

Call to Obedience # 412
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The Inner Man

by Reimar Schultze

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ...that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:16, 19).

This prayer of the Apostle Paul could be the highest prayer ever offered to God by mortal man. So understandably, when we first observe this petition, we say: “Impossible! Incredible!” But then, perhaps on second thought, we settle down to the fact that this is the Word of God—not to be taken lightly. And furthermore, this word was not spoken by some minor character of church history, but by the Apostle Paul, God’s chief apostle to the Gentiles.

So the question is: “Can we humans be filled with the all the fullness of God?” The counter questions are: “Why would Paul pray for it if it were not possible? Why not believe with him that all things are possible to those who believe?”

Now, let us consider the objection that some have with this verse. Can there be enough space in one 150-pound body for the divine fullness of God? Well, the problem is easily overcome by the words of Paul where he says: *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him...* (Col. 2:9–10). Since God’s fullness could dwell in Jesus’ human body, there is space in our bodies for all the fullness of God as well. And if He dwells in us and we in Him, that which is in Him will be in us. Hence this prayer of Paul is a legitimate prayer. It is not a prayer too high for God to answer, but rather it is a prayer for which Christ died, rose from the dead and sent us the Holy Spirit so that it may be answered. Of course, this all relates to the inner man, a phrase peculiar to the Apostle Paul which gets us to this question:

What Is this Inner Man?

Man is a compound being. That means he has more than one vital part. Man is made up of a body and a soul. When you read the creation account of Genesis, you see that God first created the body out of the earth (Gen. 2:7a). All

the elements that you find in your body, you find in the earth: nitrogen, phosphorus, oxygen, carbon, calcium, hydrogen, etc. Then after God created the body: *...He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul* (Gen. 2:7b). Man could not move his limbs, man could not see with his eyes and hear with his ears until God breathed into him and he became a living soul. So man has two basic components: one is of the earth, mortal, and the other is of God, heavenly and will never die. There will never be a funeral for your soul. The body is matter and the soul is spirit. Hence, there is an outer man, the body; and there is an inner man, the eternal soul. The inner man was created pure.

But when Adam and Eve sinned, the inner man was corrupted. The inner man lost his purity. The inner man fell out of fellowship with God. Because of Adam's sin, the whole inner man of every man born since is sin-infected and doomed to eternal damnation. Jesus said: *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies* (Matt. 15:19). All the choices of this sinful, inner man prior to his awakening to God are evil and they come out of an evil heart! None of them give glory to God (Is. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23). Man is lost; he is doomed; and in his sinful blindness, he paves his own pathway to eternal flames: *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:44).

But there is hope. The inner man can be saved, redeemed and renewed into the holy likeness and image of God. This is the Gospel. Jesus Christ shed His blood to redeem our inner man, to bring us cleansing from sin, and to revive the inner man and fill him with the Holy Spirit. We call this conversion and sanctification. If we confess our sins, repent of all our evil ways, and receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and follow Him in humble self-denial, the inner man will be restored to having fellowship with God.

What Are the Needs of the Inner Man?

Paul's first petition in Eph. 3:16 is that the inner man would be strengthened. Once the inner man has been saved, cleansed and restored, he needs continuous, daily nourishment, instruction and care. As the physical body lives on physical food, so the inner man lives on spiritual food. As the outer man becomes weak, sick, and dies without physical food, so the inner man dies without spiritual food.

The food of the inner man consists of daily reading of the Word of God. The Word of God is his bread from heaven. If you do not read the Word of God and meditate upon it every day, your inner man will become weak and blind, you will become prey to the temptation of sins, and you will fall out of fellowship with God. Read the Word of God daily and commit God's Word to memory. That is what Jesus did and by the time He was twelve years of age, He could out-quote the scribes, the Pharisees and the doctors of the law. David, the great king of Israel, said concerning the saint of God: *But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night* (Ps. 1:2). Jesus said: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* (Matt. 4:4).

We shall never begin to taste of the fullness of God's glory until we literally bathe the inner man in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God as the man of God is entirely surrendered to the will of God. Without the inner man being fed, our faith will be weak, and we will falter during storms. But the inner man must not only obey the written Word, but also that which the Holy Spirit reveals to his heart. Disobedience brings the poison of sin into his life and causes him to be separated from God. Sin separates man from God as it separated Adam and Eve from God. But as disobedience takes man out of fellowship with God, obedience brings him back into fellowship again. We must hate sin with a passion, or we will be soft on sin, tolerating a little bit or a whole lot of it in our lives.

Now here is Paul's next petition for the inner man: *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...* (Eph. 3:17a). Where do we get more faith? Paul says: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom. 10:17). Feed the inner man with the Word of God. Faith, great faith to move mountains, comes out of feasting on the Word of God.

Love to God and man comes out of that faith, as Paul continues: *...that ye, being rooted and grounded in love* (Eph. 3:17b). The inner man needs to be rooted in love. Every one of his thoughts must be rooted in the love of God. His attitude toward all men must spring out of divine love. His actions and reactions must find their anointing through loving God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength.

Why do we have so many sour marriages and divorces? Why do we have so few Christians actually witnessing for Jesus or going to church prayer services to intercede for the lost and for the backslidden church? It is because our lives

are not *rooted and grounded in love*. Our outer man which perishes gets most of our attention. Our inner man is starved, weak and diseased because we are not feasting on the Word of God. We are more in love with the world and the things of the world than with God.

Look at the millions of Christians who are spiritual skeletons, spending more time watching ungodly television programs, and spending more time in front of the mirror and in physical exercise trying to show off their mortal, corrupt bodies. Look at how weak they are and how they give in to almost every temptation becoming subject to doubt at every corner, and are too weak to testify of the mighty, redeeming work of their Savior.

Oh, how much attention did the great ones of the Bible: Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, Jesus and His disciples, give to the needs, the nourishment, the cultivation, the beautification, and the equipping of the inner man compared to the time they gave to their outer man? Perhaps, some of you abound in earthly riches and clothing of the latest fashions of the world, but your soul is moth-eaten, empty, and the fire of God you once had is all but gone. Oh, how will you stand before the judgment seat of Christ on that last great day: empty-handed, naked and unclean? I plead with you to give yourself to this great prayer of the Apostle Paul: *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ...that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God* (Eph. 3:16, 19).

There is an outer man, and there is an inner man. *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day* (2 Cor. 4:16). So, who gets more attention in your life, the outer man or the inner man? Your answer to this question will most likely determine where you will spend eternity.

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