning on God? Be specific:

- Jesus invites us to come to Him whenever we are empty: Jn 7:37-38 KJV--In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)
- Come to Jesus with the empty places you identified in the previous questions. Journal about each one after praying something similar to this:
Lord Jesus, I come to You, bringing the places that need a drink of Your living water. I ask that You would help me to trust and lean into the fullness that is mine in Christ. Help me to yield every part of my life to You:

Insights:God's Abundance

- Start a prayer journal if you don't already have a place you are recording your conversations with the Lord. Review it often to help you recognize God at work.
- Develop a plan for getting and staying full, remembering that it may take some time to find what works best for you. Use these guidelines, noting your ideas:
 - Prayerfully develop a plan for drinking of God that works for your life circumstances.

 - Limit the stressors that are draining, remembering that your calls are best fulfilled from a place of abundance vs. emptiness.

 - Identify leaks. Notice frequent triggers and over-reactions and use the listening prayer model to address root causes. Use this simple version for easy use whenever triggered:
 1. Emotion
 2. Memory or Mental Picture
 3. Message you came to believe
 4. The truth (God's truth)

 - Let the Spirit reveal to you what part(s) of your being are experiencing emptiness (think of those core needs: (Being seen, heard, understood, accepted, valued, loved, taught, protected, provided for, adequate, and engaging in play/recreation))

 - Ask the Father for a fresh filling with the Spirit (Luke 11:13)