

PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS GROWTH

Colossians 1:9-14

The New Testament exhorts us to pray and to pray for one another.

“I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.”

~I Timothy 2:1

Prayer is *work*. It takes *time...commitment...and dedication*. Prayer will always seem *boring* until it becomes **personal**. But when it becomes **personal**, it will then become **passionate**...which drives it to be **perpetual (fervent)**...and ultimately **powerful!**

Different elements that transpire when praying:

- *Refining...*
- *Repentance...*
- *Relational...*

Prayer is important. That is why Jesus declared that *“My house shall be called a house of prayer”* (**Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46**).

It’s interesting that man is trying to do away with prayer...until something happens and affects them personally...illness, tragedy, death, terror, etc. Then the first thing they do in response is pray and ask others to pray also.

Because **prayer** is so important...that is why **Paul** starts his letter by sharing the nature of his prayers for the **Colossians** before he begins to teach them.

I. THE REASON: (vs. 9)

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (vs. 9)...

- **The Petition...For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you (vs. 9a)...**

For this reason...refers back to the good report that Paul received from **Epaphras** about the **Colossian** believers’ faith in Christ.

Praying without ceasing...obviously doesn’t mean *constant* or *continual*...but comes together when one’s love for God leads

him *to seek unbroken communion with Him*...but also *when his love for people* drives him to continually pray on their behalf.

- **The Purpose...And to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (vs. 9b)...**

Filled...Gk. *pleroo*, conveys the sense of *completeness*... *completely filled* or *totally controlled*.

...The **disciples’** hearts were **filled** with *sorrow* when Jesus told them of His departure (**John 16:6**).

...The **crowd** was **filled** with *fear* after Jesus healed the paralytic (**Luke 5:26**).

...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**).

...**Stephen** was **full** of *faith* (**Acts 6:5**).

In each case, what was in their heart...*totally controlled them*. *They were under the control of what filled them*.

Knowledge...Gk. *epignosis*, describes *a process in acquiring intelligence and information on the part of someone learning*. It refers to a **knowledge** that has a *very powerful influence* on one’s *spiritual life*. The ability to *know the mind of Christ*.

True biblical **knowledge** isn’t *speculative* but is *based on the authoritative Word of God*...and it *drives one’s obedience*.

Because **knowledge** of those *absolutes* is the basis for *correct behavior* and *ultimate judgment*, it is crucial that Christians know God’s *revealed truth (doctrine)*...know *God’s Word!*

That why **Paul** gives **11 chapters** of *doctrine* in **Romans** before he begins addressing *godly living* in **chapter 12**. **Galatians 1-4** are *doctrinal*, **chapters 5 and 6 practical**. The **first three chapters** of **Ephesians** detail with our *position in Christ*, while the **last three** urge us *to live accordingly*. **Philippians** and **Colossians** also conform to the same pattern of *doctrine* preceding *practical exhortations*. **Godly living** is directly linked in Scripture to **knowledge** of *doctrinal truth*.

“Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge...”

~Proverbs 19:2

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

~Hosea 4:6a

His will...describes when the Holy Spirit *enlightens a believer* and *makes known* the revelation of God’s desire. The *ability to discern*. God’s **will** isn’t a *secret*.

Spiritual wisdom...Gk. *sophia*, the practical know-how which comes from God. The ability to *see from God’s perspective*... from God’s point-of-view. True spiritual wisdom is both *stabilizing* and *liberating*.

Understanding...Gk. *synesei*, suggest a *complete* and *deep understanding* which leads to a *clear analysis* when *making decisions* to various situations.

Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are directly connected in Scripture...they are *manifestations of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:6-8)*. They refer to the ability to *collect* and *concisely organize* biblical principles and truth from Scripture.

A mind saturated with such **knowledge** will be able to *comprehend general principles* of godly behavior. With that **wisdom** will come **understanding** of *how to apply* those principles to all the different situations in life. That progression will inevitably result in *godly character* and *practice* in one’s life.

II. THE REQUEST: (vs. 10-11)

Paul’s aim in this *prayer* was practical. **Walk** is used in the Bible to refer to *one’s pattern of daily conduct*.

So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects (vs. 10a)...

Worthy...means *of equal weight*. Believers are to *equal* the Lord’s standards...to **be holy as He is holy (I Peter 1:15)**. The aim of believers in all their *worthy conduct* should be *to please Him* in all respects...to anticipate and do His wishes in every aspect of life.

“For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

~Ephesians 5:8-10

Seeking to *please people* is incompatible with being a servant of Christ. Just as **Paul** made it the ambition of his life to *please God (II Corinthians 5:9)*...it should also be our *ambition* and *desire*.

Four things (given in **participles**) result from a **worthy walk** and **God pleasing life**:

- **A Fruitful Life**...**Bearing fruit in every good work (vs 10b)**... **Fruit** is the by-product of *righteousness*.

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

~John 15:8

The Bible defines **fruit** in many ways...*Converts* are defined as fruit...the *sacrifice of praise* is defined as the fruit that flows from the lips...*giving money* can also be fruit...*Godly living* is fruit.

“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

~II Peter 1:5-8

- **Growth**...**And increasing in the knowledge of God (vs. 10c)**... Just as one increases in their *knowledge* as they advance in their education...the believer, as he matures, should also increase in their **knowledge of God**. This is the type of **knowledge** that is *intellectual* and is gained by *experience*. The **knowledge of God** revealed in His Word is crucial to *spiritual growth*.
- **Strength**...**Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might (vs. 11a)**...Paul uses three descriptive words here. **Strengthened**...Gk. *dynamoumenoi*...(a **present participle** *signifying continuous action*...throughout a believers life). **Power**...Gk. *dynamei*...**Might**...Gk. *kratos*. The three words together describe *a power that overcomes resistance*. This describes *one not easily succumbing under suffering or fear*. This God-given **strength** produces *great endurance* and **patience**.

Glorious might...means *to manifest excellence...a manifestation of God's character and attributes*. This literally describes *the righteousness that raised Christ from the dead*. The **might** (power) available to the believer is the *limitless power of God Himself*.

“What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

~Ephesians 1:19-20

- **Endurance**...For the attaining of all steadfastness and patience (**vs. 11b**)...This **steadfastness** and *perseverance* produces **endurance** (**James 1:3**) that develops **patience**. **Patience** means *self-restraint* which doesn't hastily *retaliate*. A lack of **patience** often leads to *wrath* or *revenge*.

Knowledge of God's *promises* and *purposes* revealed in Scripture gives the *strength* to **endure trials** and *suffering*... gives us the ability to **endure trials joyously**, as did **Paul** himself (**Acts 16:25**).

A genuine *knowledge of Christ* reveals itself in *transformed character*...in *Christlikeness*.

“...You know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus...”

~I Thessalonians 2:11-14a

Such **patient** producing **power** should be accompanied by one **joyously giving thanks to the Father**. Joy verse **bitterness**.

III. THE RESULT: (**vs. 12-14**)

Thankfulness is *an essential trait* in the spiritual life of a true believer.

- **Thankfulness**...**Joyously giving thanks to the Father** (**vs. 12a**) ...**Paul** urges believers to **give thanks in all circumstances** (**I Thessalonians 5:18**).

Four other times in **Colossians Paul** instructed believers to be **thankful** (**Colossians 3:15-17**; **Colossians 4:2**).

Giving thanks too often becomes a *secondary position* in the prayers of God's people. We are *quick to make requests*...but *slow to thank God for His answers*.

Paul sums up the **doctrine of salvation** in **four great truths**:

- **Inheritance**...**Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light** (**vs. 12b**)...

Qualified us...means *to make sufficient*, to *empower*, to *authorize*, to *make fit*...a fact that that *He has made you competent*...to **share in the inheritance of the saints**...those kingdom treasures that belong to believers.

Even though believers are *unfit* in and of themselves...God has made us *competent* or **qualified us to share in the inheritance** of His holy people. This is reminiscent of the **inheritance** given to the **Israelites** under **Joshua** of the **Promised Land**.

Light...literally means **in Christ**. Spiritually it describes the believer having been *transferred* from the *darkness* into *light*... from *lostness* to being *saved*.

- **Deliverance**...**For He rescued us from the domain of darkness** (**vs. 13a**)...God drew us out of Satan's kingdom to Himself. He gave us a new birth.
- **Transference**...**And transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son** (**vs. 13b**)...The verb speaks of our *total removal* from the dominion of *satanic darkness* to the *glorious light* of the **kingdom of Christ**. The **kingdom** is the *special relationship* believers have...even in this age...with God through Jesus Christ.
- **Redemption**...**In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins** (**vs. 14**)...

Redemption...Gk. *apolytrosis*, means *to rescue by ransom*...the *price of release*. It refers to *a payment used to effect the release of someone being held captive and in bondage*. It also includes

the concept of *substitution*. We get the **English** word **emancipation** from it.

“...Through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

~Hebrews 2:14b-15

People are *captives* under the *power of sin* and *death* from which they *cannot free themselves*. Jesus' substitutionary death paid the price that sets people free.

“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.”

~Romans 6:22

Forgiveness...Gk. *aphesin*, means *remission by the Redeemer*.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

~Ephesians 1:7

So Christ's death on our behalf paid the price to redeem us. On that basis, God forgives our sins, grants us an inheritance, delivers us from the power of darkness, and makes us subjects of Christ's kingdom.

When we contemplate all He has done for us, how can we do any less than **pray to be filled with the knowledge of His will!**

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **KNOWLEDGE** of God's Word and **DOCTINAL TRUTH** is directly linked to godly living. A genuine **knowledge of Christ** reveals itself in **TRANSFORMED CHARACTER**...in **Christlikeness**.
- The **LIMITLESS POWER OF GOD** is available to all believers through the ministry of the **HOLY SPIRIT**. Scripture compares the power of the Holy Spirit with **wind** and **fire**.
- **PRAYER** is the means by which God has chosen to unleash His **POWER** to believers.