



INSIDE

MINISTRY ENDORSEMENT

**Dr. Ben Carson** .....2  
*Former Secretary of U.S.  
 Department of Housing and  
 Urban Development*

VERSE OF THE WEEK

**Ephesians 3:16–17**.....3

FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

*Jonathan Trumbull*.....5  
*John Jay*.....6  
*Francis Scott Key*.....7

ABOUT

**Capitol Ministries**.....8



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# How to Be Strengthened with His Power in Office



**A**n unknown author recorded the following true story:

A certain rich English eccentric named Julian Ellis Morris liked to dress like a tramp and sell razor blades, soap, and shampoo door to door. After a day's work he would return to his beautiful

*Continued next page*

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*The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible study sponsor.*



## PUBLIC SERVANT QUOTE

### Dr. Ben Carson

*Former Secretary of  
U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development*



Dr. Ben Carson spoke at a Capitol Ministries event. After his remarks, a former member of Parliament who sponsored a Capitol Ministries discipleship Bible study in his European nation asked: “For more than 30 years, I have been involved in battles when I take a stand on moral issues faithful to the Word of God. These are very powerful battles. When you are criticized, how do you fight these fights and keep integrity and succeed?”

Dr. Carson responded: “We need to recognize that we are not in control, that God is in control. He tells us what is required of us in His Word and the results are up to Him.

“I expect to be attacked. I know I will be attacked, because Jesus

*Continued on page 4*

mansion, put on formal attire and have his chauffeur drive him to an exclusive restaurant in his limousine. Sometimes he would catch a flight to Paris and spend the evening there.<sup>1</sup>

The author goes on to make the point of this week’s study, stating,

Many Christians live something like Mr. Morris, spending their day-by-day lives in apparent spiritual poverty and only occasionally enjoying the vast riches of His glory that their heavenly Father has given them. How tragic to go around in the tattered rags of our own inadequacy when we could be living sumptuously in the superabundance of God’s unspeakable riches.<sup>2</sup>

As you read, “How to Be Strengthened with His Power in Office,” may God’s Word speak to you as to how you may live sumptuously in the superabundance of God’s unspeakable riches.

Read on, my friend!

Ralph Drollinger

## I. INTRODUCTION

Let us examine in careful detail a great passage of Scripture found in Ephesians 3:16–17:

*That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith....*

The passage is a prayer of Paul’s. He is praying the following idea: “Lord, give believers the capacity to know all of what they have in Christ so that these Ephesian believers will come to grips with the immense multidimensional prosperity that is made available to each one of them—and to every other

believer—through their faith in Christ!” Like many today, the Ephesian believers had a limited understanding as to what belonged to them because of their salvation in Christ. From this prayer, let us examine three beautiful spiritual riches that vividly unfold.

## II. THE DELIVERER OF HIS POWER

*That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory...*

It is normative for the believer to be strengthened with power from above. Paul begins his prayer *That He would grant you* with a tautological style that is like his first prayer in Ephesians 1:17–18 that states:



♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

## Ephesians 3:16–17

*That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*

What do I mean by *tautological*? *Tautology* is the repetition of an idea. In other words, Paul is being redundant in our home passage to convey repeatedly the same thought once again for the purpose of emphasis. Paul uses this common written communication technique to emphasize the point he is making (unlike in preaching, wherein the speaker can raise his voice) (cf. Philip- pians 3:1; Galatians 1:8–9). Both *that he would grant you* and *that the Father of glory, may give you* are similar ideas: Paul’s praying in both passages reveals that he’s interceding for them (cf. 3:14), asking God to *grant* and *give* respectively. Note more precisely that Paul is not praying that God would *grant* and *give* what will follow as if they did not already possess these things (cf. Colos- sians 2:10). Rather, context suggests that he is praying God would *grant* and *give* what is to follow in a way that befits what has already been bequeathed by Him and exists in the believer at the point of salvation. Keep in mind as you study this passage that the idea of God’s having chosen and empowered the believer is something Paul has already established at the outset of his Ephesian letter (cf. Ephesians 1:4).

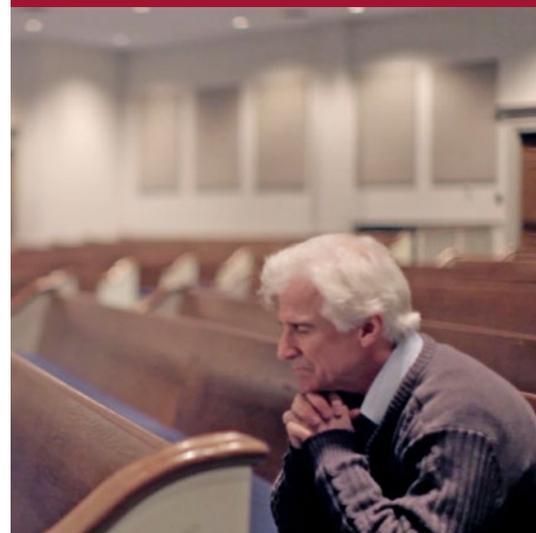
Notice the ways in which he will now describe what has been *granted* the believer: first, what has been *granted* is *according to the riches of His glory*. This phrase begins with *according*, thus indicating that the believer is empowered

with strength *corresponding* to the One giving it. The Greek word for *according* is in contradistinction to the idea of “out of.” Let me explain. For a millionaire to give \$100 is to give *out of* his riches. For him to give \$200,000 is to give *accord- ing to his riches*. Paul’s inspired prayer informs us that the believer’s strength- ening is *according to* the One granting it! Romans 11:36 provides additional insight into this corresponding deliv- ery capacity of God: *For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things....* The first portion of this pro- found passage provides a tight synop- sis of God’s huge riches in ways more than physical! Similarly illustrating, in a parallel passage from Colossians, Paul prayed that believers would be *strenght- ened with all power, according to His glorious might* (1:11). The grantor of strength is able to provide abundant strength corresponding to His capac- ity! How? God *grants according to the riches of His glory*!

Now add to this the last aspect of this stanza: God *grants in accordance* with *His glory*. Philippians 4:19 states the same idea stereophonically: *And my God will supply all your needs accord- ing to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

**His glory is the summing up of all His attributes, character, and manifest actions.**

The believer is strengthened in *accor- dance* with all of this! It follows then that Christians who understand these profound truths should exhibit abun- dantly more character, strength, and resulting fruitfulness in our personal and professional life than unbelievers, or believers who are naive to his standing in Christ (i.e., the truths presently being explicated).



May you be strengthened by the Spirit!





*Continued from page 2*

said if you do this and follow me you will be persecuted.

“If you want everyone to love you, maybe you don’t take a stand, but if you do that, are you really doing what God has called you to do?”

“What we experience here, the attacks and the battles, they’re nothing against the backdrop of eternity.”

Political leaders who are strong in Christ should not be living like Julian Ellis Morris did during the daytime! (*See my prologue.*) Beloved fellow believers, do you live as though you are disconnected from or naive to your eternal source of power?

### III. THE DESTINATION OF HIS POWER

*To be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man...*

Having substantiated the credible and omnipotent source of power available to and in the believer’s life, Paul continues in his manifest prayer, now describing God’s specific desired destination for all that indwelling power. We have already foreshadowed this destination in our study—and that is for all believers to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man. A common relationship exists that is found throughout the New Testament (NT) between the Holy Spirit and the believer’s empowerment because *strengthening with power* is one of the Holy Spirit’s ministries. This idea is normative for the believer as the following numerous passages underscore this idea:

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth”* (Acts 1:8).

*Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 1:4).

*And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom,*

*but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power* (1 Corinthians 2:4).

*For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake* (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

It follows that *to be strengthened with power* implies that the believer should not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit who indwells him at the point of his salvation (cf. Romans 8:9).

### To grieve or quench the Holy Spirit is to cut off your power supply!

Paul specifically states this idea later in his letter to the Ephesians when he writes in 4:30, *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* He tells the Thessalonians in his first letter to them (5:19): *Do not quench the Spirit.* To the contrary, in order to live powerfully the believer must *be filled with the Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18) and *walk by the Spirit* (Galatians 5:16). To do so is to fuse God’s power directly into your *inner man!* When this fusion occurs and is consistent over a time span, there will be outwardly identifiable characteristics. Galatians 5:22–23 calls these characteristics the fruit of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.* *Walking in the Spirit,* being empowered by the Holy Spirit, always equates to the believer’s manifesting increasingly His attributes, character, and actions! *Walking in the power of the Holy Spirit* is both critical and progressive. That is to say, we should walk in the Spirit in contrast to quenching or grieving the



indwelling Holy Spirit in order to bear fruit in the moment. Walking in the Spirit also means that those who have walked in the Spirit for a greater interval of time will have borne more fruit than those who have walked in the Spirit for a shorter time frame.

What exactly does the indwelling Holy Spirit directing God's power into the *inner man* (*eso anthropos*) mean?

The sphere in which the strengthening is to take place is "the inner person," it is [best] to understand the inner person as the "interior of our being...the seat of personal consciousness...and our moral being." It is the focal point at the center of a person's life where the Spirit does His strengthening and renewing work. Indeed, the inner self stands in need of empowering given our struggle against sin (Romans 7:22).<sup>3</sup>

Paul refers to this *inner man* in 2 Corinthians 4:16b when he says, ***though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*** That renewal is such good news for someone whose outer man is worn out by basketball and mountain climbing! Albeit our physical bodies are decaying and becoming increasingly weaker with age, our *inner spiritual man* should continue to grow stronger and stronger the longer we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit! Isn't that news encouraging? God's Spirit will continually and increasingly strengthen your *inner man* for as long as you live—if you continue to yield to Him! So strong is this indwelling Spirit in the *inner man* that it can slay the evil deeds of our flesh! States Romans 8:13b: ***but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.***

In Galatians 5:16b Paul echoes this idea when he states, ***Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*** Is that true in your life? Are you walking in obedience to God's Word? If you are, then you can rest assured that He is empowering and improving you daily! You are being ***strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man!*** Amen! Keep it up, dear friend!

#### IV. THE DESIRE OF HIS POWER

***So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...***

Many are the biblical reasons for God's empowering the believer. Among these reasons is the clause, ***that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*** What exactly does this phrase mean?

*Inner man* (*eso anthropos*) and *heart* (*kardia*) carry a similar Greek NT meaning. *Inner man* contrasts with *outer man* (*exo anthropos*) in Pauline word usage throughout the NT. Both are in reference to those made in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). But the differentiation is this: *exo* is used by Paul to refer to the physical and mortal side of man whereas *eso* is used to describe "The inward man [as] the true self, yearning for the life of the Spirit... It is the essential self...that passes from the body of the flesh to the body of the resurrection."<sup>4</sup> *Heart* (*kardia*, from which we derive the English word *cardiology*, i.e., "the study of the physical heart in medicine") is used in the NT to mean "supremely the one center in man to which God turns, in which religious life is rooted, which determines moral conduct."<sup>5</sup> God opens the heart and illuminates in the miracle of salvation.

Jonathan Trumbull



He called on the State of Connecticut to pray that ...

**"God would graciously pour out His Spirit upon us and make the blessed Gospel in His hand effectual to a thorough reformation and general revival of the holy and peaceful religion of Jesus Christ."**

— Jonathan Trumbull, judge, legislator, governor of Connecticut, confidant of George Washington, who called him "Brother Jonathan."

Jonathan Trumbull, governor of Connecticut, *A Proclamation for a Day of Public Thanksgiving*, October 12, 1770.



John Jay



“Condescend, merciful Father! to grant as far as proper these imperfect petitions, to accept these inadequate thanksgivings, and to pardon whatever of sin hath mingled in them for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior; unto Whom, with Thee, and the blessed Spirit, ever one God, be rendered all honor and glory, now and forever.”

— John Jay, president of Congress, diplomat, author of *The Federalist Papers*, original chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor of New York.

William Jay, *The Life of John Jay* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), Vol. I, 518, Appendix V, from a prayer found among Mr. Jay’s papers and in his handwriting.

Note this usage in Acts 16:14: *A woman named Lydia...was listening; and the Lord opened her heart (kardia) to respond to the things spoken by Paul.* More broadly understood throughout the NT than the specific act of salvation (as important as it is to understand that subject), the word *heart* is used to indicate the center of the inner life of man. It is the *seat* and *source* of each of the three aspects that best define the overall composition of man: his body, soul, and spirit.

The crux word to properly understanding this portion of our passage under study is the word *dwell* (*katoikeo*). This word *dwell* does not refer to the initial indwelling of Christ at the point of salvation, but rather to His continual abiding presence. After all, every believer is *indwelt* by Christ at the point of *salvation* as indicated by the following numerous passages:

*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test* (2 Corinthians 13:5).

*To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Colossians 1:27).

In our passage under study, the mention of *indwelling* is unrelated to salvation but rather related to sanctification. The verb *katoiko* means “to settle down,” “to dwell fixedly in a place.” *Katoiko* is used similarly in Colossians 1:19 and 2:9, referring to the totality of God’s attributes and the powers of the Godhead *dwelling* in Christ. Notice this

respectively: *For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him...For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.*

Now add to this the following: in the Greek, two words translate into the English *dwell*. The other Greek word is *paroikeo*, which is used in the NT to refer to a sojourner’s *dwelling* like Abraham, a foreigner’s *dwelling* in a land that does not belong to him. My point in bringing up this second word for *dwell* is this: had Paul meant verse 17 of our study passage to mean *dwell* in a soteriological sense, a salvific sense, he would have utilized this word instead. Accordingly, Paul is praying that the believer would have Christ take up a *permanent, ongoing* residence in the center of his being, wherein his intellect, emotions, volition, personality, and thoughts originate! He is praying that Christ will be the absolute center of your life! Is He?

Implied in the words of Paul in this passage is that Jesus Christ would rule over all that we are and do! Paul is praying that the believer would have Christ control him as his rightful owner!

Does He control your *heart*, your *inner man*?

This prayer is in keeping with Paul’s thesis or application of earlier positional truths in the epistle: *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world... He predestined us to adoption as sons... For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them*” (Ephesians 1:4, 5, 2:10). It is in accordance with these earlier propositional truths that we find Paul praying in chapter 3 that God would give them the capacity to understand



and make continually real these earlier expounded significant truths! If what was said earlier is true, then Christ by all means should *dwell* fixedly in place! Christ is not just inside your life but at home in your life! Perhaps the best picture of Christ's indwelling, being completely at home in your life, is provided by Robert Boyd Munger in his book, *My Heart, Christ's Home*. He states:

[The Christian life is pictured] as a house, through which Jesus goes from room to room. In the library, which is the mind, Jesus finds trash and all sorts of worthless things, which He proceeds to throw out and replace with His Word. In the dining room of appetite He finds many sinful desires listed on a worldly menu. In the place of such things as prestige, materialism, and lust He puts humility, meekness, love, and all the other virtues for which believers are to hunger and thirst. He goes through the living room of fellowship, where He finds many worldly companions and activities, through the workshop, where only toys are being made, into the closet, where hidden sins are kept, and so on through the entire house. Only when He had cleaned every room, closet, and corner of sin and foolishness could He settle down and be at home.<sup>6</sup>

**Christ cannot be at home  
in our hearts until our  
inner man submits to  
His empowering.**

Munger's picture of what it means to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit is

authenticated further by what Jesus said in John 14:23, "*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*"

Further states a leading commentator in summary fashion regarding this passage:

Jesus enters the house of our hearts the moment He saves us, but He cannot live there in comfort and satisfaction until it is cleansed of sin and filled with His will. God is gracious beyond comprehension and infinitely patient. He continues to love those of His children who insist on spurning His will. But He cannot be happy or satisfied in such a heart. He cannot be fully at home until He is allowed to dwell in our hearts through the continuing faith that trusts Him to exercise His lordship over every aspect of our lives.<sup>7</sup>

## V. SUMMARY

Lastly, this *indwelling* in the *heart* is *through faith*.

A synonym for *faith* is trust. In other words,

As they trust Him, He makes their hearts His home. The implication of the apostle's prayer is that the more the Spirit empowers one's life the greater will be their transformation into the likeness of Christ, a point that will be developed throughout the second half of the letter.<sup>8</sup>

As a believer, you will be *strengthened with His power* to the degree that you are obedient to the will of God. It is

*Francis Scott Key*



**"[M]ay I always hear that you are following the guidance of that blessed Spirit that will lead you into all truth, leaning on that Almighty arm that has been extended to deliver you, trusting only in the only Savior, and going on in your way to Him rejoicing."**

— Francis Scott Key, U. S. attorney for the District of Columbia, author of the Star Spangled Banner.

Hugh A. Garland, *The Life of John Randolph of Roanoke* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1853), Vol. II, 104, from Francis Scott Key to John Randolph.



directly proportional. So do you want to be powerful in D.C.? Do you want to change the direction America is headed? Do you want to make your time on the Hill count? Then may I suggest to you, as per this powerful and insightful passage we have studied, that God says this to you: “The degree to which you are obedient to My revealed will in Scripture is the degree to which I will empower you with My strength to do the job.” May God use this lesson in your life in a wonderful way, my friend.

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Capitol Ministries  
Mail Processing Center  
Post Office 30994  
Phoenix, AZ 85046  
661.288.2622  
capmin.org

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1. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1986), 104.
2. *Ibid.*, 104.
3. W. David Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man*, (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1956), 211–12.
4. Friedrich Baumgärtel and Johannes Behm, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 611–13.
5. Note that there are three views of the makeup of man known as the trichotomist, dichotomist, and monist views. The first views man as body, soul, and spirit, while the second sees the soul and spirit as one and the same. The monist holds to no distinction. The debate centers around 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which I would view along with Mark 12:30 and Matthew 22:37 as emphatic expressions delineating the specificity of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying process—versus an anthropological exegesis of man’s makeup.
6. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1986), 107.
7. *Ibid.*, 107.
8. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians. The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 259.