

Secrets of Our Strength

Ephesians 3:14-21

A Basic Bible Summary by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.
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Intro: What are the Secrets of our Strength?

I. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you “*are being rooted and grounded in love*” (**Ephesians 3:17**). That is one of the secrets of your strength.

A. God is Love – As a Christian, you are rooted in God or rooted in love. Your mental and spiritual nourishment and strength comes from God and being rooted in love.

1. Daily, moment-by-moment, we are being fed love by God. A plant receives water and nourishment throughout the day from the good soil in which it is planted. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we plant ourselves in good soil and God gives us the nourishment of true love.

2. Think of good, rich soil that has been carefully cultivated and fertilized. Wonderful soil can bring forth ripe tomatoes, acres of wheat, dozens of roses, thousands of tulips. Good soil produces what will bless us with good food or beauty.

3. Through faith in Jesus Christ, God has planted us in His love. And as God’s love nourishes and strengthens us, we will meet the needs of our families, our church, our neighborhoods and nation. Moreover, we will bring great satisfaction to the heart of God.

4. What makes the Stonegate Family so special that you want to serve God and others here? The answer is this: “We are being rooted in love.” This is an ongoing, day-by-day, Sunday-by-Sunday process. We love God and one another. God’s love flows into us to strengthen us, so we can serve one another and give of ourselves to one another.

a. A week or so ago I sent out a letter that listed 30 things I remembered that God has done through us in the past year. I asked you to thank God for all of these things. It was God’s nourishment of love that gave us the strength to do so much for our church and others outside our church. Being rooted in love, you looked for things to do. You looked at the talents God has given you and you used those talents in our church. You looked at the time God has given you and you used your time for our church. You looked at how God has

blessed you financially, and you gave to meet our church's needs and the needs of those outside our church. God's love gave you the courage and the strength to step out in faith and do a tremendous number of wonderful things.

b. You accomplished much last year, because God planted you in the best soil possible, "Love." And, you let your roots sink deeply into God's love. That is something we need to keep doing. We need to keep sinking our roots deeply into God's love and keep looking for things to do in Stonegate Church with our time, talent, and treasure.

B. God is love – As a Christian, you are also grounded in love. Your mental and spiritual nourishment and strength comes from God and being grounded in love. Your mental and spiritual stability or perseverance in faith comes from God and His love for you.

1. When you accept Jesus Christ as Lord of your life and your personal Savior, you ground your life in God's love. You stand up strong before others on the solid ground of God's love.

2. You can build your life on sand, on your own shifting, unstable, emotions – desires – lusts – wishes. Or, you can build your life on solid rock, solid ground, on the solid rock of God's love.

a. We will all face trials, afflictions, sickness, death. These will test our faith and loyalty to God. Satan will tempt us to doubt God's existence, God's love, God's good character. But when we remind ourselves that our lives are grounded on the solid rock of God's love, firmly anchored in love, we will find our faith strengthened.

b. As Christians, we are grounded in love. That means we will not put our selfish desires ahead of the needs of others. We will fight evil differently from those who worship a false god or idol, or who follow a false religion. For example, we will not stand behind women and children and use them as human shields as we fight our enemies. Rather, grounded in love, we would stand in front of women and children to protect them, even if it cost us our lives.

c. As Christians, we might also think of another analogy, far from the mind of the writer, but still applicable. If you are working on a computer, and if it is properly grounded, you will not hurt the computer or yourself from an electrical discharge. In life, if we are grounded in love, we will not damage others by our actions, and God's love will insulate us from spiritual destruction or death.

3. One thing that makes the Stonegate Family (our members and friends) so precious is this: our church is grounded in God's love.

- a. We stand on love for God and each other.
- b. We stand on love and serve each other.
- c. We stand on love and use our gifts to build up one another and our church.
- d. We stand on love before others, serving strangers, welcoming visitors.
- e. We teach the truth in love – love for God and others.
- f. We look for new and better ways to show our love for one another and the church.
- g. We are rooted and grounded in love, so we pray for one another and give of ourselves and or money to build up our church.

C. If you are a Christian, if you have bowed the knee to acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior – keep reminding yourself that you and others in our Stonegate Family are “being rooted and grounded in love.” You are being rooted and grounded in God, because God is love. You are getting your spiritual nourishment and strength from God’s love. You can face any challenge or trial because you are so rooted in God’s love that no wind of adversity can uproot you and blow you away. The secret of our strength is being rooted and grounded in the love of God.

II. At Stonegate Church, we pray for each other at various times and ways. But sometimes, we do not know how to pray. Love motivates us to pray, but what can we pray to help one another? What can we pray to strengthen one another?

- A. We can find guidance on how to pray in **Ephesians 3:16**.

“I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit.”

1. You can always pray for anyone by name using this verse. You can pray something like: “Dear Father, strengthen so-and-so in their inner being with power through your Holy Spirit.” You can never go wrong praying for someone (or even yourself) to be strengthened in their inner being with power through the Spirit of God.

2. We may not always be sure that our prayers for someone to be healed physically in this life will be answered. God may wait and heal them in the next life or after Jesus comes again. But we can always be sure that God will answer our prayers for a believer to be strengthened in their inner being with power through the Holy Spirit.

3. As Christians, we are involved in spiritual and physical battles around the world, on the mission field, and in this church and community. Our battles here at Stonegate Church against disease should not surprise us. Our battles are just different from those someplace else, that others are fighting, perhaps against demons or flesh and blood enemies. Right here at Stonegate, in Edmond, and around the world, we will always be fighting selfishness, self-centeredness, worldliness, and Satan. So we can pray something like – “O Father, strengthen everyone in the Stonegate Family in their inner being with power through your Spirit.”

4. If someone is facing surgery, or receiving medical treatment, or facing various trials, we can pray for them – “O Father, strengthen them in their inner being with power through your Spirit. And, Father, heal them in this life if it be your will. If it is not your will to heal them in this life, then, Father, help them face the future with sure faith in you and strengthen them in their inner being with power through your Spirit. In Jesus Name, may they know by experience that they are rooted and grounded in your love. Amen.”

5. Even though, by the grace of God, we have accomplished much this past year at Stonegate Church, we might be fearful about how our church will meet it's financial needs and other obligations in 2003. We may be afraid to give more of our time, talent, and treasure because of our own personal needs or desires or fears or temptations. Our prayer can be something like this – “Dear Heavenly Father, we have many needs in Stonegate Church. We want to meet these needs and have a strong church. Strengthen us in our inner being with power through the Holy Spirit, so we can meet the needs of our church with the time, talents, and treasure you have given us. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

B. What resources will God use to answer our prayers? What resources will the Holy Spirit use to meet our needs or to strengthen us? The answer is in verse 16: The Holy Spirit will use – “The riches of God's glory.” God will give us the riches of His glory.

1. The Holy Spirit will strengthen our inner being by using the riches of God's glory. The Holy Spirit will strengthen Christian families and Stonegate Church with the riches of God's glory. The Holy Spirit makes the riches of God's glory available to us through prayer. We can overcome any trial or temptation with the riches of God's glory strengthening our inner being through the power of the Holy Spirit. Stonegate Church will have her needs met in 2003, because the Holy Spirit will work in you and through you to share the riches of God's glory in the church. In 2003, the Stonegate Family and visitors will see the riches of God's glory displayed in our church.

C. What are some of the purposes of preaching and teaching or coming to Sunday School or worship at Stonegate Church? They are these:

1. To share the riches of God's glory in word and deed and love.

2. To strengthen one another in our inner being with power through the Holy Spirit, as we pray and teach according to God's Word.

3. Why do our teachers teach here? Why do our youth leaders work hard to build up our Mid-High Youth Group? They want to share with others the riches of God's glory. They want everyone here to be rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Is there any limit to God's glory?

Is there any limit to the depth of God's love?

Is there any need that God's glory cannot fulfill?

At Stonegate Church, we know something of God's glory and love, and we want to share it.

4. Why do our teachers teach? Why do our youth leaders lead our youth? Why do our deacons want a beautiful building and lawn to show our love for God and our church? Why do our elders and the session meet regularly? Why does our Stonegate Family give of their ideas, their time, their hard work, their money? What are the secrets of our strength at Stonegate Church?

First, at Stonegate Church, we are "planted and grounded in the love of God."

Second, at Stonegate Church, we want to share with each other and others, "the riches of God's glory."

Third, at Stonegate Church, we want to build up one another. We want to strengthen one another "in our inner being with power through the Holy Spirit."

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