

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

Filled to the Measure of all the Fullness of God

Ephesians 3:19-21

I. The Summit of Christian Experience

A. The image I've kept in front of you... ASCENDING THE MOUNTAIN of Christian Experience... KATHMANDU

Picture a city, dwelling in a low-lying flat valley... covered by smog and a low, gloomy cloud cover; the people live their whole lives in the weak, filtered light of the pale sun; it is overcast all the time; mists and fog and drizzle are their constant experience

They have heard that, well beyond the city limits, there is a magnificent mountain – lofty, towering over the city, but barely visible from that city through occasional breaks in the low cloud cover. The mountain seems so distant and lofty and is so rarely seen that many of the citizens of the smog-covered city think such a mountain doesn't even really exist.

But one day, a breathless citizen of their city comes to tell them that the mountain does exist, that he has climbed that mountain, and has breathed the sweet mountain air and seen sights that are almost beyond his ability to narrate... he is overflowing with joy, he can scarcely put into words what he's seen and felt... and he's there to persuade some of the city members to leave the low-lying, smog-covered daily life, which is all they've ever known, and follow him in a vigorous climb. He promises that, if they will only exert themselves and climb, the mountain will eventually reward all their efforts with a spectacular view, with sweet mountain air, with a breathtaking experience.

THIS IS WHAT EPHESIANS 3:14-21 is all about... a mountain of Christian experience... higher and higher and higher and higher Paul's language soars... more and more experience he offers any who will exert themselves spiritually and seek Christ. Today, this morning, we will reach the SUMMIT of Christian experience... the highest peak that any Christian can experience in this world, the greatest experience we can have before we die.

B. A Magnificent Unfolding, Step by Step

1. Look at the steps part by part

- a. Step 1: Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Christians... a prayer to the Father on their behalf

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

- b. Step 2: that God would strengthen the inner man of Christians according to his glory and power by the Spirit

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being

- c. Step 3: that Christ would settle down in their hearts by faith

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

- d. Step 4: that they would be rooted and established in love

Ephesians 3:17 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love

- e. Step 5: that they would receive power together with all the saints

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the saints

- f. Step 6: that they would grasp the infinite dimensions of Christ's love for them...

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ

- g. Step 7: that they would know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge

Ephesians 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge

- h. Step 8: that they would be FILLED TO THE MEASURE OF ALL THE FULLNESS of GOD!!!

Ephesians 3:19 that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God

2. Paul concludes with an astonishing doxology... which proves that we are not going TOO FAR in our estimation here... however high you think God can lift you in Christian experience, he actually can do IMMEASURABLY MORE than anything you can ask or imagine!!

Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us

3. The only way to end this is in PRAISE to ALMIGHTY GOD

Ephesians 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

C. What Kind of Experience is Paul Talking about Here?

1. Paul's own experience:

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-- God knows. ³ And I know that this man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- ⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

2. Earlier... he saw Stephen have this experience:

Acts 7:55-56 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

3. Testimonies from church history... one after another

4. Puritan Pastor John Flavel

Puritan pastor and theologian John Flavel spoke of a pastor he knew who was travelling in England: "Thus going on his way his thoughts began to swell and rise higher and higher like the waters of Ezekiel's vision, till at last they became an overwhelming flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such were the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and the full assurance of his own future guarantee of them that he utterly lost all sight and sense of the world, and all the concerns thereof, and for some hours he knew no more where he was than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed. Arriving in great exhaustion at a certain spring, he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring that if it was God's pleasure this might be his departing place from the world. Death had the most amiable face in his eyes that ever he beheld, except the face of Jesus Christ which made it so, and he does not remember, though he believed himself dying, that he ever thought of his dear wife or children or any other earthly concernment. On reaching the Inn, this influence still continued, banishing sleep, still the joy of the Lord overflowed him and he seemed to be the inhabitant of the Other world. He many years later called that day one of the days of heaven, and he professed that he understood more of the life of heaven from that one day than by all the books he ever read."

WOW!!!! Has anything like this ever happened to you? Honestly??

Note the key statement at the end:

He many years later called that day one of the days of heaven

So... that implies he never had another such experience in his life!

Could we have an experience of the love of Christ so overpowering that it actually seemed like one of the days of heaven given to us NOW as a gift years before we die... such that we never had another such experience the rest of our days, but lived off the dividends of JOY that the memory afforded? Could God give us such a gift?

David Brainerd:

“Tuesday, April 27. I retired pretty early for secret devotions; and in prayer God was pleased to pour such ineffable comforts into my soul, that I could do nothing for some time but say over and over, ‘O my sweet Savior! O my sweet Savior! whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.’ If I had a thousand lives, my soul would gladly have laid them all down at once to have been with Christ! My soul never enjoyed so much of heaven before; it was the most refined and the most spiritual season of communion with God I ever yet felt. I never felt so great a degree of resignation in my life.”

Sarah Edwards, the wife of Jonathan Edwards, had an experience on particular night that was so overpowering that she felt like she was a dust speck floating in a beam of sunlight... and that one moment of that night contained more pleasure than all that she had experienced in her whole life put together

Even George Friederich Handel, when writing his astounding musical work called “Messiah” ... was locked in his small room on Brook Street in London for three weeks, refusing to eat much of the food his servant was faithfully delivering to his bedroom door... his servant became worried about him, and opened the door. The composer looked up at him startled, sheets of music he had composed all around him, tears streaming down his face:

He said to his servant: “I think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself!” Later, he reasserted that experience, using Paul’s language: “Whether I was in the body or out of my body, I do know not. God knows.”

Church history is filled with many other such testimonies...

D. Should We Seek Such an Experience?

John Flavel wrote another time:

“Ecstasy and delight are essential to the believer’s soul and they promote sanctification. We were not meant to live without spiritual exhilaration, and the Christian who goes for a long time without the experience of heart-warming will soon find himself tempted to have his emotions satisfied from earthly things and not, as he ought, from the Spirit of God. The soul is so constituted that it craves fulfillment from things outside itself and will embrace earthly joys for satisfaction when it cannot reach spiritual ones. The believer is in spiritual danger if he allows himself to go for any length of time without tasting the love of Christ and savoring the felt comforts of a Savior’s presence. When Christ ceases to fill the heart with satisfaction, our souls will go in silent search of other lovers. By the enjoyment of the love of Christ in the heart of a believer, we mean an experience of the “love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Because the Lord has made himself accessible to us in the means of grace, it is our duty and privilege to seek this experience from Him in these means till we are made the joyful partakers of it.”

Some comments

1. Flavel notes a difference between ECSTASY and DELIGHT... it could be that such an experience of ECSTASY like he had that day would never be repeated again in your life... but that DELIGHT based on that seeking would be your constant experience ever after
2. Flavel says they are ESSENTIAL... we need SPIRITUAL EXHILARATION! Without it, we will pursue IDOLS... other lovers...

Illus. Hunt for Red October... Russian attack submarine launches a torpedo into the water to destroy the Red October... it misses the submarine and then turns, SEARCHING, SEARCHING, SEARCHING for its target... it is relentlessly searching for a massive target in the water... that’s what our hearts are like

3. Flavel says that such experience is essential to SANCTIFICATION (what we call the “internal journey”)... it gives amazing power to a quest for holiness and purity and Christian maturity in life
4. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in *Joy Unspeakable* would say that God has often given such experiences for power in EVANGELISM... for boldness and astonishing fruitfulness in spreading the gospel
5. Finally, Flavel goes so far as to say that SEEKING such an experience by the means of grace God has appointed (bible reading/meditation, prayer, mortification of sin, fellowship with other Christians, etc.) is our DUTY and PRIVILEGE

Because the Lord has made himself accessible to us in the means of grace, it is our **duty and privilege to seek this experience from Him** in these means till we are made the joyful partakers of it.

Let’s finish our look at these verses before we apply it to ourselves... or apply ourselves to this quest!!!

II. The Overflowing Fullness of God (vs. 19)

Ephesians 3:17-19 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

A. This is the PINNACLE, the SUMMIT of Christian experience...

Ephesians 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know

B. But what does it mean to be FILLED TO THE MEASURE of all the fullness of God??

1. The NIV is the only translation that speaks of a “measure”... others simply say

“That you might be filled with all the fullness of God”

BUT... the grammar in the original sustains a sense of proportion...
filled according to the proportion of God's fullness

2. So... this fullness comes FROM GOD and it is in proportion to
God's own personal fullness

C. What it DOESN'T Mean

1. That we achieve some kind of Nirvana in the pattern of eastern mysticism... that is all about EMPTINESS... realizing that the world is an illusion, and so are you... that you are nothing and everything is nothing and that you can lose yourself totally like a drop in an endless sea
 - a. And it is not like the empty charismatic experience that is ANTI-INTELLECTUAL and ANTI-DOCTRINAL, sought APART from Scripture...
2. And "being filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" doesn't mean we BECOME GOD... like pantheism... or deification
 - a. The Mormons teach about Jesus—"What we are, he once was; what he is, we can become"
 - b. NOPE! We do not become gods and goddesses
 - c. There are some INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES that will forever separate us from the infinite personhood of Almighty God
 - i) God is ETERNAL... having no beginning and no end... we are not
 - ii) God is IMMUTABLE... he never changes... we are right now in the constant process of changing... and even in heaven, we will be continually growing in our knowledge of God's glory
 - iii) God is SELF-EXISTENT... he is the great "I am"... His existence comes from Himself... but we are totally dependent on Him for continued existence—"For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)

iv) God is OMNIPRESENT... equally everywhere at once... filling all the universe with his presence: "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah 23:24); we will never be omnipresent

v) God is OMNIPOTENT... all power in the universe comes from him... we'll talk more about that in a moment; we are infinitely weaker than God

d. So for us Christians to be FILLED to ALL THE MEASURE of the FULLNESS of God does not mean those extremes

3. Neither is it merely rhetoric that Paul is talking about here... where his language soared out of control and he spoke in OVER THE TOP language that goes far beyond the reality he's describing

4. So... what does it mean that we would be FILLED TO THE MEASURE of all the FULLNESS of God?

D. God is a FULL BEING

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

1. GOD IS: filled with love... filled with joy... filled with power... filled with compassion

Exodus 34:6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness

a river of justice flows from his throne:

Daniel 7:9-10 His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

AND a river of life...

Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city.

2. Paul is praying for us to have an overwhelming sense of God's love, God's wisdom, God's compassion, God's awesome power

over the universe... filled with the JOY that comes from being in his presence

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Psalm 71:19 Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?

To be filled with the measure of all the fullness of God is to be overflowing with the perfections of God, and to be transformed by them so they characterize us

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

E. Christ In Us... the Key to this FULLNESS

1. Paul has wisely built this prayer up step by step
2. He prays that we would be strengthened with power in own INNER BEING.... Through the Holy Spirit... WHY?
3. So that CHRIST WOULD DWELL in our hearts by faith... that's how God fills us with himself

Colossians 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him

Colossians 2:9-10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ

John 1:16 And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

F. So... Being Filled to all the Measure of the Fullness of God... comes only by the Spirit's revelation of Christ in our hearts... and an intense overpowering sense of the infinite majesty of Christ as he reveals the Father

III. The Doxology: Finishing with Worship... as We Must! (vs. 20-21)

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

A. Astounding Doxology... a Word of Praise

1. It is the only appropriate way to finish this prayer!
2. He is praying for the Ephesian Christians to have an amazing experience of the dimensions of Christ's love for them
3. The ultimate purpose of that is WORSHIP... the PRAISE OF GOD'S GLORIOUS GRACE!
4. That is God's whole purpose in saving us anyway!

B. When God Overwhelms Us... We Worship

John Wesley's Journal, January 1, 1739:

"Mr. Hall, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutching and my brother Charles were present at our Love Feast in Fetter Lane with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer **the power of God came mightily upon us**, insomuch that many cried out for exulting joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.'"

Paul's doxology is simply this: NOW TO GOD BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST FOREVER!!!

Now... let's look carefully at the amazing words of this doxology

IV. The Immeasurable Power of God (vs. 20)

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹

to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

A. Praise to the Omnipotent God!

1. Verses 18-19 focus on the infinite dimensions of Christ's LOVE
2. Verses 20-21 focus on the infinite dimensions of God's POWER

B. God is ABLE to DO IMMEASURABLY MORE...

1. The ability of God to do something is the focus... the POWER of God
2. The verse asserts that you cannot use your own thoughts or conceptions of what God can do to LIMIT GOD... God is able to do IMMEASURABLY MORE than anything that your mind could think, or that you could ask him to do
3. Many verses assert this:

Job 42:1-2 Then Job replied to the LORD: ² "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

Luke 1:34-37 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ ¶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God."

Mark 9:22-23 if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." ²³ "If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

Matthew 19:23-26 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Omnipotence of God: anything that can be done by power, God can do! God's power continually sustains and upholds the universe... every display of creation's power is really a display of God's power

The beginning of our meditation on the power of God must be his achievement in creation... he spoke into existence the entire universe in six days:

Psalm 33:8-9 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. ⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Isaiah 40:26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

C. Immeasurably More Than All We Ask or Imagine

1. Immeasurably More

- a. Immeasurably = "infinitely more" "to an extraordinary degree"... Paul is stretching language to the breaking point...
- b. Just as there is no limit to the universe, or no limit to the power of the sun, so there is no limit to what God can do

2. Immeasurably More than We Can Ask

- a. This is connected with Paul's prayer, as I'll emphasize in a moment
- b. But whatever you ask God for, He can do immeasurably more than that
- c. There is no way to OVERASK... as if you would exhaust the heavenly bank account, **and get an overdraft notice!!**

3. Immeasurably More Than You Can Think (Imagine)

- a. We might hold back in asking because we're afraid of offending someone with an extreme request

- b. God is more likely to be offended by a request that implies his power and resources are TOO LITTLE
- c. So, whatever you ASK God to do, he can do IMMEASURABLY MORE than that
- d. And whatever you THINK God can do... he can do IMMEASURABLY MORE than that
- e. NIV = “imagine”... I like that

What’s the difference between thought and imagination??

Imagination = a stretching of the thoughts to our LIMITS...

That fits the idea... however far you stretch your mind when it comes to God, He is infinitely BEYOND that in capability...IMMEASURABLY MORE

D. Can Be Taken Out of Context with No Harm

1. Usually vital to keep verses in context... but there are some statements in the Bible that can be taken out of context and used anytime, anyplace, with no harm
2. This is one of them
3. We can attach this idea to ANYTHING we would ever pray about
 - a. Perhaps there is a loved one in the hospital, and the diagnosis is very serious... we can pray in faith and quote this to ourselves:

“God, you are able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; please heal him!”

- b. Perhaps we are in financial trouble... or need a job... or are facing a crisis with a company we own... or some other economic challenge

“God, you are able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; please meet our needs!”

- c. Perhaps we are in imminent danger... facing drowning after a boat has sunk... or lost in the woods, or with a hurricane bearing down on us

“God, you are able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; please save us!”

- d. Perhaps you are a missionary, living in a very challenging setting, and no one in the city of 2 million people is a believer as far as you know... you have no idea how to reach the city for Christ

“God, you are able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; please open doors for the gospel to spread in this city!”

- e. Perhaps you are single and would like a spouse... or a couple who is childless and yearn for a baby... or in a foreign country, and need an official to process your request for a government document immediately or you'll miss your flight:

“God, you are able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; please grant our request!”

E. But In Context... Also Very Powerful!!

1. Paul has been praying for the Ephesian Christians to have a sense, to comprehend the dimensions of Christ's love for them
2. That this is not merely an ordinary sense of that love is obvious when we connect verses 17-19 with verses 20-21

Ephesians 3:17-19 I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

3. God is able to pour out into your hearts such an overwhelming experience, such a supernatural sense of what heaven is going to be like that you will NEVER FORGET IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!!!!
4. Kept in context, this doxology shows that we were not barking up the wrong tree when we were speaking of ecstasy of heavenly delight!

V. To God Be Glory in the Church, and in Christ, for Eternity (vs. 21)

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

A. To God be Glory in the CHURCH

1. That's the point of this ecstatic experience... the glory of God on display for all to see!
2. The glory of God in the HOLINESS of the church!

The quest for this experience is a journey of holiness... of putting sin to death, of laying aside every sin that hinders us, of even fasting from some good blessings so we can have even more... such a quest will greatly GLORIFY GOD in the church

3. The glory of God in the SPREAD of the gospel to the lost and unreached of the world!
4. That the church would supernaturally GLOW with a powerful sense of the love of Christ... how WIDE, and LONG, and HIGH, and DEEP... that the church would GLOW with all the FULLNESS of God
5. That the world would yearn to experience such a love, such a hope, that it does not have

Ephesians 2:12 without hope and without God in the world.

6. That we would be FILLED with joy through the foretaste of glory divine... and lost people would beg us to explain why we're so happy

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

B. To God Be Glory IN CHRIST JESUS

1. What does that mean? We have no glory apart from Christ!
2. All of the glory in the church IS God's glory in Christ Jesus!!

Revelation 21:22-24 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.

C. Throughout All Generations! Forever and Ever!! Amen!!!

1. Paul's prayer extends throughout every generation of the church
2. That includes US!!!
3. And, if the Lord doesn't return, our children, and grandchildren!!!

VI. Applications

A. Come to Christ!!! (Non-Christians can't experience this delight)

B. Christians: SEEK THIS EXPERIENCE of the Love of Christ in Your Hearts

1. Flavel again:

“Ecstasy and delight are essential to the believer's soul and they promote sanctification. ... Because the Lord has made himself accessible to us in the means of grace, it is our duty and privilege to seek this experience from Him in these means till we are made the joyful partakers of it.”

2. Seek to know more and more of Christ's love in your hearts!

C. How to Seek??

1. In the “means of grace”

a. Scripture meditation

Romans 10:17 “Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ...”

b. Focused prayer and worship

Psalm 63:1-3 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

Ask God for this... say, “Lord, you are able to do immeasurably more than all I ask or imagine... please give me a vastly greater sense of your love for me than I have ever had before! Give me a foretaste of what heaven will be like! Give me a spiritual vision of heavenly glory, like you did for D.L. Moody, and Sarah Edwards, and Blaise Pascal, and Jonathan Edwards, and Bernard of Clairvaux, and Fanny Crosby...” PLEASE

c. Personal holiness and obedience

John 14:21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him”

John 14:23 “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

i) The Spirit is JEALOUS and will not share us with idols

ii) Whatever you KNOW to be sinful, put it out of your life

d. Self-denial of good blessings (Fasting)

i) Be willing to fast from even some good blessings for a time... like food, or electronic entertainment, or sports, or other hobbies, because by that you are saying THIS MUCH I WANT YOU, O LORD!!

Proverbs 27:7 He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

e. Persistence over a long time

- i) Not the “tarrying meetings” that some Pentecostals have done
- ii) Not ceasing from ordinary life...
- iii) But relentlessly seeking Christ until you are made the JOYFUL PARTAKER of this experience

D. Delight in BOTH the Ordinary vs. Extraordinary Working of the Spirit

1. Ordinary

- i) Illumination of the Scripture
- ii) Conviction of sin
- iii) Meditation/prayer/worship resulting in daily joy in Christ
- iv) Being filled with the Spirit
- v) The testimony of the Spirit that we are God’s children
- vi) The fruit of the Spirit
- vii) The joy of the Spirit

2. Extraordinary: spiritual ecstasy

The ordinary working of the Spirit is SUFFICIENT for a marvelously fruitful Christian life... God is not promising everyone an ecstatic experience... he may or may not give it... but seek it anyway

E. Red Flags and Cautions

- 1. Seeking an experience, not the person of Christ
- 2. Mystical experience severed from scriptural truth

3. Becoming works oriented
 4. Becoming spiritually depressed if it “never happens”... feeling like a second-class citizen
 5. Denigrating the more ordinary working of the Holy Spirit
 6. Becoming spiritually arrogant ... treating others like second-class citizens
- F. Final Appeal:
1. Begin to seek this blessing for yourself and for others
 2. Corporate Prayer, 6 a.m., WEDNESDAY!!!