



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 4: Made for More

This week in our series “Made for More” we looked at God’s promise to do more than we can imagine, if we give everything over to Him. Now that is an amazing promise and huge way to make an impact!

WEEKLY READING: Ephesians 3: 14-21

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, 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.

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

MONDAY

In verse 20 Paul speaks about how God is able to do “immeasurably more” than we could ever ask or imagine. So what does this mean? Does it mean we should ask God for whatever we want and He will give us whatever we ask for? Not exactly. While we can absolutely ask God for big things, that is a self-focused misinterpretation of these verses. We have to remember that God operates according to **His** will, and not our will. These verses are actually meant to explain that God is working in ways that we can’t always see or understand. He is working in ways that are so much bigger than ourselves, and so far beyond what we can imagine. As it says in Isaiah 55:8-9, God’s ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Shocker - God knows WAY more than us - Amen! This is where our faith comes in. Trusting in the power of a God that is working on a whole other level than what our human brains can comprehend. **Why do we still try to go our own way when God offers us “immeasurably more”? Can you think of instances in your own life where you tried to force something good to happen on your own? Now think about a time that you followed God in faith and He had something so much better than what you could have imagined for yourself.**

Prayer: Lord, show me where I’m operating on my own instead of following you. Help me to trust that your plans are so much greater than mine, and surrender everything over to you.

TUESDAY

At the end of verse 20, it says that we are able to accomplish God’s plans according to His power “within us”. It’s important not to miss the word “us” at the end of verse 20. Many times in our self-focused western culture, seeking God’s purpose for our lives is an individualistic

endeavor. Why would we think God's immeasurably great plans would be for just one person? In Exodus 17:8-14 we see a beautiful and very literal picture of the exact opposite of this. Joshua and his army are called to fight the enemy. During the battle, Moses goes to the top of a mountain to raise the staff of God towards them in a blessing over them. When Moses raises God's staff towards them, Joshua's army wins. However, when Moses gets too tired & weary, the staff falls and Joshua's army starts to lose. Here's the good news - God's plan wasn't for Moses to stand alone in his weariness, and it also wasn't for Joshua to fight alone. God sent Moses to hold God's staff over the battlefield to bless Joshua & his army. Then God sent Aaron and Hur to go with Moses to help in his weariness. They gave Moses a seat to rest, and they took each of his arms and helped him hold up the staff. They all worked together to accomplish God's plan of defeating the enemy. Part of realizing how much bigger God's plans are is realizing that it's not all about us, and we were never meant to carry the weight alone.

Think about a time that God's plans for your life included help from others. Instead of being a plan for you alone, did the inclusion of others create a much broader picture of the plan that God had? Is there an area in your life now that you need to allow others in, or is there an area that you are being called to join into a bigger picture to support God's plan along with someone else?

Prayer: God, show me where I need to prop up someone else's arms, and where I need to sit down and allow others to hold up mine. Help me to open my eyes to see the bigger picture that you have for me.

WEDNESDAY

As much as we may want to see the full picture of God's plans, God cares more about our hearts. He wants us "to know this love that surpasses knowledge". so that you may be "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."...as it says in verse 18-19. God wants our obedience and trust in His great plans for our lives. Throughout the Bible we can see examples of this. In our story yesterday of Moses, they didn't know the full details of the plan. They only knew they had to hold each other up while God battled the enemy through Joshua. Another great example is in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. A great army was coming against Jehoshaphat and he knew there was no way humanly possible they could defeat this army. He was terrified, but turned to God. God in His goodness simply said..."don't be afraid, don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march out against them. But you will not even need to fight...stand still and watch the Lord's Victory. He is with you." God doesn't tell him *how* they would defeat a great army. God just says - go, march and don't be afraid. What did Jehoshaphat do? Did he question God, or try to think of a "plan B" just in case God doesn't come through? No, he obeyed. They marched forward, *before they could see the full plan*, AND they worshiped God as a sign of their confidence in the victory God had promised. That is some seriously bold faith. Afterwards, verse 30 tells us "God gave him rest on every side". In order for God to accomplish His great plans, He wants to work His power through us. The only way for this to happen is for us to trust him & obey. We have to fully surrender to Him. Has God has been calling you to take a step towards something? Have you been waiting for God to present a step by step check-list, or a spreadsheet with all the details, or some kind of a "holy" project roadmap for life? **Pray and write in your journal about the areas where God has called you to take the next step, but you hesitate because you don't know the full picture yet. If you don't know where those areas are, spend time praying for God to show you. What would it look like for you to worship God ahead of knowing the full picture of His great plans for your life?**

Prayer: Lord, forgive me for hesitating to obey. Help me to see the areas that I need to turn over to you in full surrender so that you can accomplish the plans & purpose through your power that are more than I can imagine.

THURSDAY

Sometimes God doesn't show us the full picture of His plans because we aren't ready to see it yet. We might think we are, and we might think it would help us to know the end of the story, but God knows in His infinite wisdom knows that sometimes we need to wait. There are times that knowing the end of the story would cause fear, misunderstanding or even disobedience. Many times in the Bible people responded very poorly to the prophets when they shared God's plans. Even the disciples struggled with this. Every time Jesus shares a bit of a "spoiler alert" about God's plans, the disciples respond with panic and fear. In Matthew 16:21-25 Jesus tells His disciples that He will die, suffer and then come back in 3 days. Instead of realizing this was the greatest redemption story of all time, instead of joy over God's amazing plan for all humanity, this immediately results in Peter literally rebuking God. Of course, Peter gives us all a good life lesson in what happens when you rebuke God as Jesus responds in saying "get behind me satan". Peter couldn't handle the end of the story, he wasn't ready to know God's full plan and he couldn't comprehend it. Sometimes, all we can handle is the next right step. Our human brains aren't meant to be on the same level as God's, and we can't always bear the weight of His mighty plans. **What is your next right step? What are the obstacles in the way of you saying YES to God? Where do you need to let go of trying to see the end of the story, and just have faith?**

Prayer: Lord, show me the next step. Show me where I'm waiting to see more of your plans, and I just need to step out in faith.

FRIDAY

When we look at Ephesians 3:20-21, it's good to recognize that these verses are a conclusion for the previous verses 14-19. Read those two sections separately and prayerfully ask the Spirit to open your heart and mind to what this means. The "immeasurable more" purpose and plan in verses 20-21 is possible: because of the "strength with power through his Spirit", because of Christ "dwelling in your hearts through faith", because of being "rooted and established in love", because of "the power, together with all the Lord's people", and because of fully grasping Christ's love you are "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God". This is a good reminder that before we can join with God in His "immeasurably more" plans we need to: 1. Be filled with the Spirit and rooted in His love, 2. Be joined with a body of believers, 3. Operate in His power through faith and obedience. Once we open our hearts to operating in this way through His strength, we get to rejoice in goodness of verses 20-21. It's not a solo quest or a special plan just for you, it's not even fully accomplished in our lifetime. As it says in verse 21, God's immeasurably more plans, purpose and impact are together "in the church" and continues "through all generations forever and ever"!!

Pray over each of these questions and write the answers as a prayer in your journal. Ask God to help you as you learn to operate in His strength. Share these with your small group and help hold each other accountable. If you don't have a small group - maybe that's your answer to one of these questions.

- 1. Where do you need to go deeper in order to live a Spirit filled life rooted and grounded in His love?**
- 2. Where do you need go deeper in your church to join what God is calling us to do together as a body of believers?**
- 3. Where do you need to obey God and step out in faith?**