

What's Your Prayer?

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;
Colossians 1:9-11



WHAT'S IN YOUR
PRAYER LETTER?

If you were going to write a letter to a close friend whom you love and include your specific prayers for them, what would it look like? Oh, and you are writing the letter from prison.

That was a convicting thought to me as I read Paul's opening prayer to the church at Colossae. I suspect my letter would have some complaints about life in prison and asking my friend for prayers first. And when I got to my prayers for them, similar to prayers for myself, it would be filled with earthly things – getting that promotion they wanted, their kids overcoming that academic obstacle, getting over that illness. It would consist of getting things or making things easier.

Paul's prayer is different. **He is laser focused on their spiritual development.** He personally seeks and puts God first and it shows in all aspects of his life, including his prayer for others. God first isn't just something he preaches, it is woven in all aspects of his being and overflows into all he does.

His prayer includes a request of God for them, followed by five "so as" desired outcomes.

Paul's Prayer...

Paul asks God to **fill them** with the **knowledge of His will** in all **spiritual wisdom** and **understanding**.

The type of knowledge we acquire makes a big difference. Many people "know" a lot of things, but it doesn't give them a God-filled, God-honoring life. The specific knowledge Paul prays for them is that of God's will, spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Paul knows that **knowledge is not the ultimate goal**. It is just a tool. A starting point. Knowledge is pointless if ends with just knowing stuff. God-centered spiritual wisdom and understanding of God's will can greatly impact and influence their subsequent actions.

So As To...

Paul doesn't simply tell the church of Colossae what he is praying for them, **he tells them why**. He tells them what he wants the outcome of the prayer to be for their lives.

- **Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.** In *response* to God's love and grace, not to earn it. Walking is active. It is living a life reflecting our gratitude for what He did for us and seeking to live by the example He set for us. Complete surrender, obedience, and love.
- **Fully pleasing to Him.** To crave the praise of Jesus over the praise of people. To seek to please Him above others.
- **Bearing fruit in every good work.** Not running ourselves ragged striving, trying, achieving for ourselves (or even to earn God's favor), but working in God's will, which will produce good and satisfying fruit. Producing a healthy full crop instead of a crop that will quickly rot or never produce.
- **Increasing in the knowledge of God.** The cool thing about being in God's will is we learn more about Him. We aren't stagnant...we experience additional growth and transformation.
- **Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.** As long as we are still on earth, even if we are in God's will, there will be sorrow and suffering in life. But in His will and seeking Him above all else will give us His supernatural power and might for endurance and patience through the hard times. And even joy.

Put First Things First

It isn't a bad thing to pray for things we desire and for things to be easier, but it isn't the **most important** thing we should be praying for. It is about putting first things first. Seeking God first.

CS Lewis has a great quote, "**Put first things first and we get second things thrown in; put second things first and we lose both first and second things...You can't get second things by putting them first. You get second things only by putting first things first.**"

And it is true whether it is "good" or "bad" things we are putting first above God. We could pour our lives into ministry, family, evangelism, activities, serving, discipleship, friendships, etc., but if we aren't putting

God first – strengthening our relationship with Him, knowing Him better, spending quiet time and prayer with Him, seeking His will and direction – these things won't be all they could be. We might see small pockets of temporary success, but they won't be all that God is willing and able to do through us. **But if we seek HIM FIRST – prioritize time with HIM to discern His will– we will see God work in ways we could never dream or imagine.**

What we pray for ourselves, our family, our friends says a lot about what we value and are putting first.

Let's try to make a habit of joining Paul in praying to be **FILLED** with the **KNOWLEDGE of GOD'S WILL** in **ALL SPIRITUAL WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING...**

...so that, we will **WALK in a manner WORTHY of the Lord**, seeking to **PLEASE HIM above anyone else, bearing FRUIT** in every good work, **increasing in the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**, and **strengthened with all POWER** according to His glorious **MIGHT** for **endurance and patience with joy.**



Your Turn...

What were your big takeaways?

What do your prayers usually look like?

Which of the 5 “so as” do you desire more of in this season of your life?

What generally gets you “first” time, resources, energy, etc.?