

Colossians Study, Part 5 (1:9)

This evening we will get back to our demonstrative bible study.

In this study, I am seeking to demonstrate to you a way to faithfully study the scriptures.

Because here is the reality, if you do not know how to study the bible for yourself you will always be dependent upon others to teach and tell you what the bible says.

I rejoice and thank God that He has called and equipped men to be pastors to instruct His people in His word, but here is what you must know: I (nor the Lord) want you to be dependent upon me for your theological and biblical knowledge.

The sad truth is that untold millions of God's people have been led astray because they did not know how to study the bible and looked to a man to tell them what to believe.

This, by the grace of God, will not happen to you! And that is what this study is for!

We will pick up where we left off a couple weeks ago in chapter 1. (If you have your copy of God's word...)

We will examine the paragraph starting in v. 9 (As is our custom, I will read the entirety of chapter 1.)

**9 And so, from the day we heard,
Heard what? We have to go back to vv. 3–4 and v. 8**

Here we remember that Paul only heard of their faith. (Contextually, Paul did not plant this church nor did he ever meet these saints.

Notice in v. 4 and in v. 9, Paul mentions that he “heard” about them. (or even in v. 8, Paul says that Epaphras made known them their love in the Spirit.)

So, all this hearing about the saints (of their faith, their love for each based on the Spirit) causes to Paul to react.

It caused Paul to act.

What the reaction to hearing these glorious things!?

It was to pray!

Paul says,

9 And so, from the day we heard, 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,

Now, before we look at Paul’s prayer microscopically, please note that what tops the list of his prayers for these saints are things that are spiritual in nature.

By this, I mean, Paul is more concerned with their godliness than the goods!

He is more concerned for their spiritual well-being, than their physical well-being.

- **their “manner of living” than their “materials in life”**
- **their righteousness than their resources**
- **their godward obedience than their earthly convenience**

Now, to be completely honest, of course Paul would pray for things more spiritual in material because after all, it was the Colossians faith that he heard about!

And to be sure, to pray for material provision is not necessarily wrong!

God delights to hear and answer prayers concerning your material need!

But here is a truth that can sit heavy:

You can pray for certain material things that can be out of God's will for you, and therefore God will not answer!

But do you know that there are certain prayers that are NEVER out of the will of God!?

There are prayers that God will always answer with, "yes!"

These prayers are the ones that deal with greater conformity to Christ; prayers that request greater spiritual vitality; prayers that request greater obedience; prayers that request greater faith; prayers that request greater dependence on God!

GOD WILL ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYERS THAT DIRECTED TOWARD GREATER CONFORMITY TO CHRIST! (You can never go wrong with praying such prayers!)

One reason why this is so important is because, say for example, if I pray for a material need you have.

If I am not careful, I could be so preoccupied with your material need that I could miss the fact that God has created that need so that you can grow in your dependence upon Him!

So, instead of praying for your material need only, I am going to ask God to use this need to aid you in your walk with Him!

And I know for sure that he will answer that request of greater dependence!

And to make sure that I am being clear: I will still pray for that material need, of course!

The point that I am making is this: Paul, when He prays for these saints, he makes it a point to pray for things that are spiritual in nature.

So, here is what this means practically:

- **We need to intentionally pray for the spiritual well-being of the saints, because we know that God will ALWAYS answer those prayers!**

Now, notice the way Paul prays for them, “without ceasing.”

Paul says, since the day we heard about you we have not ceased to pray for you!

This word “cease” means “to stop or to make an end to something”

To say it positively, Paul constantly, continually, consistently and conscientiously prayed for these saints!

This kind of praying is not some occasion, semi-optional (maybe I will, maybe I won't...I might, sometimes I do...I'll pray when I have time) type praying!

This is a *deliberate, determined, and disciplined* type of praying.

This is “on purpose” prayer!

The prayers that Paul prayed for these saints were being regularly delivered to the throne of grace!

Beloved, we must pray this way for others!

We must have this unyielding, unceasing approach to prayer.

And in this way, Paul serves as an example of what to pray for AND how to pray! (We are to pray for the spiritual blessing of our brothers and sisters and we need to pray without ceasing.)

Now, I want to observe what I just did as I walked through the text. It was a three step process:

1. I read the text
2. I pull out the meaning of the text
3. And I applied the text

When you study this scripture, this is what you are seeking to do (repeat steps.)

1. I read the text (observe what is being said.)
2. I pull out the meaning of the text (interpret what is being said.)
3. And I applied the text ("put on" what is being said.)

Now, let's look at the content of the prayer.

What is it that Paul says that he is praying for?

He said he asks the Lord that,

9 And so, from the day we heard, 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,

As we observe the request, the prayer is simply for the saints to know the will of God.

There are at least three truths that come from this request.

1. That the will of God can be known
2. That the will of God can be accomplished (this becomes more clearing in the next phrase)
3. That the will of God is spiritual (and by "spiritual", I mean, that it originates with God that He reveals to and is not of this world!)

The fact that God's will can be known is plain to us because of the request itself.

Look at the words Paul uses to describe knowing God's will...

- 1. Knowledge (proper/full/thorough knowledge)**
- 2. Wisdom (supernatural enlightenment or a Spirit empowered insight to the things pertaining to the will of God.)**
- 3. Understanding (is similar to knowledge, understanding could be seen as "concrete knowledge;" something that you firmly grasp with the mind.)**

So, the will of God can be known and Paul's desire is for the saints to know it!

Notice in the text, that Paul prayer is that they "may be filled with the knowledge of his will..."

The word filled reveals Paul's desires for them to be completely full to brim concerning their knowing the will of God!

He wants them to know the will of God to the full! (When it comes to the will of God, Paul does not want the saints to have any vacancy.)

Now, the immediate question based on Paul's desire for them to know the will of God is what?

"What is the will of God?"

Paul does not immediately answer that question here, but he will answer it in Chapter 2 to remain anchored to Christ and not moved by the diverse and varying opinions, teachings and traditions of men!

He will further reveal the will of God in Chapter 3, where he instructs the saints on how to live and individuals and collectively.

- They are to put sin to death!**

- They are to love and forgive each other.
- Wives are to submit to their husbands.
- Husbands are to lead with wives with gentleness.

Paul reveals what the will of God is!

In a real way, the simplest and most profound expression of the will of God is found in the summary of the law that Jesus gives, when it says in Matthew 22:37–40, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

So these two commands give us clear insight in knowing what the will of God is!

To say it another

: in order for you to know the will of God, you must know the law of God.

And if we were still stuck and could not determine what the will of God is for us, we could look at other passages in scripture that makes it clear for us.

And if we did this we would run into passages like this:

1 Thess. 4:3–8

“3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification:[b] that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body[c] in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”

1 Thess. 5:12–22

12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, [c] encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.”

So, these passages inform us on what the will of God is!

And from these texts we must conclude that the will of God is for us to live lives of righteousness; lives that are consumed with holiness; lives that are preoccupied with “thus says the Lord!”

This is what Paul unceasingly prayed for!

And this is what we must unceasingly pray for both for ourselves and others!

I GUARANTEE that if you commit to unceasingly and unyieldingly praying this for yourself and others GOD WILL ANSWER this request!

We will stop here tonight and will pick up the reason why knowing the will of God is important. (And to give you the answer now, it is so that we can (verse 10), “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him...”

Let’s pray!