

Colossians, Chapter One, Lesson Three

PLEASING THE LORD Colossians 1:9-12

STIMULATE

** As our study together last week came to an end, we benefited from the life of Epaphras who showed us the joy of "**Learning to Serve**" our Lord with our entire life. We saw in verse six of chapter one that the gospel bears fruit as we are faithful to serve our Lord. Do you recall the three ways in which the gospel bears fruit?

- 1) Numerical increase
- 2) Trust and courage
- 3) Glory to God, alone

MOTIVATE

** So far in this wonderful epistle, Paul has shown us the example of "Praying Always" and Epaphras has taught us to be "Learning to Serve". Today, Paul will take our prayer life to the next level by getting very specific in the kinds of things for which we should be in prayer on behalf of one another. As we do so, we will find ourselves "**Pleasing the Lord**", which is the highest call for any child of God.

For what kinds of things should we pray? How can our prayers for each other be of the greatest benefit? We are going to learn seven areas in the life of a Christian for which we should pray.

They are:

1. For them to know God's will
2. For them to gain all spiritual wisdom
3. For them to walk in obedience
4. For them to bear fruit
5. For them to receive strength from God
6. For them to attain steadfastness
7. For them to joyously give thanks

Let's read our passage together so we learn how to be "**Pleasing the Lord**", even in our prayer life for each other.

Read passage (V.9-12)

Opening Prayer

Pleasing the Lord

INVESTIGATE

V. 9 ** To what is Paul referring when he says, "for this reason also"?

He is still referring to the genuine manifestation of the Colossians' faith, especially through the "love in the Spirit". cf. V.3-8

** When did Paul and his companions begin praying for the faith of the Colossians?

"...since the day we heard of it..."

** Do you recall from last time how Paul heard about the genuine faith which belonged to the Colossians?

Epaphras had reported it to Paul. cf. V.8

** How regularly did Paul and his companions pray for the Colossians?

"...we have not ceased to pray..." Their love for the Colossians and desire for them to grow into Christlikeness, kept them continually on their hearts. cf. 1Thessalonians 5:16-17

** Before we go any further, let's establish the kind of man that Paul was, by the authority of God. How powerful was he?

"The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles." cf. 2Corinthians 12:12

Paul was supernatural, he could do miraculous things as God directed his life to display the glory of Christ and of His Word.

** Alright then, with that understanding, let's look at how Paul prayed. Knowing that he could do wondrous things in the name of Christ, did Paul tell God what to do for the Colossians or try to claim their victory in the "name of Christ"?

No - He was only willing "...to ask..." on their behalf! This humble posture in prayer keeps God on the Throne of Glory and us dependent upon His will for our lives.
cf. Philippians 4:6, Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36 and John 6:38

Let's take a look at the heart of Paul's prayer as we try to glean from it the kinds of things for which we should be praying. Paul is preoccupied with the quality of the Colossians' spiritual life and as such prays for seven distinct things.

** What is first on his list?

1) That they may be filled with the knowledge of His will.

Where does that begin for a Christian? Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, Psalm 111:10

So being "filled with the knowledge of His will" is only possible through a true saving relationship with God in Christ Jesus. As we develop a reverence for God and are subject to His Word, we gain a clear insight to His will for our lives.

** What is second on his list?

2) That they live their lives "in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Paul is speaking of the balanced, calm Christian life - even in the midst of trials. cf. James 1:5 and 3:13-17 with the end of Colossians 1:6

V.10 ** What is next on his prayer list?

3) That they "may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord". This is a common theme throughout the writing of Paul, and as such proves to be an important preoccupation for us as Christians.

cf. Ephesians 2:10, 4:1, Philippians 1:27, Colossians 2:6

****** If we are praying in the same manner as Paul for our fellow Christians and they are responding with an obedient lifestyle, what is accomplished according to the middle of verse 10?

We are all trying "to please Him in all respects". cf. Psalm 37:23, 147:11 and Ephesians 5:10

****** Let's continue our prayer list for today, what is the next thing for which we should pray?

4) For others to be "bearing fruit in every good work".

cf. John 15:16 with Titus 2:7, 14, 3:1, 8, 14

****** For the Christian, what goes hand-in-hand with "bearing fruit in every good work"?

"...and increasing in the knowledge of God..."

As we live out our lives in obedience to God and His word, we will do those things that bear His fruit and bring Him glory. At the same time, we will gain a greater understanding of Who our God is and what makes up His characteristics. cf. Philippians 3:9-10, Job 1:1, Job 42:5-6

V.11 ****** So far we have seen a very circumspect lifestyle called for by the apostle. According to verse eleven, what is the fifth thing for which Paul prays that makes that lifestyle possible?

5) That the Colossians might be "strengthened with all power".

****** Is that our own power, increased by doing spiritual push-ups?

Absolutely not! It is power received from God "according to His glorious might".

cf. Ephesians 1:18-19, 6:10, Philippians 4:13, 2Timothy 2:1

****** With all of that supernatural strength on our side, what is the next thing on Paul's prayer list?

6) "...for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience..." This is a wonderful thing for us to ask the Lord to give to our fellow saints. The joy that comes from a consistently obedient lifestyle goes without equal in this world.

cf. Ephesians 6:11 and 13, 2Peter 1:5-8, 1Corinthians 10:13

V.12 ****** Paul has been praying for some marvelous things to be made manifest in the life of the Colossians. Here in verse twelve, what is the seventh thing for which he prays?

7) That they would become individuals who are "joyously giving thanks to the Father".

Just as a footnote, we give that thanks to the Father through Christ (Colossians 3:17).

cf. Ephesians 5:20, 1Thessalonians 5:18

****** What is the reason given by Paul here in verse twelve for thanks to be rendered unto God?

He "has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light".

** Is it possible for us to qualify ourselves simply by doing all of these good things we have seen together in this passage?

No - as a matter of fact it is impossible!
cf. Romans 3:20-24 and Romans 6:22-23

** How did the Father qualify us for so grand an inheritance?

By making an unimaginable exchange! cf. 2Corinthians 5:21

** Can you see why Paul would pray for us all to always joyously give thanks to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ?

Yes - we have freely received an inheritance which is:

Imperishable - 1Peter 1:4-5

Sanctified - Acts 20:32

Eternal - Hebrews 9:15

And of the "light" - Acts 26:14-18, Colossians 1:12

EXTRICATE

** If our prayer life for one another is to be "**Pleasing the Lord**", what seven elements should it contain according to Paul?

We should be praying:

1. For them to know God's will
2. For them to gain all spiritual wisdom
3. For them to walk in obedience
4. For them to bear fruit
5. For them to receive strength from God
6. For them to attain steadfastness
7. For them to joyously give thanks

DELINEATE

** As you review that amazing list, which items seem new to your prayer life on behalf of your brothers and sisters in Christ?

For me personally; items 1, 4 and 6.

EVALUATE

** How does knowing that others in the Body of Christ are praying for you in these areas effect your daily walk?

It makes me want to be more aware of these seven characteristics of the Christian life, and to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest them in my heart.

ACTIVATE

** Will you spend time this next week reviewing this list for two reasons?

First to apply them to your own walk with the Lord, for His name sake.

And second, to improve your prayer life on the behalf of others that it might become one that is "**Pleasing the Lord**".

Closing prayer