

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

"The Power You Need"- Ephesians 3:14-21

Sermon Summary: Pastor Bryson opens Ephesians 3:14-21, emphasizing that Christians need power beyond themselves to grow into who God has created them to be. Drawing from Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church, the message highlights that while believers receive a new identity in Christ at salvation, the process of sanctification—becoming who God declares us to be—requires God's ongoing power through the Holy Spirit.

Key Points:

- We need power beyond ourselves to become who God created us to be; our own strength is insufficient for spiritual growth and sanctification
- God provides strength through His Spirit dwelling in us permanently, not temporarily, with the intention to make transformative changes from the inside out
- We must recognize our desperation before God while simultaneously remembering that Christ's righteousness has been applied to our lives through the gospel
- Understanding God's love is essential for spiritual growth; His love is described as being as long as eternity past, wide enough to include all nations, high enough to ring praises from angels, and deep enough to cancel the debt of sin
- We should not measure God's love by current circumstances but by the eternal reality of the cross
- The church community is essential for experiencing and understanding God's love; isolation hinders spiritual growth
- Prayer should be centered on God's glory rather than merely our comfort or convenience

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 3:14-21 (primary passage)
- 1 John 4:19 ("We loved because he first loved us")
- Philippians 1:6 (referenced regarding God completing the work He started)

Stories:

- The classic scene from the 1975 movie "Jaws" where Martin sees the shark and says "You're going to need a bigger boat," illustrating that what they had was insufficient for the task at hand
- Personal story about moving to an apartment in Wake Forest, North Carolina five years ago with yellowy-beige paint that they didn't change because they weren't permanent residents, contrasting with how the Holy Spirit comes to dwell permanently and make changes
- Story of a young child telling his mother "I love you six" because that was as high as he could count, illustrating our limited capacity to comprehend God's infinite love
- Personal testimony about joining The Passage staff three years ago and praying a simple prayer for students to care about the things of God, witnessing God answer beyond expectations through students coming to faith, getting baptized, serving faithfully, and discipling others

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question

Think of a time when you realized you were “in over your head” and needed help beyond your own ability (at work, school, family, etc.). What specifically showed you that your own resources/power were not enough?

Point 1 – We Need Strength (Ephesians 3:16–17a)

1. Read Ephesians 3:16–17a and Philippians 1:6.

According to these verses, what are at least three specific things God does “in us” (not just “for us”) to move us from “saved” to “being sanctified,” and how do those actions show that spiritual growth cannot ultimately depend on our own willpower?

2. Read Ephesians 3:16–17a, John 14:16–17, and Romans 8:9–11. Paul prays that we would be “strengthened with power through His Spirit” and that Christ would “dwell” in our hearts.

From these passages, identify at least two practical indicators that Christ is “dwelling as owner” rather than “visiting as a guest” in someone’s life, and explain why those indicators require the Spirit’s power rather than mere behavior change.

Point 2 – We Need Love (Ephesians 3:17b–19)

3. Read Ephesians 3:17b–19, Romans 5:8, and 1 John 4:9–10. Paul says we must be “rooted and grounded in love” and then prays that we would KNOW Christ’s love that “surpasses knowledge.”

From these verses, identify at least two concrete truths about God’s love that do not change with our circumstances, and explain how believing those truths would directly challenge the “blessings – problems = God’s love for me” equation the sermon described.

4. Read Ephesians 3:18, John 13:34–35, and 1 John 4:11–12. Paul says we grasp God’s love “with all the saints.”

From these passages, list at least two specific ways that actively participating in the church (beyond just attending) helps a believer better understand and experience the “length and width, height and depth” of God’s love.

Point 3 – We Need Faith (Ephesians 3:20–21)

5. Read Ephesians 3:20–21, Matthew 6:9–10, and James 4:3. Paul's prayer is centered on God's glory and His power working *in us*, not mainly on making life easier.

Based on these verses, describe at least two specific ways a prayer that is mainly driven by God's glory will be measurably different (in content or priorities) from a prayer that is mainly driven by personal comfort or convenience.