

'KNOWING GOD'

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12a

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INTRODUCTION

Please think on what you focus your time. Where do you exert your energy? What are you learning? The Lord stated through the prophet Jeremiah, "**Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises loyal love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, says the Lord.**"

YOU MUST KNOW GOD AND MUST KNOW HIS WILL.

We need to pray for the same things for our lives and for our families and Christian family. Let us examine the prayer of Paul for the Christians in Colossae in Col. 1:9-12a.

I. THE PRIMARY NEED FOR WHICH WE MUST PRAY: KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL (v. 9)

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it" takes us back to the thanksgiving section of vv. 3-8.

A. Prayer must not cease—we must continually ask for the right requests.

B. Filling with the Knowledge of God's will must be continual-- **by God.**

1. "His will" must not be *cheapened* to mean what we often mean by saying we want to know "the will of God."
 - Paul thinks of God's revelation in Christ of His redemptive plan and program.
 - The emphasis on knowledge follows the teaching of the Old Testament [cf. emphasis upon the "fear of Yahweh" as the beginning of knowledge—Pr. 1:7; cf. 9:10—wisdom].
 - The emphasis on the "will of God" here is intended to be practical and has primary reference to the moral commands and teachings of Scripture as applied to the everyday living of believers.
2. Wisdom must accompany knowledge of God's will. [Wisdom is knowing how to apply knowledge.]
 - "All"—not merely partial
 - "Spiritual"—given by the Holy Spirit [both word apply to both wisdom and understanding]
3. Understanding must also accompany such knowledge.
 - It is the ability to decide in particular cases.
 - The OT context shows that these virtues are essential to godly leaders.

Verse 10 indicates the purpose of being so filled with that knowledge. Paul likely gives here an implied exhortation.

II. THE PURPOSE/RESULT FOR WHICH WE MUST BE FILLED WITH SUCH KNOWLEDGE: A GODLY LIFESTYLE (10)

A. Having the right knowledge of God should result in right conduct. The idiom of "walking" on the correct "road" of life is very common in Biblical and Jewish usage. Compare Enoch who "walked with God" and was taken (Gen. 5:22, 24) and Noah who walked with God and was saved from the Flood (Gen. 6:9).

B. The walk must **be "worthy of the Lord."** A life fitting for such a relationship with Christ.

C. The walk must **be pleasing to him**

- The phrase is literally: "Into/unto all pleasing"; it shows the result of walking worthy.
- I Cor. 10:31 spells out the believer's responsibility clearly—"do all to the glory of God." Such God-glorifying conduct will result from the deep knowledge of God, for as Hendriksen notes, "the more God's children know him, the more they will also love him; and the more they love him, the more they will also wish to obey him in thought, word, and deed" (57).

III. THAT WHICH ACCOMPANIES A "WORTHY WALK" FOR THE CHRISTIAN (10b-12a)

A. Bearing Fruit in Every Good Work (10b).

1. In this case the focus of the fruit bearing is not internal as it was in v. 6, but the focus is on external diffusion by the clarification "in every [or "every kind of"] good work.

2. “Good works” here are clearly the result—the fruit of grace, not the root of grace; see Eph. 2:8-10.
- B. Growing/increasing in the knowledge of God (10b)
1. “Grow” is repeated from v. 6, as is bearing fruit—in v. 6 the growth of the church was in view.
 2. Growth is in “knowledge”—deep insight into—complete and full knowledge
 3. The “in” likely speaks of the sphere of the knowledge, since the context focuses so much on the importance of knowing and understanding God “and his purposes.
 4. God is the Object of this knowledge.
- C. Being Continually Strengthened-- God enables what he demands of a believer.
1. With all might/power—the related noun of the verb. By means of “all” power which God provides for whatever occasion. “All” here has the idea of limitless and complete power, power to the highest degree.
 2. According to His might/power of His glory [could be “glorious might”].
 - Paul not only elaborates on the extent of the strengthening, but also on the source of it—in God himself.
 - To be strengthened “according to” God’s might is saying more than to be strengthened “by/of” His might. For a wealthy person to give of his wealth the gift might still be quite small, but if he gives “according to” his wealth, the gift would be substantial.
 - “Might” speaks of inherent strength that displays itself in rule over others. Robertson calls it “perfect strength.” The might that Paul speaks of here is characteristic of the divine glory.
 - “Glorious might” does not place enough stress upon the importance of “glory”.
 3. The Direction and Result of the Strengthening—“For the attaining of all steadfastness and longsuffering.”
 - a. Steadfastness/endurance: The noun has the literal idea of “to remain under”. When experiencing troubles, trials, difficulties, and persecution instead of fleeing, despairing, or rebelling against them, the believer “remains under” them patiently enduring them.
 - b. “Longsuffering/patience literally means “long of anger”; otherwise, the person with this quality is “longsuffering” and practices self-restraint, not being hasty to avenge a wrong or to indulge in outbursts of anger.
 - Paul speaks not of “some” or “any” steadfastness or longsuffering; he describes “all steadfastness/longsuffering” The Christian must not be content to manifest endurance/patience occasionally, but must be so all of the time in all circumstances. The word “all” modifies both nouns.
 - c. “With Joy” is taken by some as telling how such steadfastness and longsuffering is to be accepted. However, by so connecting the words, the fourth participle beginning verse 12 has no prepositional phrase modifier as do the other 3. It is best to read “With joy giving thanks.”
- D. Joyously Giving Thanks
1. Thanks is given for all circumstances.
 2. Thanks is given joyfully.
 3. Thanks is given to the Father.

CONCLUSION

Paul knew how to pray! Do we? For what should we pray?

- 1) To be filled with the knowledge of his will, for which we need **all** wisdom and understanding from the Spirit.

What Results from such knowledge of God’s will?

- 2) TO WALK in a manner **worthy of** Christ, to **please him** in everything.

What will that look like? Bearing fruit in every good work; Growing in the knowledge of God; Being strengthened with all power, glory, leading to perseverance and patience; Giving thanks with joy to the Father

YOU MUST KNOW GOD AND MUST KNOW HIS WILL Compare what you want for your life with what God wants!