

## Colossians 1:9-14 Paul Prays for the Colossians

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## Introduction

Every Christian can minister directly to the spiritual well-being of other believers without seeing or speaking to them. We can play a role in their spiritual growth, and even secure God's blessings for them. The amazing means is prayer.

While Paul gives instruction to the Colossians, he also shares something of his prayers for them. This passages gives a sample of Paul's ministry of prayer on their behalf. His prayer contains two elements: petition (vv. 9–11), and praise (vv. 12–14).

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## Colossians 1:9-14

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

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## The Petition

Colossians 1:9

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**For this reason** refers to the favorable report Paul had received from Epaphras in verse 8. Since the day Paul heard that report, he had been praying for the Colossians. People often do not pray for those who are doing well. Most prayer focuses on those who are struggling, facing difficulties, or fallen into sin or physical distress. Knowing that others are growing in their faith should not cause us to stop praying for them.

Rather, it should encourage prayer for them more. People who are growing in Christ attracts the enemy's attention.

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Praying without ceasing demands **an attitude of God-consciousness**. It is to view everything in life in relation to God. When we meet someone, we should consider where they stand with God. If we hear of a situation, we react by praying for God to act in that situation. When we hear good news, we respond by giving praise to God. When Paul looked around his world, everything he saw prompted him to prayer in some way. When he thought of or heard about one of his beloved churches, it moved him to prayer.

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**A second aspect of unceasing prayer is to be people-consciousness.** We cannot effectively pray for people unless we are aware of their needs. Paul will exhort the Colossians to keep alert in prayer (4:2), while to the Ephesians he wrote, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18).

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The two elements of praying without ceasing came together in Paul's prayer life. His love for God led him to seek unbroken communion with Him. His love for people drove him to unceasing prayer on their behalf.

The prayers of Paul recorded in his letters reveal his heart and are models for us.

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Paul's petition is that the Colossians be filled with the knowledge of His will. The word filled means "to be completely filled, or totally controlled". The disciples' hearts were filled with sorrow when Jesus told them of His departure (John 16:6). Luke 5:26 states the crowd was filled with fear after Jesus healed the paralytic. The scribes and Pharisees were filled with rage after Jesus healed on the Sabbath (Luke 6:11). The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31), while Stephen was full of faith (Acts 6:5). In each case they were totally under the control of what filled them.

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Paul wants the Colossians to be totally controlled by **knowledge**. *Epignōsis* (**knowledge**) consists of the normal Greek word for *knowledge* (*gnōsis*) with an added preposition (*epi*), which intensifies the meaning. The knowledge Paul wants the Colossians to have is a deep and thorough knowledge of God's will.

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Our society today denies absolutes especially in the area of morals. Without a source of authority to provide absolute standards, virtually anything goes. What moral values are enforced are often arbitrary and based on human opinion. Christians have the authoritative Word of God that provides absolutes. Those absolutes are the basis upon which all truth about God and all standards of faith and conduct are set. Because knowledge of those absolutes is the basis for correct behavior and ultimate judgment, it is crucial that Christians know God's revealed truth (His will).

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Having the knowledge of God's Word control our minds is the key to righteous living. What controls your thoughts will control your behavior. Self-control is a result of mind-control, which is dependent on knowledge. Knowledge of God's Word will lead to all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Wisdom refers to the ability to collect and concisely organize principles from Scripture. Understanding is a more specialized term, referring to the application of those principles to everyday life. Both of these have the Holy Spirit as their source.

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How does one get understanding?

1. You must desire it. John 7:17 states that if one desires to do God's will, they will know and recognize truth (Genter paraphrase).
2. You must depend on the Holy Spirit. It is through Him that we know the things God has revealed to us (1 Cor. 2:10–12).
3. You must study the Scriptures. 2 Tim. 3:16–17 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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Paul prays that the knowledge we have would be of His will. God's will is not a secret; He has revealed it in His Word.

- God's desire that a person be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- God's will is that he be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:17–18)
  - Sanctification is God's will. (1 Thess. 4:3).
- God will is to be submissive to our authorities. (1 Pet. 2:13, 15).
- Giving thanks is God's will. Paul writes, "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:17).

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### So What ...

A mind saturated with Biblical knowledge will be able to comprehend the principles of godly behavior. With wisdom will come the understanding of how to apply those principles to the situations of life. This progression will result in Godly character and practice.

Where are you in this journey? Let us pray for one another that God would take us deep into His knowledge and wisdom!

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