

Praying for Others (Part 1)
Colossians 1:9-14
December 18, 2011

Introduction

Paul starts out with a thanksgiving in **verse 3-8** and moves on to praying for the church. He thanks God for their faith and love and that they are working because of the hope that they have in Christ Jesus. It is interesting that Paul thanks every church except for the church in Galatia, that he omits his thanksgiving to God because of their abandoning the gospel. Even though the church in Colossae has issues with false teaching, they have not abandoned the gospel. In this letter, we see Paul's prayer for others which is we as Christians should emulate.

Within his prayer we see that the content of his prayer is fundamental to all spiritual life which is the discernment of God's will and the power to perform it. His prayer provides an answer to the questions that all believers in Christ ask: For what shall I pray? How do I know His will?

We need to take a look at how we should pray for others and what are the contents of this prayer. Paul's prayer is easily divided into petition and praise which we will study separately.

Colossians 1:9-14 *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

I. Praying for Others

- Why do we pray for others?
 - Prayer is an instrument that God has ordained to bless His people. When we come to the presence of God, we are dependent on Him and seek Him to provide wisdom and understanding...when we pray for others, we seek Him to bless others, to protect others, to love others.
 - We are motivated to pray for others by love for others.
 - Scripture commands us to pray for others.

1 Timothy 2:1 *First of all, then, I urge that supplications [requests], prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.*

- Biblical examples

Exodus 32:31-32 *Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! (32) Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."*

Numbers 12:13 *So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"*

Deuteronomy 9:20 *And the Lord was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.*

Ezekiel 9:8 *So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"*

Acts 12:5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

II. Petition (Asking God) (9-11)

- For this reason

Note: Verses 3-8, Paul is commending the church for their love and faith. This is a positive situation, and there is no mention in the letter that the church is in danger or in a bad situation (other than false teachers). We tend to pray for others who are going through tough times. We tend to think this is unnecessary to pray for those who are seemingly doing well. Here Paul prays for the church in good times. This is the time that all believers need it most because they are in the midst of the greatest struggle, and we need to cover them in prayer. Paul never stops praying for this church that is doing well. Paul prayed that God would continue the work and increase the work. This we do not pray often enough.

- We've not stopped praying and asking

1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray without ceasing.

Note: Unceasing prayer is simply an attitude to view everything in relation to God. When we encounter people in bad situations, we pray for them. When we hear good news, we praise God for His glory. We do it at the moments we encounter. We continually offer up thanks or petitions.

- Asking God to fill you

Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation [wasteful expenditure]; but be filled with the Spirit.

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Note: Being filled means to be in complete control of something. We are not to be under control of wine which leads us to do bad things. Being under control of the Holy Spirit is to do what He wants...being obedient to the Word of God.

- Fill you with the knowledge of His will
 - The knowledge of His will controls your whole being

Note: This knowledge of His will is not secret, but revealed in His word.

- Dangers of having no knowledge of His will

Proverbs 19:2 Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps errs.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

1 Corinthians 14:20 Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

Ephesians 4:13-14 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (14) Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Note: Knowledge is crucial to Christian living.

- The knowledge is from the Holy Spirit

James 3:17 *But the wisdom that comes from heaven*

Transition: Paul asks God that the Christians be filled with the knowledge of His will, so they can serve Him and do what He wants. After all, no one can serve God if one does not know what He desires for us to do.

- Results of being filled with the knowledge of His will
 - Worthy walk

1 Thessalonians 2:12 *that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

Ephesians 4:1 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.*

Philippians 1:27 *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

Matthew 21:28-31 *"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' (29) He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. (30) Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. (31) Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first."*

Note: It is a walk or living a life that is pleasing Him. Paul says "live a life worthy of the Lord" which is to say that our life is like Christ Jesus in every aspect.

- Fruitful works

John 15:8 *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

James 3:17 *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

2 Peter 1:5-8 *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, (6) to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, (7) to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. (8) For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Note: Wisdom is required for us to bear spiritual fruits.

- Spiritual growth

1 Peter 2:2 *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*

Note: Spiritual growth can only come from His words. We can only mature as Christians when we take the time to study and meditate on His words.

- Godly strength

Note: Not Samson strength but Holy Spirit strength!

Romans 6:4 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,*

Ephesians 3:16 *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

Romans 15:13 *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Note: We have continuous access to God's unlimited power. Through the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to resist sin, preach boldly, to live in a worthy manner.

Transition: Paul understood that when we live godly or desire godliness, we will suffer persecution, so Paul prays that we will endure with joy.

- Joyous endurance

Acts 16:25 *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them*

III. Praise (12-14) (Jan 1)