
Colossians 1:9-14, *Qualified in Christ!*

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: Prayer is the divine telephone of communication. It lines us up to Christ, and helps us to be sensitive to His Spirit and to the needs of others. God gives us a complete understanding, in His own time, what He wants us to do with our lives. The key is that we have to ask Him for this wisdom and insight so we will know what our meaning and purpose are according to what He wants us to do with our lives. The focus we are to seek is our spiritual formation and our growth in Him. Doing this will bring the wisdom to know the opportunities and the abilities needed to meet His call. When we focus on Christ, we will know Him better and then all the other things and stuff in life will start to line up better, then we can be better at honoring Him as Lord! Goodness and kindness come from a heart that is transformed and poured out to Him. It does not flow from one's willingness to just do it; we have to be a person in Christ to do the work He has called us to do. We have to remember: He gives us the strength and power to be in Him and to allow His love and Fruit to flow from us. *In Him we can do all things; out of Him we can do nothing.* With His power and purpose in us we have the endurance, hope, and patience to overcome all that life throws at us—even stress and sufferings! Our identity and joy are in Christ alone! Let us be real, authentic Christians who are thankful for who He is and what He has done for us—His rescue of us from sin and darkness, His Kingdom, His freedom, His forgiveness of our sins, and His purchase of our very being by His shed blood. Christ is our inheritance, hope, and over our very lives here on earth and in the eternity to come. We are His and are in Him. So let us live for the Light—live out our lives as worthy.

Contexts and Background:

These early Christians needed to understand that knowing God was not a one-time event; it is a continual relationship, where we constantly rely on Him. He is the Hope we have; He gives us grace and peace. Our place and security is in Heaven to come and our joy can then be declared and lived out. Paul affirms that yes, Christ is sufficient for faith and salvation; nothing else is or could be. Yes, we do have hope beyond hope. If our place is secured in eternity—and it is; if we have a Savior in Whom we can have faith and trust—and we do, then we can lead a life of endurance no matter what is thrown at us. These are things we cannot accomplish by our own means; we need Jesus. He needs to be placed first! Thus, Paul urges them and us to put Christ first, and to move on to spiritual maturity. From this perspective, we know His Truth so we can still be triumphant in Him in the time we have here on earth.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *We have heard about you.* A mark of a great leader is compassion for those under his care and the ability to connect and affirm, as well as correct. If you do not correct and just affirm, you lead others astray. If you just correct and do not encourage, you discourage and dishearten people (Acts 19:10; Col. 4:12).
- *Stopped/cease to pray.* This means the moral sense to always be pursuing God. Paul is directing them to the Old Testament and challenging the current philosophy that seeks any wisdom and knowledge. In Christ, we are to seek His wisdom and knowledge through prayer and the Word (Ex. 28:30; 1 Sam. 12:23; Psalm 119; Prov. 1:2-7).
- *Knowledge of his will/will of God.* Here, the will of God is about learning about Him, following His decrees, and building fruit and character. After that, one can make good decisions and weed out false teachers. Seeking to place Jesus first and foremost so to follow only Him, and thus love, trust, and obey Christ is a mindset and lifestyle (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:17; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:13-15; 4:19).
- *Spiritual wisdom.* Meaning the thinking and application of what Jesus has taught (Phil 1:6, 27; 2:12-13).

- *Live a life worthy/walk worthy of the Lord.* This means live in the manner of what we know and believe—and do it consistently. We do this when we are pursuing God and His righteousness, and believing His precepts, so He is more and we are less in our will. This is our “walk with God,” meaning living out the daily Christian life thinking as He has called, behaving as we believe, and thus doing in response to His Work in and for us. It is also being empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is never the walk in our own will and strength; such a thing is pride and disobedience to our loving Lord (Lev. 26:3; Ezek. 36:27; Mark 10:29-31; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; 5:16; Eph. 4:1; 5:1; Phil. 3:10-14).
- *Worthy.* Meaning behave as the One you represent, as the name *Christian* means to be like Christ in His character. Refers to being an “appropriate” or acceptable offering so we “deserve” our reward—but we do not earn it.
- *Fully Pleasing Him.* This means to be a friend of God with gratitude; seeking Him first is to glorify Him. (Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 20:7; Psalm 69:30-31; Matt. 5:16; 6:33; Mark 12:29-30; 1 Thess. 2:4).
- *Bringing forth fruit.* Meaning that fruit from a tree is the byproduct of a healthy, well-watered, and cared for tree. It is the same with a growing Christian: Christ’s characteristics from the Holy Spirit are flowing in, and through, and then out of us, thus our fruit is an offshoot of the care we make in paying particularly close attention to His Word so we can grow more righteousness. Our growth and development in Christ is paramount and this results from our mindset and attitude in our relationships. This is the central feature of our faith development that results from saving faith. In the Old Testament, Israel is the vine that bears fruit for God. Now, the Church is to bear this fruit to promote the Gospel. In John, Jesus switches that metaphor as God will produce the fruit through the believer. We are the “vine” He is the “root” and trunk (Gen. 1:28; Hos. 10:1; 14:7-8; Matt. 13:3-8, 31-32; Luke 8:11; John 14:15; Rom. 1:13; 15:30; 1 Cor. 16:15; Gal. 5; Phil. 1:11, 22; 4:7, 17; Col. 1:6; Heb. 12:11; 13:15).
- *Growing/increasing in the knowledge of God.* Referring to our spiritual formation as allowing Christ to dwell in our minds and hearts so He goes to our hands and feet. This is our maturity, character, demeanor, and conduct—the essence of who we are is a display of Christ, even without opening our mouths. We are His exhibit—an example of His work. This cannot occur unless we work at it—take what He gives and build upon it, so we can grow deeper in Him (Psalm 119; John 14:23; Rom. 8:5-9; 1 Cor. 12-13; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:3-5, 13-14).
- *Being strengthened.* We are anchored in our faith and hope in Christ! This means discipline, solid doctrine, correct thinking, and not being drawn to false teaching or faulty trends. God’s plans and faithfulness transcend what we know and see (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:8, 14-16; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 1:6-9; Col. 1:4-5; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 1:3)!
- *Endurance and patience/longsuffering.* Meaning our attitude and mindset when we face trials, setbacks and hurts, and handling difficult people, so we can take tricky and complicated circumstances and learn and grow from them rather than fume and rant and rave, none of which do anything to help us. This is the outcome of being strengthened in the Word and growing in the Spirit by our prayer life, devotions, learning, and fellowship and then putting this into practice as we walk through life. The result is a deeper love and an ability to endure what life throws at us (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16-20).
- *Qualified us.* Meaning we are made sufficient for the task because He empowers us. Paul boldly states that we are accepted by Christ alone; no entity in the universe has better qualifications than our Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Rom. 3:23; Gal. 2:21; Eph. 1:1-11; 2:8; Col. 2:16, 18, 20-23)! The Colosse church was teaching that other supernatural beings were bringing/channeling wisdom that had power over them, and that in order for anyone to grow in faith, this wisdom needed to be caught. Also they were teaching that these beings could also hinder a person from seeking truth-contradiction; thus, believing in, even seeking pagan gods shows our lack of faith in the One True God.

- *Inheritance.* The portion and rewards received for obedience and faith refers to the Promise Land for the Jews; but more appropriately, for the Christian, it is having God as our God, having Him live in us, our possession of the world to come. We become “joint heirs” (Num. 26:52; 33:51-54; Josh. 14: 1-2; Acts 3:25; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Titus 3:7; Heb. 6:17; 11:9; 1 Pet. 3:7) of His promises. He is the Light that shines on our lives, on our path. The world is the darkness we avoid—the evil, while we bear the Light by our deeds (Psalm 27:1; Isa. 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 58:8-10; 60:1).
- *The saints.* Meaning to be set apart or consecrated to serve the Lord; these are the inheritors of God’s provision and blessing, the ones who know and love Him and desire to make Him known.
- *Kingdom.* Referring to a community of people under the rule of a king. For us, it is the everlasting reign and Lordship of Christ where we have a personal and eternal relationship with Him (Matt. 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:11).
- *Light.* Meaning God’s Divine Truth, Love, and Holiness. A contrast between light—meaning goodness and God-honoring—and the conflict with darkness and evil, as those who are wicked, and who fight against God. This is a synonym of God’s Kingdom; the ones of the light participate in the Kingdom and Heaven (Psalm 27:1; 36:9; 105, 119; 130; Isa. 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 58:8-10; 59:9; 60:1-3; Matt. 5:14; 6:23; John 8:12; ; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8-14; 1 John 1:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; James 1:17; 1 John 2:9-10; Rev. 21:23; 22:5).
- *Rescued/delivered us.* God liberates us from the slavery of sin to freedom in Christ. This denotes rescuing a slave from captivity, as we were slaves to sin and darkness, but now we have freedom in Christ (Luke 22:53; Acts 26:18; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:11; 1 John 2:9-11).
- *Dominion/power of darkness* refers to sin and the ways of the world that are meaningless and hopeless. Christ is the Perfection; He has the power and authority to be the Light and shatter the darkness on our behalf (2 Cor. 3:15; 4:4-6; 6:14; Eph. 5:8-14; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:5).
- *Son of He loves/His love* means *God’s beloved Son* from the Gospels (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; John 6:37, 44; 17:23-26; 2 Pet. 1:17). This alludes to the promise of God (Deut. 18:15; Psalm 2:7; Isa. 42:1).
- *Redemption.* Means to flee a slave by paying the price for him. This is about the forgiveness we receive; that God redeems Israel and He redeems us by paying for our sins by what Christ has done through His shed blood (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 4:8-13; Gal. 6:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:13-16; Col. 1:21-22; 2:13, 17, 20; 3:9-10; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19).
- *Forgiveness of sins.* God gives us a “pardon” by grace alone and grants us a “remission of our sins.” (Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Eph. 1:7).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Do we fully understand that we have been rescued from sin and darkness and from hopeless despair? Has that hit home? Are you filled with gratitude because of what Christ has done? To venture further in the faith beyond our saving faith, we have to take heed and be encouraged that God is our rescuer! Therefore, we are to respond in gratitude for His provision and gifts (Col. 2:7; 3:17; 4:2)!

God hears and knows our deeds; He is overjoyed when they are good and faithful, giving out of our faith and not just soaking it in from Him. This is all about our trust and obedience in Him. We are called to hear His Word and then put that Word into our practice of life. The evidence of our faith and His impact on our lives will be what comes out of our lives onto others around us in fruit, character, and deeds. Our lives will be manifested by prayer that gives rise to thankfulness, from a will that trusts in Christ, that puts out

Love, that synergizes our hope, kindness, and peace that, in turn, makes us faithful and good by what Christ has done for us. God's Word, His written word and His Spirit are the change agents for us and for those around us! We can do nothing to earn our salvation; only Christ qualifies us. We just respond to what He has done with faith that leads to obedience, and accept His grace and transformation: He transforms and changes us completely!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How do you feel when a salesman misrepresents a product, then you buy it and it does not work? How is this like when we say one thing and do another or behave in a different manner?
2. What do authentic Christians look like? How do they behave? How should we? How do you line up? What does it take to understand that knowing God is not a onetime event?
3. How would you compare a Christian to a fruit tree, where the fruit is the byproduct of a healthy, well-watered, and cared-for tree? How is this like being a growing Christian?
4. How is what Paul prays for like what you pray for or desire? How is prayer like a Divine telephone of communication? How do you use God's phone? How should you?
5. What would your life look like if God gave you a complete understanding of what He wants you to know and do in your life? How would this help you recognize the opportunities and have the abilities to know and meet His call?
6. Why can't goodness and kindness come from an ungrateful heart or flow from a will to just do it?
7. Got Fruit? What are you bearing for God? (See Galatians chapter five for your template.)
8. What does it mean that in Christ you can do all things, and out of Him you can do nothing? What do you need to do so you will know that Christ gives you the strength and power to be in Him and to allow His love and Fruit to flow from you?
9. What does it mean to you to live the Light? Live out your life as worthy?
10. Do you feel that you have the endurance, hope, and patience to overcome all that life can throw at you? If not, what do you need so you will be strengthened to face stress and sufferings?
11. Is your identity and joy in Christ alone? If not, why not? If so, how has this worked for you? How can it work better?
12. What is missing from your spiritual formation and growth in Christ? What will you do to fill in the gaps?