

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you..."
(Colossians 1:9)

Paul starts Colossians off just like he did Ephesians and Philippians, with emphasis on praying for them! *"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."* (Ephesians 1:15-17)

What a thoughtful and intense prayer for the Ephesians! Paul also starts Philippians with a powerful prayer for them! *"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 1:3-6)

Interestingly, Paul does not start off the book of Galatians with an emphasis on praying for them. Of course, we know that it is implied both by Paul's overall practice and teaching that he was praying for them. Paul talked about being [spiritually] in the pains of childbirth and being perplexed about the Galatians and this implies prayer as well. However, Paul does not *specifically* mention praying for them like he does in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians! That just goes to show how tough, directive, intense, and necessary the letter to the Galatians was!

Do Not Stop Praying For One Another

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light." (Colossians 1:9-12)

When we pray for each other, it is important for us to ask ourselves, what exactly are we

praying for? Paul gives us three outlines of how to pray for other disciples in our midst or ministry. We find these outlines in Ephesians, Philippians, and here in Colossians. Paul says here that they have **not stopped praying** for them and do so **continually**! The Colossians prayer starts off right away asking for the disciples in Colossians to be filled “*with the knowledge of [God’s] will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.*” The goal of this knowledge is “*to live a life worthy of the Lord.*” Paul then, through this example of how to pray for each other, teaches us what a **worthy** and **God-pleasing life** looks like.

#1 Bearing Fruit In Every Good Work

First, we should be *bearing fruit in every good work*. So when I pray for other disciples of Jesus, I need to consider *every good work* they are doing and be praying for them. This is why we’d pray for someone that is being reached out to by another disciple, or we’d pray for their evangelistic efforts overall, or their efforts to get the Gospel out (such as internet ministry, MERCYworldwide, and so on). We need strong bible talks so our relationships with each other are deep enough to where we actually know what good work each other is doing. Then we can pray specifically about every good work for every disciple in our bible talk.

#2 Growing In The Knowledge of God

Secondly, we should be *growing in the knowledge of God*. Do I pray that my brothers and sisters are growing in their knowledge of God? Do I know what they want to learn about and are we close enough so that we know what each other needs to grow in and/or learn about? This means that we need great fellowship that goes beyond the surface and outside of typical pleasantries. The simple question of “what do you want to grow in the knowledge of God” or something like it is a fantastic conversation starter with a brother or sister!

#3 Strengthened With All Power According To His Might

Thirdly, we should be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. We need

to be strong and powerful via God's glorious might, not our own. We can get confused or distracted by trying to be strong in ourselves. *"For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."* (1st Timothy 4:8 NIV) I believe it is very important to exercise and go after your health. However, in today's mindset, there can be an emphasis on relying on our own strength and power. The scriptures teach that this kind of thinking leads to being cursed (Jeremiah 17:5); planting evil, reaping evil, and eating the fruit of deception (Hosea 10:13); making our strength our "god." (Habakkuk 1:11)

The purpose of this strengthening with all power according to his glorious might is to give us *"great endurance and patience."* I need this power and might when I am feeling tired, discouraged, distracted, or dismayed! We need this strengthening all the time, even if we are feeling great! I will always need strengthening with all power according to his glorious might to help me with my endurance and patience. Satan, our enemy, is always attacking with arrows of doubt and darts of temptation. Sometimes our own consequences or circumstances are heavy and haunting. Prayers that strengthened us in this way are always needed! Imagine the impact on our bible talk if we prayed for this kind of strengthening for one another daily?

#4 Give Joyful Thanks

Lastly, we should pray giving joyful thanks to the Father! Why? Because he has qualified me to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light! What an inspiring truth – a repentant, baptized disciple of Jesus is qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. Think about that! When I pray, am I "joyfully thankful?" We need to make sure that we are thankful to God about all things – especially our relationship with God in the light and the salvation he's given!

I was baptized March 11th, 1992, by the grace of God. That night, I was brought from the *"dominion of darkness"* into the *"kingdom of light!"* Jesus is the Light! (John 1:4-10) *"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* (Colossians 1:13-14) My inheritance is redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and eternity with my God!

Certainly, there are a great many things to thank God for – but my redemption and forgiveness of sins need to be at the core of that gratitude. I’ve been redeemed, forgiven, and have an eternity with a loving and kind father to look forward to. Am I “giving joyful thanks” for these things? Imagine the impact in our hearts if we did make it a point to **give joyful thanks** for these things daily?

Closing Challenge

In conclusion, Paul often taught disciples to imitate his faith and his example. *“Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.”* (Philippians 3:17) *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”* (Philippians 4:9) *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”* (1st Corinthians 11:1) There are many other places where imitation of Paul and his example is urged and lifted-up. (cf 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 1 Corinthians 4:17) Let’s imitate Paul as a bible talk and pray like this for each other – not just for today or this week, but from here on!

Let’s pray for one another that we will:

Bear Fruit In Every Good Work
Grow In The Knowledge of God
Be Strengthened With All Power
Give Joyful Thanks

Mnemonic devices are things used to help us remember something. Our bible talk is using one right now for our current series – “God Eats Pop Corn.” This catchy mnemonic device is used to help us remember the books in our series – “Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.” For this kind of prayer for one another, we can think of “BGBG” or “Bear, Grow, Be, Give.” “Bear fruit, Grow in knowledge, Be strengthened, Give thanks.” God’s word gives us this as one of many inspiring examples for us to imitate for when we may feel stuck in our prayer life!

Amen!