



6/7/2020
Colossians 1:9-14

BIG IDEA

God is looking for a fruitful life, not a religious one.

LOOKING BACK

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Invite members to share any questions or points that came up in their family discussions regarding last week's study. Invite them to share ways God continued to speak to them as they sought to apply those truths throughout the week.

- What is something you have asked someone to pray for you recently?
- What is something you have prayed for someone else recently?
- Would you say that your prayers are mostly about physical things or spiritual things? Why?

LOOKING IN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| *Have a volunteer read Colossians 1:1-9.*

- If the Colossian church was demonstrating faith, hope, love, and bearing fruit and increasing in gospel truth, then why did Paul feel compelled to pray for them without ceasing?
- How would you describe Paul's view of prayer based on this verse? How does that challenge your own view of prayer?
- What is the difference between the knowledge of God's will, spiritual wisdom, and understanding? How are they related to each other? Can you have one and not the other?

Palapas' number one prayer concern for the Colossians was for their spiritual growth. God wants us to know His will, and He reveals this to us in His Word. We are to act on what He reveals to us, living under the influence of His truth.

| *Have a volunteer read Colossians 1:10-14.*

- Based on these verses, what is the responsibility of each individual believer in the spiritual health of the church?
- In your own words, what does it mean to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord"?
- Why is Paul's prayer here also an appropriate prayer for our local church today?

Paul prayed for four major requests: that the Colossian believers would be filled with the knowledge of God's will (v. 9); that they would walk worthy of the Lord by pleasing Him, bearing fruit, and growing in their knowledge of Him (v. 10); that they would be strengthened through the Lord's power (v. 11); and that they would give thanks to God for all He has done (v. 12). Paul didn't just want the Colossian believers to have head knowledge. He prayed that this knowledge would help them and their church walk in that truth.

- In your own experience, how has God's knowledge, wisdom, and understanding led to living for the Lord in the way Paul describes here?
- What makes it hard to pray that other people will have these traits?
- What is the significance of Paul reminding his readers that God qualified them to share in the blessings of salvation? What does this teach us about our own salvation?
- Of the reasons given by Paul for thanking God for our salvation, which one speaks the most to you? Explain.

The first step in becoming the type of person who walks in a manner worthy of the Lord is by coming to faith in Christ; we can do none of this apart from Him. In this week's message, we were reminded that you don't have to do any sort of religious practices to complete your religious life. Paul reminded his readers that God qualified us, rescued us, brought us in, redeemed us, and forgave us. All of these things should cause believers to be thankful for their salvation and remind us that our past does not disqualify us from a glorious future.

LOOKING FORWARD

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- If Paul knew about our church, what evidences of spiritual health would he find?
- What do you think he would feel compelled to pray for us about? For you, specifically?

FAMILIES

Use the following questions and truths to disciple your children throughout the week.

Pray Paul's prayer for the Colossians over your children.

PRAY

Thank God for His redemption, the truth of His gospel at work in you, and for qualifying you to share in the inheritance of the saints. Ask Him to fill you with the knowledge of His will so that you might walk with Him in a worthy manner, bearing fruit. Ask Him to strengthen you to endure with joy and patience.

COMMENTARY

| *Colossians 1:9-14*

1:9 Paul's letter to the Colossians began with a prayer of thanksgiving. That prayer, based on the good report of Epaphras, reminded the Colossian believers of the power of the gospel so they would not be seduced by the siren song of heresy. The theme of prayer continues in verses 9-14, but the focus shifts from thanksgiving to intercession. Paul prays that the believers will live lives that are pleasing to God. Does it take deep knowledge, strict living, or a rapturous experience to please God? That's what the false teachers were telling the Colossians. We, like the Colossians, need to know the truth about what pleases God so we won't be enchanted by error.

Paul tells us why he prays and what he prays for. When Paul says for this reason, he is looking back to the good report he received from Epaphras. Paul prays for believers who are doing well. He asks that they continue in the process of growth. The focus of much prayer is on those who are struggling and not doing well. While those are good prayers, Paul reminds us of the need to pray for those who are doing well since they are prime targets for enemy attacks. Many of our prayers ask for immediate relief from circumstantial or personal difficulties. While some of these prayers are good, Paul wants us to include prayers for spiritual growth and long-term development.

Paul's prayer is that God fill believers with the knowledge of his will. Paul wants the Colossians to know God's will and then let that knowledge control them. God's will is not a spiritual Easter egg he hides from us. No, God wants us to know his will and so clearly reveals that will in his Word. A mere knowledge of God's Word is not what will please Him. We need to be controlled by that knowledge. The word fill means to control. To be filled with something (an emotion like fear or jealousy) means to be under its controlling influence that causes us to do things we might not do otherwise. Being controlled by God's will should cause us to do things we might not otherwise do—things like enduring rather than giving up, like being patient with others rather than getting angry with them.

The knowledge and control of God's will come through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This is more than simple intelligence. Wisdom refers to the comprehension of truth, while understanding refers to the application of truth. Being controlled by God's will means believers comprehend the principles of Scripture and then put them into practice.

1:10 Being controlled by God's will is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. The goal is to live a life worthy of the Lord and . . . please him in every way. The request of verse 9 was made so that the Colossians would live lives which please God. The word worthy refers to conduct that is expected and appropriate for God's children.

If pleasing God is the goal, how do we achieve it? Paul spells that out very clearly in verses 10-12. By bearing fruit, growing in knowledge, being strengthened for adversity, and giving thanks for salvation, we please God.

First, believers please God when they are bearing fruit in every good work. Good works are not a means to achieve salvation, but a natural result of it. Good works in the life of the believer please God because good works are God's plan for the believer (see Eph. 2:8-10).

Second, God is pleased when believers are growing in the knowledge of God. The more we know of God's character, his ways, and his expectations, the more we are able to bring our lives into conformity with what pleases him.

1:11 Third, our lives please God when they are characterized by endurance and patience. Life is often difficult and challenging. At times, circumstances are less than friendly. At those times we need endurance—the ability to pass through any experience and trust God to see us through. At times, people are less than friendly. At those times we need patience—the capacity to be long-suffering with people and not retaliate when we are wronged or irritated.

We all know from experience, however, that staying steadfast through the circumstances and being patient with people is tough stuff. It's often beyond our ability. Right! The good news is that we aren't left alone with only our own resources to meet the challenge. Paul reminds us that God's power is available. Believers can please God with endurance and patience as they are strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. It is proper for a Christian to ask God to strengthen him to do God's will. God will do this. Sometimes it is immediate, and other times it is gradual, similar to the way a person is strengthened over time physically. As we yield ourselves to God in trust and obedience, we will be strengthened to do his will.

1:12 Finally, believers please God when they are joyfully giving thanks to the Father for the blessings of salvation. Just as Paul was clear to spell out specific means to please God, he is equally clear about the blessings of salvation for which we are to give thanks. This time we are given a list of three: God qualified us, rescued us, and brought us into a new kingdom.

God, the Father, has qualified believers for sharing in the blessings of salvation. We don't qualify ourselves by our moral achievements or personal worthiness. In grace, God qualifies us when we trust

Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sin. That this salvation is ours by grace is seen in our participation in the inheritance. We don't earn an inheritance. We receive it.

1:13. Being qualified is only one reason to be thankful. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. God delivered us from the ruling power of darkness, and the good news doesn't end there. God has also taken a positive step: he has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. God has transferred us; he has moved us from one place to another. He has taken us from Satan's dark realm and placed us into the bright light of Jesus' kingdom.

1:14. God's work of salvation, for which believers are joyfully to give thanks, is pictured further with redemption and forgiveness. To redeem someone means "to buy them back and set them free." Jesus' death was the price paid to buy us back and set us free from sin. Because of Christ's death on our behalf, we are set free from both the penalty and the power of sin.

Forgiveness parallels redemption. Forgive literally means "to send away, to cancel." Through the death of Jesus, God has canceled the debt of our sin. It was a debt we could never repay; but since Jesus paid the debt for us, God has forgiven the debt.

Paul wants us to know the truth about pleasing God so that we won't be victims of the well-disguised lies of those who might lead us astray.