

# Life: Strengthened by God's power

December 11, 2015

- *The Bible Studies for Life* lesson for Dec. 27 focuses on Ephesians 3:14-21.

## **The Triune God empowers all believers (Ephesians 3:14-17)**

The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians several times throughout his letter to them. In these verses, he reports about one of his prayers said on their behalf. Specifically, he prayed for them to be empowered by God.

Everyone would love more power and vigor for life. We all have seen small children running everywhere and wished for some of their energy. That statement comes from the recognition we have limitations in life, specifically in the area of power.

God empowers believers. He does this all day, every day. Usually, this empowerment isn't noticed. What garners our attention to the presence of God's power in our lives is our weakness.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul said: "I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." In our weakness, God's power can be displayed fully in our lives. We recognize God's equipping power, because we know any achievements we accomplish have come not from our own ability but God's.

What should a Christian do when God's power doesn't appear? When an electrical appliance malfunctions, what should you do? Check the power source. Is it plugged in? After all, if you want the appliance to work, you need to connect to power. Prayer is the connection to God's power. If you

want power, pray; keep praying; don't stop praying until you experience God's power in your life.

How will you know when you have been empowered? Is it by super-human abilities and achievements? No. It's the indwelling of Christ in our hearts. Abilities and achievements are best left for God to accomplish. Our focus is to have Christ dwell in our hearts and find his expression in every action, word and thought.

### **God empowers us to know and walk in his love (Ephesians 3:17-19)**

Naturally, we want power in life for everything, but Paul specifically mentions God's power enabling us to know his love for us. To be accepted, valued, treasured and loved is a need everyone has. The experience of God's love in our lives provides the foundation needed to live the Christian life to the fullest extent.

How much does God love us? This basic tenet of the Christian faith is difficult to illustrate. God's love is unique. It's beyond our comprehension. At the same time, its infinite nature means we can always learn more about God's love and to comprehend "how wide and long and high and deep" (v. 18) it is.

A story attributed to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr reveals how great love can be. A professor and his wife took in a foster boy notorious for terrible behavior. He disobeyed constantly and habitually used foul language. He even threw a bowl of oatmeal at one of the other children living in the home.

One day, the professor came home to find the garden hose running from the front faucet through the living room window. He immediately ran to shut off the water and went inside to survey the damage. He found the rebellious child inside watching everything. The professor walked over to the boy, put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Billy, how long is it going

to take you to learn that we are going to keep on loving you, no matter what you do?"

God's love for us is crazy. As sinners, we don't deserve his love. We have no right to expect his love. We should not even be so audacious as to ask for his love. Still, God loves us. His love enables life itself.

### **God's power in our lives goes beyond what we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21)**

What can God do? No one fully knows. Whatever you might think he can do, God can do more. Once you've stretched your belief about God's ability, you're still wrong. He can do more.

At times, events in our world can lead us to wonder if God really is at work. Terror, murder, persecution and unimaginable sin take place everywhere. The lesson is basic and necessary. God loves us, and God is at work in our world to bring glory to himself. In bringing glory to himself, blessings will be poured upon faithful believers.

Late one Saturday afternoon, a man rode up to a Christian Motorcyclists Association rally in Arkansas. He had left on his trip the night before and rode all Saturday to get to the event.

While there, he experienced the worship service, taking in the music and the message. That evening, he accepted Christ as his Savior. At the end of the service, someone noticed the man was walking quickly away. He stopped the new believer wanting to do some preliminary follow-up. The new Christian explained he needed to get back home in order to be at work Monday morning. It would take him the rest of Saturday night and all day Sunday to make it.

He then added: "I'm going to tell my wife that I accepted Christ tonight. She's been praying for me for 20 years." God loves us. God has power. He

works his love into us for a powerful life.