

FOR MORE LOVE:

-- Philippians 1:9 "And this I pray, **that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and discernment**"

-- 1 Thessalonians. 3:12 "...and may the Lord cause you to **increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men** , just as we also do for you."

-- 2 Thessalonians 3:5 "And **may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God** and into the steadfastness of Christ."

After you have had a delicious dessert, the thought that comes to you is "*Can I have some more?*" There is something inside of us that wants more whether it is more clothes or money; more ice cream or tart or more of a fantastic concert.

Paul prayed that he and we should ask for more and have more! The primary commodity was not possessions or good food but more love. He believed that love had a tendency to "leak" out of us and thus needs to be replenished. He believed that there was nothing wrong in asking for more love and more of God's love filling his life and hence our lives.

So his prayer was that God would fill him with more love. He asked that more love would enter the lives of fellow Christians so that God's love could "leak" out to others.

He knew from personal experience that his love leaked out through the challenging people and

experiences that he endured.

He knew that it was only God's love that sustained him and helped him to love others. It was that Godlove (agape) that people saw and were drawn to. It was that Godlove that needed to be asked for on a daily basis because it had a tendency to leak out when things got tough.

Meditate on God's love for you and how it can fill your life. Ask for God's love to fill you so that His love can be seen in your life. Pray that you and others may be filled with the love of God.

FOR CHRIST TO DWELL IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH:

-- Ephesians. 3:14-17 "...I bow my knees before the Father...that He would grant you...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**"

In April we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This is not just an historical fact or a theological idea.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead releases the presence of Jesus in the world. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead releases the presence of Jesus into the lives and hearts of people.

Paul's prayer found in Ephesians 3 was for all Christians to experience again and again the presence and power of the resurrected Christ daily in their lives. His prayer was that Christ would make His home in their lives and our lives. He was to be more than a visiting guest who would come and go. He was to take up residence in the life of the Christian.

His prayer was for people to know the power and presence of Jesus that would carry them through the tough times and lead them through the confusing times.

His prayer was that they would live out of the presence and power of the resurrected Christ who made his residence in their lives.

FOR THE FULLNESS OF GOD: -- Eph. 3:17-19 (NIV) "And I pray that you...may have power...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

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Paul's prayer for the Ephesians at the end of chapter 3 was that they be filled with Christ and filled with the measure of the fullness of God.

He knew that to live the Christian life can drain you in various ways as you continue to serve and give to people.

Loving and praying can be quite draining and Christ can "leak" out of our lives. Thus we need to be continually filled with God to continue to work of loving and leaving.

The danger is that we learn to run on empty and not ask to be refilled. Very quickly, we can be drained and become tired and exhausted as we continually give out. Very quickly we can run on empty and use all our reserves up!

We take our cars to the service station to get refilled before they get on empty and stop.

In the same way we need to be filled with God each week by worship; reading scripture; praying

so that we do not run on empty and stop!

This should be our prayer for ourselves and the people that we pray for!

Meditate on Ephesians 3:14-20. What is God saying to you? What is He impressing upon you to believe more about Him in your life. Pray these verses out loud by putting your name where it says you/your. Pray it again out loud, putting the person's name that you are praying for where it says you/your.

FOR GRACE AND PEACE:

-- 1 Corinthians. 1:3 "**Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Also similarly: 2 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 13:14, Gal. 1:3, Gal 6:18, Eph. 1:2, Eph. 6:23-24, Phil. 1:2, Phil 4:23, Col. 1:26, 1 Thes. 1:1b, 1 Thes. 5:28, 2 Thes. 1:2, 1 Tim. 1:2, 1 Tim 6:21b, 2 Tim 1:2, Tit. 1:4, Phile. 1:3)

-- 2 Thessalonians. 3:16 "Now may the Lord of peace Himself **continually grant you peace in every circumstance**."

Have you ever attended a difficult situation or been with difficult people? It may have been at a family gathering or standing in a line or harassed by an angry motorist!

The world is full of difficult situations and difficult people. A great amount of grace is needed to accommodate and not inflame the situation. A great amount of peace is needed to quell the intense feelings that are being aroused.

Paul constantly prayed grace and peace to all he communicated with even with those who were anti Paul.

This grace and peace did not come from a human source but a divine source. Grace was extended by Paul because Paul had received the grace of God in His life. He knew he deserved judgment and punishment for what he did to God's people. But God offered him grace and he was able to offer grace to others.

He was able to offer the peace of God because he had received that peace from God.

As you pray for those going through difficult times or contending with difficult people, pray that God may pour out His grace and peace upon the situation and the people concerned.

Ask God for His grace and peace to help you as you go through difficult times.

Pray “Come Kingdom of grace and peace into” Wait to receive that grace and peace before you respond to the difficult situation.