

**Ephesians 3:11—This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,**

“*Eternal purpose*” can actually be translated “the purpose of the ages.” This “*purpose*” has existed in God’s heart from eternity past and, of course, has “*eternal*” significance. God’s “*eternal purpose*” is the unveiling of the mystery through the Person of His Son.

As the church’s understanding of Jesus grows, and as she increasingly comprehends the privilege of living “*in Him*” (2Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:6), Who is the “*mystery*” (Colossians 2:2), she cherishes more deeply His Person—which results in greater praise. The angels’ adoration of God is also naturally bolstered. Yes, God desires praise from His children (Hebrews 13:15), His angels (Psalm 148:2; Hebrews 1:6), in fact, all His creation (Psalm 10:6; 69:34; 148:3-9). Before concluding, however, that God yearns to be worshiped due to an unhealthy ego, or that He can’t exist without it, consider the following passage:

*neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; (Acts 17:25)*

God suggests worship for our benefit, not His. Only through beholding God’s glory and majesty do we grasp His perception of life (2Corinthians 3:18) and enter into His “*joy*” (Psalm 16:11; 147:1). God desires to be worshiped for the good of the worshiper, again proving His commitment to the principle of the cross, a selfless principle that has governed the Godhead from eternity past. What has been stated relates well to verse 12.

**Ephesians 3:12—in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.**

If God’s desire is that the created realm worship Him, then the body of Christ must understand what grants New Testament believers access to His throne. Many saints are deficient in the area of worship because they “*feel*” unworthy to enter God’s presence. The key words in verse 12, therefore, are “*in whom,*” especially since the last words in verse 11 are “*in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Only because we are in Jesus do “*we have boldness and confident access*” (Ephesians 3:12). In Ephesians 1:3-4 we discovered that “*in Him*” we have been made into holy and blameless saints, blessed with every spiritual blessing. We are not lowly sinners saved by grace! In fact, once we repented and believed while depraved, God made us the righteousness of Himself (2Corinthians 5:21)! Hence, Paul states, “*in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him*” (Ephesians 3:12). The apostle John, realizing this truth, writes:

*...And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;*  
(1John 2:1)

Jesus, our “*great high priest*” (Hebrews 4:14), not only died for us, but also intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:34) before the Father. Thus, when sin disrupts our fellowship with the Father (notice that I said “*fellowship*” and not “*relationship*”), confession restores our passion for worship. The enemy would have us believe that worship can coexist with unconfessed sin—a lie from the pit.

**Ephesians 3:13—Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.**

Many “*tribulations*” came Paul’s way as he preached the mystery. In fact, after completing his third missionary journey, Paul’s return to Jerusalem was inundated with false accusations from the unbelieving Jews (Acts 21:17-22:24) due to his involvement with the Gentiles (Acts 21:27-29; 22:21-22). The church

at Ephesus was well aware of the price Paul paid. Thus, he encourages the Gentiles at Ephesus “*not to lose heart*” at his “*tribulations*” (Ephesians 3:13). Evidently, Paul’s many trials were disheartening to his readers. Paul basically says, “Don’t concern yourself with what I have suffered, *for they are your glory*” (Ephesians 3:13). Paul’s sufferings actually enhanced the cause of Christ (Philippians 1:12) and were of great value to the Ephesians, for as Paul was strengthened in his sufferings the Ephesians would be strengthened in theirs—resulting in much “*glory*” (2Corinthians 4:17). Consequently, Paul states regarding his sufferings, “*for they are your glory*” (Ephesians 3:13).

### **Ephesians 3:14—For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,**

Paul begins verse 14 with, “*For this reason.*” Because the Ephesians were discouraged and on the verge of losing heart (Ephesians 3:13), Paul prays for them—“*I bow my knees before the Father*” (Ephesians 3:14). No doubt existed as to Whom Paul was bowing when he prayed. He bowed “*before the Father,*” the God capable of answering prayer.

Intercessory prayer brings about remarkable results from the Father (read Exodus 17:8-13). Paul, a true prayer warrior, who believed so much in prayer that he encouraged the church at Thessalonica to “*pray without ceasing*” (1Thessalonians 5:17), used the most powerful resource imaginable to minister to the needs of the church at Ephesus. He prayed for them! His use of the phrase, “*I bow my knees,*” does not necessitate that this same posture be assumed by everyone who prays. Although passages such as Psalm 95:6, Ezra 9:5, and Daniel 6:10 confirm that kneeling is proper, prayer is a matter of the heart—not the position of the body.

The prayers of the saints have sustained me while pursuing God’s call upon my life. I am certain that you could say the same in regard to your particular calling. Because God honors the prayers of His people, Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus.