

Apostolic Prayers – Colossians 1:9-11

(NASB), “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, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously”

I. Book of Colossians Context

- a. The book of Colossians is a letter written by Paul to the saints in Colossae. He wrote this letter around A.D. 60, during one of his many imprisonments.
- b. Colossae was located southwest of Asia Minor and close to Ephesus and Laodicea. Most scholars believe Paul didn't plant the church in Colossae but His companion Epaphras did (see Col. 1:7-8; 4:12-13).
- c. Colossae was a trade city with many coming and going which likely meant a lot of different ideas and thoughts were flooding into the city. The Church in Colossae was made up of mainly Gentile believers who were struggling with some of the Jewish traditions. Paul writes to them because he's heard that they have become vulnerable to the deception of other thoughts and practices. Paul wanted to refute those theological errors and provide clear teaching for them.

II. Basic Outline of the Apostolic Prayer

- a. That you may be:
 - i. Filled with the knowledge of His will
 1. In all spiritual wisdom
 2. And (spiritual) understanding
- b. So that
 - i. You will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord
 1. To please Him in all respects
 2. Bearing fruit in every good work
 3. Increasing in the knowledge of God.
- c. Strengthened with all power according to His glorious might for the attaining of
 - i. Steadfastness
 - ii. Patience
 - iii. With Joy (joyously).

III. Verse 9

(NASB), “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,”

(NIV), “9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,”

(AMP), “9 For this reason, since the day we heard about it, we have not stopped praying for you, asking [specifically] that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom [with insight into His purposes], and in understanding [of spiritual things],”

(TPT), “9 Since we first heard about you, we’ve kept you always in our prayers that you would receive the perfect knowledge of God’s pleasure over your lives, making you reservoirs of every kind of wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

a. Key words

- i. **Filled** – *Pleroo* – to fill, make full, fill up, to cram, level up, or to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute, finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction).
 - ii. **Knowledge** - *Epignosis* - The coming at the knowledge of a thing, ascertainment, a distance perception or impression, acknowledgment, insight (The tendency of the word in N. T. usage is to denote knowledge which is not merely intellectual, but of the nature of spiritual experience.)
 - iii. **Will** – *Thelema* – will, bent, inclination; resolve, purpose or design. What one wishes or has determined shall be done.
 - iv. **Spiritual Wisdom** –
 1. **Spiritual** – *Pneumatikos* – Spiritual, pertaining to the soul, as distinguished from what concerns the body. Divinely or supernatural .
 2. **Wisdom** - *Sophia* – wisdom in general, knowledge (ability); practical wisdom, prudence. “Used of the knowledge of very diverse matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context in every particular case.”
 - v. **Understanding** – *Synesis* – a sending together, a junction, as of streams; understanding, intelligence, discernment. A mental putting together.
- b. Filled with the knowledge of His will – God’s will should be understood here as what He has determined to do (or what He is already doing) according to His heart.

- i. The usage of the word “epignosis” denotes the “experiential type of knowledge”. Paul’s prayer is for the saints to have insight into the revelation of what He wants to do through continually experiencing and being made full of the intentions of His heart.

(1 Corinthians 13:12 NASB), “12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

(Ephesians 1:17-19 NASB), “17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and 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”

- c. In all spiritual wisdom and understanding – Breaking down “The knowledge of His will” even further Paul prays for a spiritual wisdom and also a spiritual understanding of all things related to what God intends to do (His will). This again is Paul praying for a spiritual and practical knowledge of divine things.
 - i. Spiritual wisdom – often mentioned in this epistle as that which is opposing to the false “philosophy” and “show of wisdom”. Essentially this part of the prayer is for the saints to use their brain to discern (as opposed to emotions) and throw out what is not of God.

(1 Corinthians 14:20 NASB), “20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.”

(Ephesians 4:14 NASB), “14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;”

- ii. Spiritual understanding - To think (comprehend) for themselves according to the Holy Spirits guidance. Almost a precursor to spiritual wisdom. This part of the prayer is for saints to be able to comprehend (by the Spirit of God) the things of God pertaining to His will.

(Colossians 2:8 NASB), “8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”

(Colossians 2:23 NASB), “23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

(Ephesians 1:7-10 NASB), “7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10

with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him”

- d. **Summary** - Paul opens the prayer by saying He continually prays for the experiential and full knowledge of what God has determined to do, through the avenue of the Holy Spirit providing clear understanding and application of that very knowledge of His will.

IV. Verse 10

(NASB), “10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

(NIV), “10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,”

(AMP), “10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord [displaying admirable character, moral courage, and personal integrity], to [fully] please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and steadily growing in the knowledge of God [with deeper faith, clearer insight and fervent love for His precepts];”

(TPT), “10 We pray that you would walk in the ways of true righteousness, pleasing God in every good thing you do. Then you’ll become fruit-bearing branches, yielding to his life, and maturing in the rich experience of knowing God in his fullness!”

a. Key words

- i. **Walk** – *peripateo* – to walk, to rove, roam, to accompany, from the Hebrew, to maintain a certain walk of life and conduct.
- ii. **Manner Worthy** – *Axios* – worthily; suitably, in a manner becoming.
- iii. **Fruit** – *karpos* – from the Hebrew, fruit of the womb, offspring
- iv. **Knowledge** – *epignosis* – the coming at the knowledge of a thing, ascertainment, a distance perception or impression, acknowledgment, insight (The tendency of the word in N. T. usage is to denote knowledge which is not merely intellectual, but of the nature of spiritual experience.)

- b. (So that you may) Walk worthy of the Lord – The true knowledge of God’s will is inseparable from walking conformably to it. Paul is praying that they would have His (Jesus) life reproduced in them, that they would have the mind of Christ and that it would be evident that His footprints of love govern their steps.

(1 Thessalonians 2:12 NASB), “12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

- c. And please Him in every way – Paul’s prayer is stating that the one who walks worthy of The Lord is pleasing to God. The fragrance that a believer’s life puts off can bring pleasure to His heart.

(Hebrews 11:5 NASB), “5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

(Colossians 3:20 NASB), “20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing [a]to the Lord.”

(1 Thessalonians 2:4 NASB), “4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.”

- d. Bearing fruit in every good work – The first manifestation of walking worthy of the Lord is bearing fruit in every good work. It can also be understood that the prayer Paul prays here is for the saints to “make something (circumstances, situations, relationships, etc.) fruitful.”

(Matthew 7:17 NASB), “17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”

(Psalm 1:3 NASB), “He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.”

(John 15:8 NASB), “8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

- e. Growing in the knowledge of God – the second manifestation of walking worthy of the Lord is to increase in the experiential knowledge of God. Paul prays not for a path of thoughtful speculation of God, but the earnest practice (encounter) that they might become better acquainted with Him. He prays that they would continually experience His thoughts, His heart, and the mysteries of His grace.

(2 Peter 3:18 NASB), “18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

(1 Corinthians 13:9-10 NASB), “9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.”

(Philippians 3:10, 12 NASB), “10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

(Ephesians 4:13 NASB), “13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

(John 17:3 NASB), “3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

- f. **Summary - Being filled with the knowledge of His will is unto letting our steps be governed by His Spirit so that our walk would be pleasing to Him. When we walk worthy of and pleasing to The Lord the reaction is bearing fruit in every good work (including making people, places, and things around us fruitful) and continually growing in the practical and experiential knowledge of the person of God.**

V. Verse 11

(NASB), “11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously”

(NIV), “11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,”

(AMP), “11 [we pray that you may be] strengthened and invigorated with all power, according to His glorious might, to attain every kind of endurance and patience with joy;”

(TPT), “11 And we pray that you would be energized with all his explosive power from the realm of his magnificent glory, filling you with great hope.”

a. Key words

- i. **Strengthened** – *dynamo* – to strengthen, confirm
 - ii. **Power** – *dynamis* – power; strength, ability, miraculous power
 - iii. **Glory** – *Doxa* – a seeming; appearance; a notion imagination, opinion; the opinion which obtains respecting one; reputation; honor; dignity
 - iv. **Might** – *Kratos* – strength, power, might, force
 - v. **Endurance** – *hupomone* – steadfastness, constancy, hopeful endurance.
 - vi. **Patience** – *makrothumia* – patience; patient enduring of evil, fortitude
 - vii. **Joy** – *chara* – cheerfulness
- b. Strengthened with all power according to His glorious might – His glorious might is the manifestation of Himself in love to man to meet all sides and kind of spiritual need with a corresponding completeness. Paul’s prayer is for His power to be manifest in their voluntary weakness. Paul is likely speaking to the saints being strengthened to bear trials.

(2 Corinthians 12:9 NASB), “9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

(Philippians 4:13 NASB), “12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.”

(2 Thessalonians 1:11 NASB), “11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,”

- c. Patience and longsuffering with joyfulness – Paul prays that the saints would be strengthened for the attaining of these three manifestations:
 - i. Patience – Endurance of the soul in the path of faith, hope, and love. That they would persevere under trials and remain in the will of God.
 - ii. Longsuffering – meaning the opposite to that “haste of the spirit” which give others no (grace or) time, under pressure of pain or wrong.

(1 Timothy 1:16 NASB), “16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”

- 1. To be longsuffering is to be slow to anger not easily provoked to wrath, quick to forgive, bear long with patience all reproaches and persecutions for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel.
 - iii. With Joyfulness – with a cheerful spirit, or with joy in the Holy Spirit. To rejoice when counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.
- d. **Summary – The final part of Paul’s prayer is for strength, according the manifestation of God’s power through the Holy Spirit living in us, to endure trials and testing being gracious and longsuffering and abiding in joy in the midst of whatever might happen.**