



STRENGTH TRAINING!

Growing daily in the things that really matter!

The Loving Man!

Ephesians 3:17-19

Message #3 of 4

Sermon given on May 18, 2019



**Men's Retreat Session #3 – Saturday Evening
Tahquitz Pines Conference Center**

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Loving Man!

Ephesians 3:17-19

Opening Comments

- Welcome to session three of **STRENGTH TRAINING: Growing daily in the things that really matter!**
- Turn to **Ephesians 3**
- As a quick recap: last night I shared that men are doers – God made us that way
- We talked about the two aspects of men – the outward man – your body (including physical strength), desires, passions, even your mind
- And the inner man – that part of you that loves and is capable of responding to God
- I challenged you to examine yourself
- The outward man is perishing and everything it does is tainted by that perishing
- The inner man has access through the Holy Spirit to the ‘strength of His might’ – the supernatural power of God
- And everything the inner man does has the fingerprints and aroma of God
- I gave you four exercises to strengthen the inner man
- Be humble – Pray – ask God to strengthen your inner man
- Be spiritual – recognize that everything in life is spiritual
- Be trusting – learn to trust God to act on your behalf – not all on you
- Be obedient – When God wants you to do something – do it! Now!
- This morning Pastor Randy shared the amazing reality that if you are a believer, Christ dwells in your heart – God lives in you!
- And then he explained how that indwelling is experienced through faith
- He gave us two exercises to strengthen our inner man
- Examine yourself – do you have faith? Is it real? Is it complete?
- Work out your Inner Man – You have to commit to doing your part
- This retreat is based on a prayer by the Apostle Paul for the people in the church in Ephesus
- So far, we have looked at

- **Ephesians 3:14-17a**
- Let's look now at our verses for tonight
- **Ephesians 3:17b-19a**
- Let's pray and then look at the next aspect of the inner man
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Loving Man!**
- Pastor Randy said this morning, “Men as we strive to strengthen the inner man, we must gain an understanding and awe that Creator God wants to dwell in our Heart!!!”
- Our ‘inner man’ is the dwelling place of God – Wow!
- Keep your finger in **Ephesians 3** and turn to **1 John 4**
- I have another one – do you know that God loves you?
- Not like when I say I love a good pastrami sandwich
- Paul says the love of Christ ‘passes knowledge’
- **1 John 4:9**
- No matter how much of Christ’s love you experience, you will not fully explore the width and length and depth and height of His love
- And what’s important to our context is that it is the ‘inner man’ that experiences that love
- The outward man cannot know and experience the love of Christ
- That is why men (and women) feel unloved, lonely, empty
- Because they are looking for love, companionship, and purpose with the outward man
- The outward man is perishing – it is always in a state of decay, while the inner man is being renewed day-by-day
- As men, we might not put much emphasis on love
- When it comes to entertainment, we use the derogatory term of ‘chick flick’ to describe a sappy love story
- Personally, I would rather have a root canal than watch a ‘chick flick’ – God is obviously still working on me in that area
- Put a bookmark in **1 John 4** and turn back to **Ephesians 3**
- In Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians inner man to be built up in love there are three parts

- In Greek, verbs are very powerful – they contain a depth and richness that is often not easily translated into English
- One of the parts of Greek language is what is called ‘voice’
- Don’t ask me why it is called that, I don’t know
- Each of the parts of Paul’s prayer regarding love is in a different voice and this teaches us a ton about love
- First part – rooted and grounded
- **Ephesians 3:17b**
- ‘rooted’ = established – idea of a tree whose roots hold the tree firmly in place
- ‘grounded’ – strengthened – idea of a foundation having been laid
- Paul is praying that our inner man would be immovable in the love of Christ
- Both rooted and grounded are in the passive voice
- That means that the subject is being acted upon by an outside force
- ‘that you’ is the subject – the Ephesians and by extension all believers
- The outside force is God through the Holy Spirit
- It is the sovereign work of God to root and ground us in the love of Christ
- While we ought to pray this over our lives, there are two other parts that must be included in our lives
- Second part – ‘able to comprehend’
- **Ephesians 3:18**
- ‘comprehend’ = to grasp intellectually
- How big is the love of God? Infinite! Immeasurable!
- And yet Paul is praying that we would comprehend the width and length and depth and height
- Paul is not referring the infinite love of God
- He is referring to love of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ
- Jesus was God become flesh – He became like us so that He could die for us
- So, while the love of God is immeasurable, the love of Christ can be comprehended – in a sense – it can be measured – how wide, long, deep, and high is the love of Christ
- Remember, the voice for rooted and grounded was passive

- The voice for comprehend is middle voice
- That means there is still an outside force at work, but not with a passive subject – there is a sense of cooperation – both the outside force and the subject are active
- God is sovereignly bringing comprehension, but we play a role in comprehending
- There is a key to comprehend the love of Christ fully that might be easily overlooked in this verse – phrase ‘with all the saints’
- Christianity is not a solo sport – it has always been intended to be a team sport – it is to be a community
- Guys, biblical manhood has been under attack for a long time
- And in the last generation we have seen a rapid erosion of true biblical manhood
- Men are feeling empty, lost, hopeless, unloved because they are not rooted and grounded in love
- And that is mainly because they are neglecting to be ‘with all the saints’ **Hebrews 10:24-25**

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Most of the 18 to 35-year-olds in the US, see no purpose in the gathering together of believers
- If the width and length and depth and height of the love of Christ is comprehended in community, what does that mean for those who won’t engage in the community of Christ?
- Listen, if you aren’t interested in being an active part of the community of Christ or are too busy to be actively involved in comprehending the love of Christ with ‘all the saints’, then you cannot be ‘rooted and grounded’ in love
- If you aren’t rooted and grounded in love, what are you rooted and grounded in?
- The third part – ‘know the love of Christ’
- **Ephesians 3:19a**
- Paul’s prayer is that they would ‘know the love of Christ which passes knowledge’

- That is kind of an odd thing on the surface – praying that they would know something that is beyond their knowledge
- ‘know’ = knowledge attained through experience
- I can say I love pastrami sandwiches because I know what a good pastrami sandwich tastes like because I have experienced it
- Paul’s prayer is that they would experience the love of Christ, which cannot be understood apart from Christ
- The word ‘know’ is in the active voice – which means the subject is the primary force at work
- Being rooted and grounded is solely a work of God
- Comprehending is a cooperative work with God and ‘all the saints’
- Knowing the love of Christ is something I am to actively pursue
- Turn back to **1 John 4**
- I want to give you three exercises so that you can know the love of Christ in your inner man
- **1 John 4:9-16**
- Knowing the love of Christ requires action on my part – you cannot passively know the love of Christ
- The first exercise to strengthen the inner man to know the love of Christ is – **Actively Love One Another**
- Let’s read verse 12 again
- **1 John 4:12**
- The word love can be a verb or a noun – we see both in this verse
- The first is the verb ‘love’ is in the present tense = happening now, active voice
- The second is the noun ‘love’ followed by the word ‘perfected’ there means completed or finished
- As we actively love one another, our experience of the love of Christ is being perfected
- The question should come to mind – how do you actively love one another?
- Turn back a page or two to **1 John 2**
- How many ways are there to love someone? Countless ways!
- How many right ways are there to love one another? One!
- But how do you know what is the right way to love one another?

- **1 John 2:3-6**
- The second exercise to know the love of Christ – **Keep His Word!**
- The old bumper sticker – What would Jesus do?
- Jesus said in Matthew 22 that the two greatest things we can do with our lives is to love God and each other
- Doing that, fulfills the whole law
- All of God’s commands are designed to teach us to love Him and each other
- And as we keep God’s Word the love of God is being perfected in us
- This is a call for obedience
- But how do we obey something we don’t know – third exercise – **Love His Word**
- To love one another the right way, the way Christ would love them in my place, thus perfecting my knowledge of His love, it must be in obedience to God’s Word
- To obey God’s Word, I must know His Word **Psalm 119:127**
Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!
- Early in my faith, God caused me to have a love for His Word
- Now I actively love God’s Word by reading almost every day for the last 22 years
- I also actively love God’s Word by meditating on it, talking to people about it, and teaching it
- To know Christ’s love – love one another
- To love one another the right way – obey God’s commands
- To obey God’s commands – actively love God’s Word
- Doing that will cause you experience Christ’s love
- Which will enable you comprehend just how wide, long, deep, and high Christ’s love is
- Which will result in God rooting and grounding you in His love in your inner man
- Which will enable you to stand firm in your faith strengthened with God’s might in the inner man
- And out of your life will flow power, faith, and love
- A man like that can change the world

- The outward man, your physical self, your desires, passions, and mind cannot do anything truly good – corrupted – perishing
- The inner man strengthened by God, walking in faith, and growing in the knowledge of the love of Christ can do anything
- **Pray!**