

**Eph 3:17b-18 Grounded in Christ's Love  
in order that you, being rooted and grounded in love.**

Having stated the petition, Paul now gives the reason for the prayer: he wants the Ephesians to really understand Christ's deep and abiding love for them, and also demonstrate this deep love for one another. The word here for "love" is agape. This is the kind of love that we should have for all people, even for our enemies. It is a selfless kind of love that Christians must have in regard to acting in the best interest for all human beings." **Matt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**" The idea of agape, the kind of love that God wants us to express, is a free choice toward someone to show them affection, whether they deserve it or not. Agape is not a love of the worthy, but regardless of worthiness, and it is not a love that desires to possess, but to set free. Agape is a love given despite the lack of merit in the person loved, and it is a love that seeks to give. Agape is self-sacrificial love. Agape love seeks the highest good in the one loved.

So, the love that we are supposed to be rooted and grounded in is agape love toward God: Romans 12:1 **Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.** And, we are to have this self-sacrificing love toward other believers: John 13:34-5 **4 I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."** And John 15:12-13 **12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.** So, it's talking about our expression of Agape love, but we also must realize that, even after salvation, this grace of love does not have its source in human beings, but in God. Christian love always has its source in God's love. We see this clearly in 1 John 4:19-20 **19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and yet he hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother and sister whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.** We love because He first loved us! So, it's only through experiencing God's love that we can learn to love others like this.

The purpose for our being rooted and grounded in love is for the purpose of having the ability to comprehend the love of Christ. We're not going to be able to understand and appreciate the love of Christ if we don't understand His love for us. And it's our being rooted and grounded in His love that gives us the ability to understand His love for us. It's a cycle of receiving love from God, being rooted and grounded in it, and then sharing it with others, resulting in an inexhaustible supply of love from God to share. This word rhizoo ριζόω, has the idea "to cause to root", or "to become firmly rooted", or "to take root." It speaks of growth in the Christian life through love. We see this in Col 2:6-7 **Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.** Being rooted in Him is making a firm determination to live for Christ, walking in our relationship with Him. And this is important, because the World, the forces of the enemy, and our own fleshly desires are going to try to pull us away from Christ. And, if we don't make sure and put our roots, our being deep into Christ, then when the troubles, trials, persecutions, etc. come, then they are going to succeed in pulling us away from Him. We see this shallowness of relationship with Christ in the Parable of the Sower. This type of heart won't let go of it's sin, it's own way of doing things, and so does not put roots down deep into Christ so that they can withstand the hard times. Jesus put it like this in Mark 4:16-17 **16 And in a similar way these are the ones sown with seed on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; 17 and yet they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately they fall away.** The second metaphor is from architecture. It uses the word Themelioo θεμελιόω, which means "to found, lay the foundation of" a building. We must build our lives on the

foundation of Jesus. He says something similar in Matthew 7:24-27 **24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”**

**“in order that you [being rooted and grounded in love] might be able to comprehend with all the saints.”** When Paul says that we might be able to comprehend Christ’s love, he uses a word that means “to have strength enough, be able,” as the ability to restrain our human nature, our sin nature, and allow the Holy Spirit to influence us to act like Christ. The word for comprehend here is really *katalambano(w) καταλαμβάνω*, which means “to seize, lay hold of,” “to grasp, understand, comprehend” mentally.

So Paul is saying “that God may grant you to be strengthened in the inner person with the result that Christ may dwell in your hearts in order that you, having been rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend” with all the saints. Growth in the individual believer cannot occur in isolation but must be accomplished in context with other believers, and ALL believers, not just the ones that we prefer, or like, or think are most like us!

**what is the breadth and length and height and depth.**

These four words, expressing measurement, the four dimensions refer to the love of Christ. The context itself is about Christ who dwells deeply in believers’ hearts (v. 17) and believers who are to know the love of Christ (v. 19). Verse 19 explains the parts of verse 18. The spatial dimensions fit well with the agricultural and architectural metaphors in verse 17 where they refer to the love in which believers are rooted and grounded. There are 3 dimensions in our 3-dimensional world, the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension is time, and this serves to express the timeless love of God that endures forever.