

EXPOSITORY TEACHING ON THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

MESSAGE FOUR: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE [PART TWO]

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:9-14

- ❖ 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, 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. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

REVIEW OF PART ONE:

1. AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE IS PEOPLE-CENTERED, NOT SELF-CENTERED.

Scripture: “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to *pray for you* [Colossian believers]” (Col. 1:9).

2. AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE IS CONSISTENT AND PERSISTENT.

Scripture: “And so, from the day we heard (about their conversion), *we have not ceased* to pray for you” (Col. 1:9).

3. AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE IS SPIRITUAL-MINDED RATHER THAN EARTHLY-FOCUSED.

i. Paul prayed for believers to be filled with the knowledge of God’s Will

Scripture: “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.*” (Col. 1:9)

ii. Paul prayed for believers for the purpose of living a life worthy of the Lord.

Scripture: “...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.” (Col. 1:10)

CONTINUATION OF THE MESSAGE – PART TWO:

iii. Paul prayed for believers for divine empowerment.

Scripture: “May you be *strengthened (have power) with all power (full power), according to his glorious might (majestic power)*, for all endurance and patience with joy.” (Col. 1:11)

- Paul prayed for knowledge (v9), obedience (v.10) and divine empowerment (v.11). We must learn to pray the same for ourselves and for others.
- Having the knowledge of God’s will isn’t enough, having the passion to obey isn’t enough. We need the power of God continuously.
- We need power not just for healings and miracles but for endurance and patience too in difficulties.

Observe: “May you be strengthened (present tense, i.e. continually strengthened) with all power, according to his glorious might, *for all endurance and patience with joy.*” (Col. 1:11)

Paraphrase: May you be continually strengthened with all God’s strength, which comes from His glorious power, so that you would be able to endure and be patient in everything with joy.

Endurance and Patience: Some Bible scholars describe “endurance” as being strong in difficult circumstances and “patience” as bearing up with difficult people.

- These two qualities are required in the Christian life, for we often face difficulties with situations and people.

Observation: But this endurance and patience must not be exercised with sadness and grumbling attitude. Paul says, “so that you would be able to *endure and be patient in everything with joy.*”

Joy: Endure everything with joy and be patient in everything with joy. Without joy, endurance and patience becomes a heavy burden and pressure.

Power from God: And this endurance and patience with joy comes from God who strengthens our weak hearts. Seek God for His strength and power in troubles.

- **Illustration:** Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns to God after being dragged publicly, badly beaten, and imprisoned in the inner prison (**Acts 16:25**). How did they get this joy and strength in the midst of suffering? From God.
- From prison, Paul wrote to believers in Philippi, “I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. *I can do all things through him who strengthens me*” (**Phi. 4:12-13**).

4. AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE IS FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING TOWARDS GOD FOR HIS LOVING-KINDNESS.

Scripture: “May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, *giving thanks to the Father*, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.” (**Colossians 1:11-12**)

- It is when believers have endurance, patience and joy in all situations that their hearts would overflow with thanksgiving to God.
- Paul not only gave thanks to God in v. 3 (for their faith in Christ and love for the saints), he also prays that these Colossian believers would grow in thanksgiving to God (v.12).
- Without cultivating a thankful heart, we cannot develop our prayer life.
- Paul understood that growing in thanksgiving to God in all things develops a healthy spiritual life.
- Thanksgiving speaks immensely about our true character.

Illustration: In 1860, Sep 8, a young man (Edward Spencer), battled for six hours and saved 17 persons in lake Michigan, ruining his health (spent on a wheelchair) and career the rest of his life. When he died after some years, not a single person from the 17 persons he rescued ever came to thank him. How ungrateful these people were! [*Warren Wiersbe, Be Complete, pg. 43*]

G.K. Chesterton: “When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.”

Paul gave three reasons to thank God always:

Qualified: “Giving thanks to the Father, who has *qualified you* to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (**Col. 1:12**)

- We have no qualification in ourselves to enter into the kingdom of God. God qualified us (made us fit) by His grace through the work of Christ Jesus on the cross.
- “Inheritance of the saints in light” – Heaven is the inheritance of the saints in light and we live together eternally in the presence of God.

Delivered: “He has *delivered us* from the domain of darkness.” (**Col. 1:13**)

- An unsaved soul is in the bondage of sin and Satan. But God has delivered us from the domain of darkness. This is not man’s work, but only God’s deliverance.

Transferred: “He has *transferred us* to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (**Col. 1:13**)

- He saved us from the domain of darkness and put us in the kingdom of His beloved Son, Christ Jesus.

Observation:

- Past tense:
 - Qualified (already happened)
 - Delivered (already happened)
 - Transferred (already happened)
- Present state:
 - Share in the inheritance of the saints in light
 - In the kingdom of His beloved Son (present - Church; future - Heaven)

RECAP:

1. An Effective Prayer Life is People-centered, not Self-centered.
 2. An Effective Prayer Life is Consistent and Persistent.
 3. An Effective Prayer Life is Spiritual-minded rather than Earthly-focused.
 4. An Effective Prayer Life is Filled with Thanksgiving towards God for His Loving-kindness.
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Questions for Reflection:

1. What are the four lessons that we learn about the characteristics of an effective prayer life?
2. Why did Paul pray for believers to be strengthened?
3. What is the difference between endurance and patience?
4. What is the necessity of joy in endurance and patience?
5. For what three things Paul encouraged believers to give thanks to God?
6. When you pray for others or for yourself in difficult situations, do you pray for the power to endure and to be patient with joy?
7. Do you thank God for the cross of Christ every day?
8. What difference did God make in your life through this message?