

Session 4 Paul's Prayer in Colossians 1:9-12

I. INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 1:9-12

- A. Paul prayed for the saints to be filled with the knowledge of God's will so that they would be empowered to know God in a deep way, walk worthy of Him, and be fruitful in ministry.

⁹...[we] do not cease to pray for you...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹strengthened with all might...for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father... (Col. 1:9-12)

- B. ***Do not cease:*** Paul did not cease to pray this, knowing that the Spirit would do more as he prayed more and he was determined to keep the themes in this prayer in his conversation with the Lord.

II. WALKING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL (COL. 1:9)

- A. Believers are granted the privilege and miracle of partnering with God in His plans (Col. 1:9).

⁹...filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Col. 1:9)

- B. ***That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will:*** The *general* will of God refers to that which is important for all believers to know—it includes what His Word reveals regarding who we are to Him, how we are to live, what we are to believe Him for, and what His main kingdom purposes are.

1. Our highest purpose is to receive and express God's love back to Him and to others. This comes ahead of seeking to make an impact or to be successful from man's point of view.
2. The knowledge of God's will includes understanding *specific aspects* related to our personal life direction and ministry assignments as well as for our local church, our city, nation, etc.
3. The Lord's main ministry assignments in our life change in various seasons of our life. It is a great blessing to have clarity and confidence in where to invest our time and resources.
4. We express love to others in a greater way as we see more clearly the great diversity in His calling on other people and ministries—instead of being critical of them even in subtle ways.

- C. ***In all wisdom and spiritual understanding:*** Receiving wisdom includes receiving insight on how to practically walk out God's ministry assignment in each season in terms of how much of our time and resources we are to invest in our family, other relationships, and in various ministry activities.

- D. Receiving understanding includes receiving insight on how to interpret "what is happening" from God's point of view when His blessing on our circumstances increases or decreases and when His promises and provision are delayed by His hand or when it is hindered by the enemy.

- E. The sons of Issachar understood the times in that they saw what God was doing in His prophetic purposes in each season, and they knew what to do and what Israel should do in practical action.

³²...the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do... (1 Chr. 12:32)

III. THE GOAL OF UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL IS TO PLEASE JESUS (COL. 1:10)

- A. Believers are blessed with the miracle of being empowered to please our glorious God (Col. 1:10). Here, Paul gives several reasons for praying that the saints receive the knowledge of His will.

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. (Col. 1:10)

- B. **That you may walk worthy of the Lord** (1:10): To walk worthy of the Lord is to walk in agreement with His heart and ways. We are to have a **worthy response** to God by resisting compromise and embracing God's ways, thus, to be prepared and in position to walk in the fullness of our calling.

1. In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, Paul prayed that God would count the saints in Thessalonica worthy to walk in the fullness of His calling. In other words, he was praying that they be strengthened to walk in mature faithfulness that would put them in the position to walk in their highest calling in this age and the age to come. This included the Lord helping them see and gain victory over various unperceived "blind spots" in their life and ministry.

¹¹We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power... (2 Thes. 1:11)

2. No one is "worthy" to receive forgiveness. It is a free gift because of Jesus' worthiness.
3. One important way to pursue this is by intentionally and diligently pursuing the anointing to love Jesus with all of our heart—that the First Commandment be in first place in our lives.

- C. **Fully pleasing Him** (1:10): We want to respond to Jesus' love and His excellent, kind leadership by doing what pleases Him. We want to invest our time and resources in a way that He delights in. Eternal rewards are about Jesus expressing how He feels about the way we loved Him in this age.

⁹Therefore we make it our aim [priority], whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.
¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:9-10)

- D. **Being fruitful in every good work** (1:10): To grow in knowledge of God and in ability to bear fruit.

1. Jesus chose us to bear fruit that would remain forever (Jn. 15:16). It is a most glorious reality for weak and broken people to be empowered to do things or bear fruit that God esteems forever. Our life becomes epic as we diligently press this as a lifelong journey.

²Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit...⁵"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me [talks to Me], and I in him [I talk to him], bears much fruit..."¹⁶I chose you...that your fruit should remain..." (Jn. 15:2, 5, 16)

2. **Bears fruit:** We bear fruit inwardly in our character and outwardly in our ministry and service to others—godly character (Rom. 6:22; 7:4-5; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Heb. 12:11; Jas. 3:18) and ministry and service (Jn. 4:36; Rom. 1:13; 15:28; Phil. 1:22; Col. 1:5-6).

3. **He prunes:** The Father is a vinedresser who *prunes* every believer who bears fruit. He takes initiative to intervene to prune so that His people are more focused and fruitful. Pruning is positive as it causes God's people to be *more focused* so they can be *more fruitful*.

E. **Increasing in the knowledge of God** (1:10): There is no aspect of God's grace that more powerfully transforms our emotions or satisfies our heart than when the Spirit reveals the knowledge of God to us. The most transforming power is the knowledge of God. Christianity is pursuing a Person. It is more than escaping from hell, obeying a code of conduct, and fulfilling a ministry assignment.

1. Immediately after Paul's prayer, he proclaimed the glory of the knowledge of God in Christ (Col. 1:15-20).

¹⁵He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth...All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through...His cross. (Col. 1:15-20)

2. Paul gladly gave up everything as he saw the magnificence, the excellence, of Jesus! If we can see what Paul saw about Jesus, then we can live like he lived.

⁸I count all things loss for the excellence [magnificence] of the knowledge of Christ Jesus... (Phil. 3:8)

3. The best-kept secret in the Church is Jesus' magnificence. We are liberated from the inferior pleasures of sin by experiencing the superior pleasures of the beauty of Jesus.
4. Without having a sense of awe in our relationship with God, we will live spiritually bored and be more vulnerable to Satan's tactics. A spiritually bored believer is weak. A believer fascinated with the Lord is strong.
5. The Spirit longs to be our escort into the treasure of the deep things of God's heart.

¹⁰The Spirit searches...the deep things of God...¹²We have received...the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things...freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)

¹³The Spirit of truth...will guide [escort] you into all truth...¹⁴He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:13-14)

6. God is raising up ministries to bring the Church to the knowledge of the deep things of Jesus. The most neglected subject in the kingdom of God is God Himself. Instead, we talk about relationship skills, leadership principles, economic principles, ministry skills, and how to be happy and make life easier. The Spirit wants to reveal the knowledge of God to His people.

⁸To me...grace was given that I should preach...the unsearchable riches of Christ... (Eph. 3:8)

7. Jesus is our greatest treasure, but He is “hidden” until we seek for more of Him with all our heart. The Spirit will escort us into the divine treasury of the magnificence and beauty of Jesus. Our life is to be a treasure hunt into the knowledge of God, which becomes our gold.

³Yes, if you...lift up your voice for understanding, ⁴if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵Then you will...find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:3-5)

IV. STRENGTHENED TO PERSEVERE WITH JOY (COL. 1:11-12)

- A. Paul gives us clarity and assurance for the Holy Spirit’s help to strengthen us (Col. 1:11-12).

¹¹...strengthened with all might...for all patience [perseverance] and longsuffering with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (Col. 1:11-12)

- B. ***Strengthened with all might*** (1:11): Paul prayed that the Spirit would strengthen the saints so that they would have patience or endurance in pressure—physical, financial, verbal (accusations), delayed promises, etc. We pray that the Spirit ***strengthens our inner man*** (mind and emotions) to enable us to love and obey Jesus. It takes God’s power to love God and to understand His heart.

¹⁶...grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... (Eph. 3:16)

- C. ***For all patience and longsuffering with joy*** (1:11): The word translated “patience” is translated as *endurance* or *perseverance* in various Bible translations. It speaks of not quitting under pressure.

1. Paul connected three virtues to help us understand trials—perseverance, character, and hope.

³We also glory [rejoice] in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope... (Rom. 5:3-4)

2. ***Perseverance***: This speaks of our fortified resolve to continually press in or “reach” to love, obey, and pursue God and His promises. We refuse to quit or draw back from contending for fullness. Pressure causes us to ask deep questions about the purpose of our life and the condition of our relationship to God. It causes us to rehearse the consequences of persevering in God compared to giving up (quitting). Pressure causes us to work our “faith muscle.”

3. ***Character***: Those who persevere without quitting under pressure will grow in godly character.

4. ***Hope***: Hope is confidence that Jesus’ leadership is good, that love is being imparted in us during the process of the trial, and that our life is successful in God’s eyes as we grow in love.

- D. ***Giving thanks to the Father*** (1:11): We give thanks by believing in God’s good leadership. We interpret our lives through the lens of grace that sees that the Father has qualified us be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. We embrace the beauty narrative of our life, empowering us to grow in obedient love for Jesus with deep gratitude and humility.

1. ***The beauty narrative***: We embrace the truth about a beautiful God who has a beautiful plan for our life, in which He uses His power to impart beauty into our life that continues forever (Rom. 8:28). All things work together for “good”—in terms of growing in love and humility.

2. **The dark narrative:** The enemy wants us to entrap us into a negative narrative of how bad we are treated, how hard things are, what we do not have, how much we fail, etc.
- E. **Qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance** (1:11): There are many implications to the glorious inheritance of the saints. We are empowered by seeing and enjoying our inheritance in Christ.
- ¹³He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [transferred] us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption through His blood... (Col. 1:13-14)**