

Colossians 1.9-14, Good Things To Always Pray

Let's begin at the end and ask 2 questions, v. 13-14

1. *Why should we come to God with our requests?*

- v. 13, because if he has power to deliver/rescue us from the domain of darkness and transfer us into his eternal kingdom, then he also has the power to handle our needs and concerns.
 - **Transferred** — to move to another place

2. *Why does God care about our requests?*

- v. 12, because he has already qualified us to share in his eternal inheritance
 - **Qualified** — made worthy
- v. 14, because he has already brought us redemption, the forgiveness of sins, which comes through faith in Jesus.
 - Romans 3.23-26,
 - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- He cares about our eternal and our immediate well-being. So we can come to him with our cares and concerns, our fears and our hopes.

When Paul prays for the Colossians, he prays for their daily spiritual living. He has not met this church, so he doesn't know their specific needs. But he knows what they and all other Christians need.

Paul prays for 1 primary thing, which has 1 primary outcome, which has 4 primary results in the life of a believer

I. Paul's One Primary Prayer: that you be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

We live in a time where there seems to be no standard of truth.

What's right to you is right to you. You believe what you want to believe, I'll believe what I want to believe. But is there any real truth out there? Any standard of right and wrong? And definite knowledge?

This is what Paul is addressing with the Colossians.

There is a generic word for 'knowledge,' but Paul uses a word that means "complete, full knowledge." He doesn't want us to have a general or basic idea of who God is, but to fully understand God and his purposes for humanity. There are many false gospels out there. Some of them even sound really good. But, as Christian believers, Paul wants us to pray for ourselves and one another so that we not be fooled. And as believers, there is no reason for us ever to be fooled, because we have access to full knowledge of God's will.

Listen to these words from chapter 2.1-4,

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

Paul prays that we will be filled with this knowledge.

And that in it—or with it—we will have spiritual wisdom, which is knowledge applied, and spiritual understanding, which is rightly interpreting the times.

So how does one come by this knowledge?

Is it through meditation? Do I need to attend a seminar? Or certain classes? The knowledge of God comes to us through the Word of God.

- Psalm 1.1-2,
 - *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

- 2 Timothy 3.16-17.
 - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

* How do we know the will of God? Through the word of God.

How does God's Word apply to our current life situation with the coronavirus?

What is his will for me, my church, his church worldwide? How do I love my neighbor during these times? This virus should remind us that disease and death exist because of sin. So whether it is a specific judgment or God's judgment on sin in general, is there something I or the church needs to repent of? How do I handle fear and anxiety? How do I handle the loneliness of being closed up all day long?

This is having eyes to see, ears to hear, and a mind to understand.

Paul prays that we be filled with the knowledge of God. This, for Paul, has one primary outcome.

II. Paul's One Primary Outcome: That we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him.

It is not enough to simply know about God and know what it means to be a Christian and how you should live. You must do it! Think of the Greek philosophers who would sit around all day sharing ideas. An idea is a great idea only if you can do something with it. Paul, being a Jew, understood this. Jewish thought stated that a person does not know something unless he can do it.

- You might be able to tell me how to bake a cake, but you don't know how to bake a cake unless you have baked a cake.
- You can tell me how to mourn the loss of a loved one, but unless you have actually done it, you don't know how to do it.

So we must take what we know and apply it to our lives.

Paul says to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

This word for walk means to “walk around.” Or, “everywhere you walk.” So be filled with knowledge of his will so that everywhere you go and everything you do will be done in a manner pleasing to God. And how do we please God? We live according to his will. This begins with Jesus.

Paul says to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Again, we cannot do this without Jesus. Isaiah says that even our best efforts are like filthy rags. Remember, God through Jesus makes us worthy. We must begin by placing our faith in Jesus. Then, once we are made worthy, we can begin living a worthy life.

If we are walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, it will have 4 results in our lives.

III. Paul's Four Primary Results.

1. Bearing fruit in every good work.

- Produce a crop. Paul says elsewhere, that some sow and some reap, but we all play a part. A kind word, a helping hand, an invite to church, a prayer, a sharing of the Gospel. A life that lives out the Gospel in word and in deed. We could say, a life that makes every act count.
- In the previous paragraph, Paul wrote that he is thankful for the fruit they are already bearing. And now he prays that they will bear even more fruit! Paul never wants us to sit back and think, “I’ve learned enough; I’ve done enough.” There is no retiring from being a Christian.

2. Increasing in the knowledge of God.

- So, Paul has prayed that they would be filled with knowledge of God, and now he prays that they will be filled with even more knowledge of God! There is a pattern here of continued increasing and growing. As you are filled with the knowledge of his will, and you apply it to your life, and you bear fruit because of it, you will increase in knowledge because you will see it working and you will understand more of God’s purposes.

- We can talk about God's faithfulness all day. We can talk about our faith in God. But until you have to put it into practice, it's just theory. When a pandemic hits and you are put on lockdown, and people are dying from the virus, is God still faithful? When you can't go to church and you can't see your friends or Sunday School class, do you put your relationship with God on hold? When a storm hits, and you're hiding in a closet or bathroom because there's possible tornados, and pine trees are threatening to fall on your house, is God still faithful? What if a tree does fall on your house? Is he still faithful?
- As you take what you know, and apply it in your life, you will see that what God says really is true, and your understanding will increase and deepen.

3. *Being strengthened in all power*

- Knowledge of God brings spiritual strength. You know who the one is in whom you say you put your trust. You know of his goodness and faithfulness and love and mercy throughout the ages. And you know that he is still the same today as he was yesterday.
- But what kind of strength? Strength for what? To climb a mountain? Score a touchdown? Ace the test? Overcome an illness?
- It is strength according to his glorious might.
 - God's strength, working through Moses, parted the Red Sea. God's strength, working through David, slew Goliath. God's strength, working through Nehemiah, rebuilt Jerusalem. God's strength, working through Peter, preached the Gospel at Pentecost and 3,000 people got saved.
 - But Paul prays for strength in God's power for two specific reasons.
- **First, for all endurance.** America is a rare country in history where we do not face open persecution. Sure, people might speak out against the church, or mayors might try to arrest or fine people for gathering during the quarantine; but we have never faced real persecution. Scripture doesn't say we *might* suffer, it says we *will* suffer. And so we need strength to endure.
 - But we suffer in many other ways. As long as we live in a broken world, we will suffer. We suffer the loss of a loved one. We suffer the loss of a friendship. We suffer illness and old age. We suffer fears and anxieties. We suffer the unknown.
 - So we need strength to endure. That word "endure" means to remain under without giving in or giving up. As the pressures of life push in or down on you, you don't give up or quit.
 - We like to quote the verse from 1 Peter, "*cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*" And that's nice, but what about when they come

back? You cast them again. And when they come back? You cast them again. And you pray for strength according to his glorious might so that you can continue to endure and not give up.

- **Second**, we need strength in God's power for patience with joy. Some Bibles translate patience as long-suffering or long-tempered. The pressures of life can be frustrating. They can cause you to blow up on someone, or to retaliate and fight back. But Paul says we must have patience with joy. You ever 'patiently' stood in line at Wal-mart and grumbled the whole time wondering why they won't open up one of the other 32 registers? That's not true patience.
 - True patience is also joy-filled. Because God is still in control. You might be inconvenienced or frustrated or just tired of everything going on in your life or in the world; and you just want to scream, or punch somebody. But God is still in control. He still knows who you are, where you are, and what you are going through. This might be where we need to pray for knowledge of his will.
 - You can go read the Psalms, and see many times where David asks, "Where are you God? Do you not hear?" As early as Psalm 3, David begins, "Save me from my foes!" And he ends the psalm with, "Salvation belongs to the Lord!" He knows God's goodness because he has heard of it in the Scriptures, and he has seen it in his own life. So David can endure hardships, and he can have patience with joy, because he knows God is on his side and is giving him the strength to persevere.

4. *Giving thanks to the Father*

- As we grow in knowledge, as we see God at work, as we are strengthened and we endure, we come to know and deepen our understanding that he is worthy of all praise.
- Even more, he is the one who qualifies us to share in the inheritance of the saints. And he is the one who through Jesus, has delivered us and transferred us. And he is the one who has redeemed us, bringing us forgiveness for our sins. We have much to give thanks for.

Notice throughout this passage, that it is all directed back to God:

It is *his* will and *his* power. Our purpose is to live worthy of *him*, pleasing to *him*, growing in knowledge of *him*. [He does not have to act in ways that are pleasing to us or make him worthy of us—I think we get that mixed up sometimes.] Our power comes from *him* in *his* way, by *his* purposes. So we praise *him*, worship *him*, glorify *him*, give thanks to *him*. Because *he* qualifies us. *He* rescues us. *He* redeems us. *He* forgives us.