

Colossians 1:9–11. "Walk in a Manner Worthy".

Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday April 23rd, 2023.

Colossians 1:9–11 ⁹ 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, ¹⁰ 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; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; (ESV)

If you are planning on doing any trips this summer, you most likely know the importance of paying attention. When hiking, it's important to stay on the trail to avoid getting lost. While visiting Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, a 19-year-old hiker from Quebec was rescued after being stuck on a ledge of the tallest mountain in the Park. Samuel Frappier was hiking with a friend but got separated along a technical climbing area where there is no trail down the mountain. "I spent all night shivering on a small rock," Frappier told the CBC. "If I slipped just one foot more, then I would have fallen to my death." Frappier used his cellphone to call authorities and spent the night on the mountain, where temperatures dropped below freezing. He said he wasn't injured, but he didn't have any technical climbing equipment that would help him move up or down. (<http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/05/29/quebec-hiker-samuel-frappier-rescued-from-mountain-ledge-in-colorado/>)

For the Colossians, False teachers were luring the Colossians off the path of truth. The Apostle Paul showed them that they had all they needed in the Word of God for their journey, and they were instructed to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, staying true to what they were taught. Departing from the path of truth would not only cause them succumb to error but walk straight into danger.

Every day we face a myriad of choices: What we eat, who we see, what we do and why we do it can seem overwhelming. If we don't start the day and continue on a purposeful path, then we will allow others to dictate our path for us. When we have a godly purpose, that is considered, resolute, and seeking to honor God, He will give us the strength to achieve the most glorious and productive results.

In order to "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord", we must live a life that is 1) Prayerful (Colossians 1:9), 2) Pleasing (Colossians 1:10) 3) Purposeful (Colossians 1:11).

In order to "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord", we must live a life that is a: 1) Prayerful Walk (Colossians 1:9)

Colossians 1:9 [9] 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, (ESV)

As we begin a journey, the path that we take is a path that others have tread before. It is the knowledge of this path and the way others have undertook the journey that we begin to understand what is before us and how to undertake the journey. What Paul had heard refers to the favorable report he had received from Epaphras (v. 8). What is recorded in previous section of Col. 1:3–8, identifies the spiritual condition of the

church. Paul expressed great joy when he **heard** of the Colossians' salvation. **The joy continued** from that day, and that, too, became an occasion for prayer. Additionally, Paul saw the **dangers** in the theological **heresy** and what it would do to the congregation. **The specific nature of the prayer** occurs in two complementary verbs found here, "**praying**" (*proseuchomenoi*) and "**asking**" (*aitoumenoi*). Although the terms are basically synonymous, **when used together they stress slightly different aspects of prayer**. The first, "**praying**," is a general term, the most common for prayer in the Pauline Epistles. It **covers the entirety of the prayer life**. The second, "**asking**," is more specific. It **expresses a particular request that God intervene in the lives of the people for whom Paul prayed**. Thus, **Paul's general prayer took a specific form. He prayed that they would know the will of God in their lives.** (Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 200). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

- **Much of our prayer time tends to focus on** those who are struggling, facing difficulties, fallen into sin or physical distress. **Paul, however, knew that the knowledge that others are progressing in the faith should never lead us to stop praying for them**. Rather, it should **encourage prayer for their greater progress**. **The enemy may reserve his strongest opposition** for those who have the most potential for expanding God's cause in the world.

In traveling the path, we must be **conscious** of the **dangers** and **have continual reliance of God through continual prayer**. Paul employed the **negative words "not ceased to pray for you" ... Paul prayed regularly and consistently for them**. Such unceasing or recurring **prayer** (1 Thess. 5:17) demands first of all **an attitude of God-consciousness**. That does **not mean to be constantly in the act of verbal prayer**, but to **view everything in life in relation to God**. **When Paul looked around his world**, everything he saw prompted him to prayer in some way. **When he thought of or heard about one of his beloved churches**, it moved him toward communion with God. **Thus, Paul's actual petition is for the discernment of God's will and the power to perform it** (O'Brien, P. T. (1998). *Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 44, p. 20). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

- **For example, if we meet someone**, we immediately should consider where they stand with God. **If we hear of something distressing happening**, we should react by praying for God to act in the situation because we know He cares. **If we hear of something delightful that has happened**, we should respond with immediate praise to God for it because we know He is glorified.

In traveling the path of faithfulness we must know where God wants us to go. Paul's petition is that the Colossians be filled with the knowledge of His will. This is an **AORIST PASSIVE SUBJUNCTIVE**. **Believers cannot fill themselves**, (they must be **filled with the Spirit**) (cf. Eph. 5:18) (Utley, R. J. (1997). *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, then later, Philippians)* (Vol. Volume 8, p. 14). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.). *Plēroō* (**filled**) means to be **completely filled**, or **totally controlled**. **The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31)**, while **Stephen was full of faith (Acts 6:5)**. **In each case they were totally under the control of what filled them**. Paul discusses the **knowledge they need** in order to see through these errorists; and again the wording fits the special need: that you may **be filled with full knowledge** (ἐπίγνωσις), with **no gaps in this knowledge** that may lay you open to **deception**. We must also **guard against the danger in all of us of the flesh**, which **prevents the perfect translation of knowledge into conduct**. (Lenski, R. C. H. (1937). *The interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (p. 34). Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern.).

- **What we are filled with controls us.** If our minds are filled with pornography, we will be lustful. If our minds are filled with gossip, we will be filled with others actions. If our minds are filled with entertainment, we will be filled with living out fantasy. When we are filled with the knowledge of God's will we will be active and fruitful in living a purposeful Christian life.

Paul wants the Colossians to be totally controlled by knowledge. *Epignōsis* (knowledge) consists of the normal Greek word for knowledge (*gnōsis*) with an added preposition (*epi*), which intensifies the meaning. The knowledge Paul wants the Colossians to have is a deep and thorough knowledge. This knowledge is no merely intellectual exercise, no theosophical *gnosis* such as was affected by the teachers who threatened to lead the Colossian church astray. Charles Spurgeon said: "Every believer should be able to filter his culture's seductive *gnosis* through the grid of God's *epignosis*". (Charles Spurgeon as recorded in Hughes, R. K. (1989). *Colossians and Philemon: the supremacy of Christ* (p. 23). Westchester, IL: Crossway Books.)

- **Some people realize** that they don't know particular things helpful for life and godliness and they strive to grown and be filled with the knowledge of God's will. The most dangerous situation to be in, either by apathy or ignorance, if think that you already know all you need to know. This stagnation in ignorance closes us off from grown, both personally and corporately. They is a healthy dissatisfaction that leads us in sanctification, growth in holiness and encourages this in others.

True knowledge ... starts with a proper attitude toward God: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). Right knowledge leads to right behavior: it was because the pagan world, according to Paul, "did not see fit to retain God in their knowledge" that they were abandoned "to a base mind and to improper conduct" (Rom. 1:28) (Bruce, F. F. (1984). *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (p. 46). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

Please turn to Ephesians 5

Paul prays that the knowledge we have would be of His will. The general will of God for all His children is given clearly in the Bible. The specific will of God for any given situation must always agree with what He has already revealed in His Word. The better we know God's general will, the easier it will be to determine His specific guidance in daily life. Paul did not encourage the Colossians to seek visions or wait for voices. He prayed that they might get deeper into God's Word and thus have greater wisdom and insight concerning God's will. He wanted them to have "all wisdom"—not that they would know everything, but that they would have all the wisdom necessary for making decisions and living to please God (Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 111). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.).

One simple way to understand God's will that we submit to being controlled by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:15-21 says:
Ephesians 5:15-21. [15] Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [18] And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, [19] addressing one another in

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, [20]giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [21]submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (ESV)

- As in **Colossians 1:9**, the command to be **filled/controlled with/by the Spirit**, in Greek (*plērousthe*) is a **present imperative** and does **not** describe a onetime “filling” but a regular pattern of life (Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2271). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.).

Having the knowledge of God’s Word control our minds is the key to walking in a manner worthy. What controls your thoughts will control your behavior. Self-control is a result of mind control, which is dependent on knowledge. Knowledge of God’s Word will lead to all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Though the terms **wisdom** and **understanding** may be synonymous, *sophia* (**wisdom**) may be the broader of the two terms. **It refers to the ability to collect and concisely organize principles from Scripture. Sunesis (understanding) could be a more specialized term, referring to the application of those principles to everyday life. Both sophia wisdom and Sunesis understanding are spiritual; they deal in the nonphysical realm and have the Holy Spirit as their source. While the Colossians have learned the word of truth from Epaphras, they are apparently too easily confused by false teaching... At its root, the Colossian crisis is a crisis of knowing God. And so it is with every challenge to a congregation’s spiritual formation** (Wall, R. W. (1993). *Colossians & Philemon* (Col 1:9). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.).

- **Believing, submissive Bible study leads to the knowledge of God’s will. A mind saturated with such knowledge will also be able to comprehend general principles of godly behavior. With that wisdom will come understanding of how to apply those principles to the situations of life. That progression will inevitably result in godly character walking in a manner worthy.**

Illustration: 7140 To Make Sure Of Visits

One of Rabbi Ben Jochai’s scholars once asked him, “Why did not the Lord furnish enough manna to Israel for a year, all at one time?” The teacher said, “I will answer you with a parable. Once there was a king who had a son to whom he gave a yearly allowance, paying him the entire sum on the fixed date. It soon happened that the day on which the allowance was due was the only day in the year when the father ever saw his son. So the king changed his plan and gave his son day by day that which sufficed for the day; and then the son visited his father every morning. How he needed his father’s unbroken love, companionship, wisdom and giving! Thus God dealt with Israel and deals with us.” (Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (pp. 1569–1570). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.)

In order to “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”, we must live a life that has a:

2) Pleasing Walk (Colossians 1:10)

Colossians 1:10 [10]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. (ESV)

Prayer is practical. It is **not** an escape from reality. **The end of prayer is not** “spiritual” in the sense that we do **not** seek a mystical communion alone with God. **In prayer we struggle** with being in the world as those who **“walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.”**

As Christians **in prayer we are looking for the power** **not** to be translated to some “third heaven,” but **to be made transparent witnesses of Christ’s glory in us, bearing fruit of His Spirit.** Here in **verse 10,** **Paul is talking about holiness,** a holiness that is personal and social. The person who would **“walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.”** **boldly orders his or her life in obedience to God, seeking what is pleasing to God, thus doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with the Lord (Mic. 6:8)** (Dunnam, M. D., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1982). *Galatians / Ephesians / Philippians / Colossians / Philemon* (Vol. 31, p. 335). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.).

Walk is used in the Bible to **refer to one’s pattern of daily conduct.** **A mind controlled by knowledge, wisdom, and understanding produces a life worthy of the Lord.** To live a life **“worthy of the Lord”** (*axiōs tou kyriou*) (probably) means to **live a life that is commensurate (appropriately corresponding) with what the Lord has done for us and is to us.** It (may) also suggest **acting in conformity with our union with Christ and with his purpose for our lives.** **The New Testament describes several features of the worthy walk.** We are to **walk** in humility (Eph. 4:1–3); in purity (Rom. 13:13, KJV) in contentedness (1 Cor. 7:17); **by faith** (2 Cor. 5:7); **in good works** (Eph. 2:10); **different from the world** (Eph. 4:17–32); **in love** (Eph. 5:2); **in light** (Eph. 5:8); **in wisdom** (Eph. 5:15); **and in truth** (3 John 3–4). **Such a walk will please Him in all respects.** (Vaughan, C. (1981). Colossians. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon* (Vol. 11, p. 178). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.).

Hymn: Trying to walk worthy in our own strength is **doomed** to failure. **Martin Luther stated that truth clearly in his hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”:** **Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He. Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same. And He must win the battle”.**

Paul also speaks of bearing fruit in every good work. In scripture, **converts** are referred to as **fruit.** **Paul spoke of the household of Stephanas** as the “first fruits of Achaia” (1 Cor. 16:15). He also desired some fruit among the Romans (Rom. 1:13). **Hebrews 13:15** defines **praise** as **fruit:** “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, **the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”** **Giving money** can also be **fruit** (Rom. 15:26–28). **Godly living** is **fruit,** as indicated when the writer of Hebrews tells us that God’s discipline produces in us “the peaceful **fruit** of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11). Finally, **the holy attitudes mentioned in Galatians 5:22–23** are referred to as “the **fruit** of the Spirit.” Believers should be growing in the manifestation of all these various types of fruit. **True knowledge of God’s will is inseparable from living in harmony with it.** **True knowledge** leads to obedience; **complete obedience** cannot occur without the knowledge of God’s will given by the Holy Spirit. (Barton, B. B., & Comfort, P. W. (1995). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (pp. 155–156). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.)

- **A simple test to see if you are living a life pleasing to God** is if **you and others** around you see you **bearing fruit in every good work.** **Are you** sharing the gospel more effectively, do you find yourself **living a life of praise,** are you **more generous** with your **time, talent and resources** and are you manifesting a greater and greater **fruit of the spirit?** If this is **not** the case, then **perhaps you have confused** your **position** in Christ with **Christ’s expectation of your life** in Christ.

Please turn to 2 Peter 1

Through union with Christ (Jn. 15:4-5) and utilizing godly wisdom (James 3:17) we can have fruitful lives. We must never be passive bystanders, but active participants in aiming for and working towards a fruitful life. Peter describes the progression:

2 Peter 1:5-8. [5]For this very reason, **make every effort** to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with **knowledge**, [6]and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, [7]and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. [8] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they **keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)

Therefore, spiritual growth is increasing/progressing in the knowledge of God. *Tē epignōsei* (in the knowledge) is an instrumental dative case. It indicates the means by which our increasing, or growth, takes place. The knowledge of God revealed in His Word is crucial to spiritual growth. Peter wrote, “Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2). Moral and spiritual growth comes from knowing and doing the will of God. (Patzia, A. G. (2011). *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon* (p. 23). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.)

Illustration: Spiritual Growth

One night, a mother fixed a special meal for her family: turkey with mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, and apple pie for dessert. It was **everyone’s favorite meal**, especially when it came at a time **other than Thanksgiving**. The aroma filled the house, and as the children came in from playing, they could **hardly** wait for dinner to begin. The last child appeared only a few minutes before dinner time and sat through the meal **without** eating, even though he especially loved those foods. Why? Because he had filled up on peanut butter at a friend’s house. In settling for something lesser, he had **lost his appetite for the best**. The same applies to our spiritual appetites. Some people don’t have much of an appetite for spiritual truth because they have satisfied themselves with lesser things. (Michael P. Green. (2000). *1500 illustrations for biblical preaching* (p. 355). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.)

Finally, in order to “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”, we must live a life that has a:

3) Purposeful Walk (Colossians 1:11)

Colossians 1:11 [11] May you be **strengthened** with all **power**, according to his **glorious** might, for all **endurance** and **patience with joy**, (ESV)

Dunamoumenoi (“**strengthened**”) is a present participle, signifying continuous action by God. God is **not** like a booster rocket giving believers an initial boost of power and then **leaving** them to fly on their own. Believers have the ability to be continually strengthened with all power throughout their Christian lives. The only issue is if they rely on God for strength or themselves, who lack strength. But what is the power by which believers are strengthened? Paul used two different Greek words for God’s energy: The word used here for power is *dunamis* (from which we get our word

“dynamite”) which means “**inherent power**”. **When this power is utilized**, it is expressed as *kratos* which means “**manifested power**,” **power that is put forth in action**. **The grace of our Christian lives** is but a result of God’s **power** at work in our lives. **Spiritual growth and maturity** can come only as we **yield to God’s power** and **(submit to) Him to work in us**. (Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 112). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

The measure of that power is according to His glorious might. **Glorious** is from *doxa* and **refers to the manifestation of God’s attributes**. **Might** translates *kratos*, which **refers to strength in action**. It refers to God eleven out of the twelve times it is used in the New Testament. The link here is **the outpouring of God Himself** that we can **be strengthened with all power**. The **power** available to us is **the limitless power of God Himself**. We are engaged in a **spiritual conflict** (Eph 6:10ff.), and **we need spiritual power** from God. The word strengthened is in the Greek **present tense and indicates that God keeps continuously and progressively filling us with dynamic power** (Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). *KJV Bible Commentary* (p. 2456). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.)

Please turn to Ephesians 3

God’s power is manifested in us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. **Our Lord told the disciples they would receive power** after the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). **To the Romans he wrote**, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the **power** of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). **That power is available to the believer who is filled with the knowledge of God’s Word**.

Paul prayed for the Ephesians:

Ephesians 3:14-19. [14]For this reason **I bow my knees** before the Father, [15]from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, [16]**that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit** in your inner being, [17]so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**--that you, being **rooted and grounded in love**, [18]may have **strength to comprehend** with all the saints what is the **breadth and length and height and depth**, [19]and to **know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge**, that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. (ESV)

Paul gives one last result of true spiritual knowledge: joyous endurance of trials. **Knowledge of God’s promises and purposes revealed in Scripture gives the strength to endure trials and suffering**. *Hupomonē* (**endurance/steadfastness/longsuffering**) and *makrothumia* (**patience**) are **closely related**. If there is a distinction, it is that **endurance/steadfastness** (*hupomonē*) **refers to being patient in circumstances**, whereas **patience** (*makrothumia*) **refers to patience with people** (Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], p 198). Both refer to the patient enduring of trials.

Endurance/steadfastness/longsuffering is “the **refusal** to be daunted by hard times”; **patience** is “the **refusal** to be upset by **perverse** people.” How strong the distinction should be made is questionable, but the point is that **there are difficulties through which we pass** for which we can find **no** relief or release; **we need the power** to endure. **The promise** is that **in every situation adequate power to “suffer through” (longsuffering) and to remain whole and triumphant can be ours through the Holy Spirit**. Likewise **there are people** with whom we live and to whom we relate **who try us, provoke us,**

spitefully use us, scorn us—some deliberately, others unconsciously. **They are dull** to our feelings, **callous** to our needs, **demanding but never** giving. We **need patience** in relationships, **power** to endure **rejection and injury**, **the capacity** to keep on loving, forgiving, and accepting when **all human responses are spent** and **all natural juices of good will are drained from souls** (Dunnam, M. D., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1982). *Galatians / Ephesians / Philippians / Colossians / Philemon* (Vol. 31, p. 336). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc).

Paul does **not** have in mind a stoic, teeth gritting endurance. **The strength provided by knowledge of God's Word allows the believer to endure trials "with joy"** (*meta charis*). **Due to strength imparted by God, believers are able**, even in the midst of **tribulation**, to give thanks **with joy** and **to rejoice with thanksgiving** (cf. Matt. 5:10–12; Luke 6:22, 23; Acts 5:41; 2 Cor. 4:7–17; Phil. 1:12–21). (Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 59). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.)

It was Paul's constant prayer for the Colossians that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will. **He knew that only when believers are controlled by that knowledge can they walk worthy of the Lord** and please Him. Paul knew further that **such knowledge was required for a fruitful life, spiritual growth, strength, and joyful endurance of trials**. **May we Walk in a Manner Worthy living a life of prayer, seeking to please God and follow His purpose** for our lives as individuals and together as a congregation.

(Format Note: Some base commentary from MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 23–32). Chicago: Moody Press..)