

Colossians 1:9-14 Paul Prays for the Colossians

1

Introduction

We are looking at the importance of prayer. Believers should be praying for each other. Not just when one is facing difficulty, but also when they are growing and maturing in the faith.

To be effective in prayer, we need to be God-centered - to see the world and situations from His perspective. We also need to be people-centered and be concerned for their spiritual needs and wellbeing of others.

2

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; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

3

The Petition

Colossians 1:9

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;

Last week we studied how Paul prayed that the Colossians **be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.**

Paul wants believers to have the knowledge of God's will.

Wisdom is to know God's truth and be able to see people and situations from God's perspective. Understanding is to be able to apply the knowledge of God's truth to the people and situations of daily life.

Today we will look at the **five purposes that are fulfilled in spiritual knowledge.**

4

A Worthy Walk

Colossians 1:10a

that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him

Walk is used in the Bible to refer to one's pattern of daily conduct. A mind controlled by knowledge, wisdom, and understanding produces a life **worthy of the Lord**. Although it seems impossible that anyone could walk worthy of the Lord, that is the teaching of Scripture. Paul desired the Thessalonians to "walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). He exhorted the Ephesians to "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Eph. 4:1). He told the Philippians to "let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).

5

A Worthy Walk

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God has not left us to our own resources for walking worthy. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Christ dwells in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Paul prayed for the Ephesians "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you" (Eph. 3:16–17). **Trying to walk worthy in our own strength is doomed to failure.**

6

A Worthy Walk

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The New Testament describes several features of the worthy walk. We are to walk in **humility** (Eph. 4:1–3); in **purity** (Rom. 13:13, KJV); in **contentedness** (1 Cor. 7:17); **by faith** (2 Cor. 5:7); in **good works** (Eph. 2:10); **different from the world** (Eph. 4:17–32); in **love** (Eph. 5:2); **in light** (Eph. 5:8); in **wisdom** (Eph. 5:15); and in **truth** (3 John 3–4). Such a walk will please Him in all respects.

7

A Fruitful Life

Colossians 1:10b

being fruitful in every good work

Fruitfulness also results from knowledge. Fruit is the by-product of righteousness. It is the mark of every redeemed individual. Jesus said in John 15:8, “By this My Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples” (cf. vv. 2, 5–6). Paul told the Romans, “you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should **bear fruit to God**” (Rom. 7:4).

8

A Fruitful Life

Colossians 1:10b

being fruitful in every good work

The Bible defines fruit in various ways. Here Paul speaks of bearing fruit in every good work.

Converts are referred to as fruit (1 Cor. 16:15; Rom. 1:13)

Praise is referred to as fruit (Hebrews 13:15).

Giving money can also be fruit (Rom. 15:26–28).

Godly living is fruit (Heb. 12:11).

Holy attitudes of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23).

9

A Fruitful Life

Colossians 1:10b

being fruitful in every good work

What produces fruit in believers' lives? First, **Abiding in Christ**. Jesus said in John 15:4–5, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Second, **wisdom** is a necessary prerequisite for bearing fruit. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). Lack of fruit is directly related to lack of spiritual wisdom.

10

A Fruitful Life

Colossians 1:10b
being fruitful in every good work

Finally, **diligent effort** on the Christian's part is required, as Peter writes:

2 Peter 1:5-8

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11

Growth

Colossians 1:10c
and increasing in the knowledge of God

Spiritual growth is progressing **in the knowledge of God**. The tense of the word **knowledge** indicates the means by which our **increasing**, or growth, takes place. The knowledge of God revealed in His Word is crucial to spiritual growth. This is combined with the Holy Spirit who unites with our own efforts. Without the Spirit, we could not grow.

Some marks of spiritual growth include:

1. A deeper love for God's Word (Ps. 119:97).
2. A more perfect obedience (1 John 2:3-5)
3. An enlarged faith (2 Thess. 1:3; cf. 2 Cor. 10:15).
4. A greater love (Phil. 1:9).

12

Strength

Colossians 1:11a

strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power,

The fourth result of knowledge is spiritual strength. “Strengthened” tense signifies continuous action. God is not like a booster rocket giving believers an initial boost of power and then leaving them to fly on their own. Believers are continually **strengthened with all might** throughout their Christian lives.

The measure of that might is **according to His glorious power**. **Glorious** refers to the manifestation of God’s attributes. **Power** refers to strength in action. The **power** available to us is the limitless power of God Himself.

13

Endurance

Colossians 1:11b

for all patience and longsuffering with joy

Paul gives one last result of true spiritual knowledge. It is **the joyous endurance of trials**. Knowledge of God’s promises and purposes given in Scripture gives the strength to endure trials and suffering. The words **patience** and **longsuffering** are closely related. If there is a distinction, it is that **patience** refers to circumstances, whereas **longsuffering** refers to patience with people. Both refer to the patient enduring of trials.

Paul does not have in mind a stoic, teeth-gritting endurance. The strength provided by knowledge of God’s Word allows the believer to endure trials **joyously**, literally “with joy”.

14

So What ...

It was Paul's constant prayer for the Colossians that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will. He knew that only when believers are controlled by that knowledge can they **walk worthy** of the Lord and please Him. Paul knew further that such knowledge was required for a **fruitful life, spiritual growth, strength, and joyful endurance of trials.**

These are the same things that Paul would pray for us. Let us take these things to heart and commit ourselves to being filled with the knowledge of His will!