

A pen in God's Hand

Some people are like a bag of potato chips: they look full on the outside, but inside, there's mostly air and not many chips. Likewise, some believers might seem filled with grace, peace, love, health, and happiness on the outside, but inside, they feel empty. There is more fluff than substance.

I wonder how often we overlook Jesus in our everyday lives. While we may think about Him, read about Him, share about Him, and talk about Him, yet we often miss the deeper story He wants to write through us.

Paul's prayer is directed toward a community of believers filled with passion, love and hope yet encouraged them into spiritual maturity. Although Paul has never met them, it's believed he heard about them through his ministering friend Epaphras (v.7)

Colossians 1:9-14 (NKJV) –

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, DO NOT CEASE TO PRAY FOR YOU, and to ask that you may be FILLED with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him¹, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God²; ¹¹ strengthened³ with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks⁴ to the Father who has QUALIFIED US to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has DELIVERED US from the power of darkness and CONVEYED US into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins.

Why did Paul pray that they be FILLED (fully equipped) with the knowledge of His will in ALL wisdom and spiritual understanding?

- That they walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him
- That they be fruitful in every good work
- That they grow in the knowledge of God
- That they be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power
- That they give thanks to the Father (who has qualified us to share in His inheritance)

What is Paul actually praying over them? Spiritual discernment/maturity (deep rooted relationship with Christ). Why is this so crucial?

Spiritual discernment is God giving us the ability to tell the difference between truth from error, good from evil and God's will from deception. This is mainly important as we apply God's Word and spiritual revelations, especially during these dark and challenging end times. Spiritual discernment equips us to test spirits, judge situations and their outcomes, and to make knowledgeable and ethical decisions aligned with God's will.

An obvious example of lack of spiritual depth can be seen in how some of us and our Christian friends/family engage on social media platforms regarding many moral issues in our culture –

topics like immigration, abortion, war, gender identity, politics and biblical topics. I encourage you to do face to face conversations about these topics to avoid misunderstandings.

Often, we react based on what we've heard from others (internet) rather than anchoring our responses in God's Word and bringing Christ into every situation. We tend to align with left-wing or right-wing agendas, conservative or liberal viewpoints, or the beliefs of friends and family. This can lead to confusion about what we truly stand for.

Are we contending for our faith or comprising our biblical beliefs? The bottom-line question to ask ourselves when these situations arise is – What does the Bible say?

If we as a Church are going to be the moral difference in this world, we need to grow in our spiritual discernment and live like Christ. Paul is stating that we are needing three important virtues: knowledge of God, wisdom of God, and understanding of God. This is how we think, react and grow! Is it possible that we don't want to go deeper in our relationship with God because we are comfortable with our life right now?

“He (Paul) knew that **spiritual ignorance** is the constant source of error, instability, and sorrow; and therefore, he desired that they might be soundly taught in the things of God.” (Spurgeon)

Hosea 4:6 (NASB)

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

The title of this sermon is “A pen in God's hand” but in order for us to even allow God hand's to wrap around the pen, we need to surrender the pen. When a genuine knowledge of Christ is present in someone's life, it reveals itself in a transformed person. You see that person walking worthy and bearing the fruit of the Spirit of God.

If you can preach the Good news of Christ, preach it! If you can comfort a friend, comfort them! If you can provide a meal to a struggling neighbor, then send her that meal! Don't wait to do the BIG and SEEN things in order to glorify God, also bear fruit in the little things because the smaller things also glorify Him.

Lack of Knowledge destroys future generations

Isaiah 30:21-22 (ESV)

*And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “**This is the way, walk in it,**” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. ²² Then you will defile your carved **IDOLS** overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “**Be gone!**”*

Understanding Generational Curses

A generational curse manifests in one's life when there is no repentance for our sins. If a parent refuses to confront their own sins, they are more likely to expose their spouse and children to the very sins they are fighting. Families can carelessly pass down negative behaviors, negative patterns, negative beliefs, and the negative consequences of past sins.

The power of a generational curse:

A cursed family (Poverty, Diseased)

Max Jukes (atheist) + Wife (godless woman) =

- 560 Descendants
 - 310 died as paupers (in poverty)
 - 150 became criminals
 - 7 of them murderers
 - 100 alcoholics
 - More than half of the women were prostitutes
 - Descendants of Max Jukes cost the United States government more than \$1.25 million in 19th century dollars.

A Godly family (Blessed, Healthy)

Jonathan Edwards (Christian) + Wife (Christian) =

- 1,394 descendants
 - 294 College graduates
 - 13 College presidents
 - 65 College professors
 - 30 Judges
 - 75 officers in the military
 - 1 dean of a law school
 - 100 well known missionaries
 - 80 held public office
 - 100 lawyers
 - 3 U.S. Senators
 - 3 State Governors
 - 3 Mayors of large cities
 - 1 Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury
 - 1 Vice-President of the U.S.A.
 - Not one descendant was liable to the government

It sounds unfair for God to punish children for the sins of their fathers. However, there is more to it than that. The effects of sin are naturally passed down from one generation to the next. When a father has a sinful lifestyle, his children are likely to practice in the same sinful lifestyle.

Exodus 20:5 (NLT) warns us:

You must NOT bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generation”.

A Jewish explanation specifies that this passage refers to “ungodly fathers” and “rebellious children.” So, it is not unjust for God to punish sin to the third or fourth generation – those generations are committing the same sins their ancestors (past family members) did.

Often, we may not realize that we have taken the pen from God, attempting to write our own story and in danger of sabotaging (harming) future generations. Our relationship with Him needs to reach a level where we can surrender the pen to HIM and trust that He will write a story far better and beyond our imagination. We tend to ignore His voice, replacing it with the distractions of the world. Today, He invites you to declare over those modern-day idols – *Be Gone!* How can we do this? By focusing on **JESUS!**

Recognizing Our Control: Trusting God's Story

Deliverance comes through **surrender** and **repentance in Christ Jesus**. We are not capable of doing this on our own. Paul prays that we be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so we can endure life’s challenges patiently and joyfully overcoming in the name of Jesus!

BUT GOD is one of redemption and restoration!

The solution for a generational curse has always been **repentance to God**. While God promised to visit the sins of the third and fourth generations, He also assured us restoration.

Exodus 20:6 -NLT

“But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.”

This is from a place of God's grace and mercy...that it endures far longer than His wrath. For anyone anxious about a generational curse, the answer is: salvation **ONLY** through **Jesus Christ**.

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I **plead** with you to offer your **bodies** to God as a **living and holy sacrifice**—one that He will find acceptable. This is **truly the way to worship Him**. Don't conform to the behaviors and customs of this world; instead, let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think**. Then, you will learn to **know God's will** for you, which is good, pleasing, and perfect.*

The enemy is going to be pressing in on every generation trying to stop God’s plan for your family even with the smallest compromise. BUT God has calculated every sin, mistake, doubt, fear, and enemy’s attempt to destroy our families. He promises us this:

Psalm 23:5

“He prepares a table before me, in the presence of my enemies.”

God has prepared a table before the enemy's threat in your life. The enemy is present while God is preparing this feast and God intentionally and deliberately prepares this table before you KNOWING that the enemy is watching His every move. God planned it! In the middle of your chaos, mess, test, hard, and dark times...God prepares the table!

Many times, we are so focused on what the enemy is doing to us across and over the table that we fail to notice that God has already prepared a table.

God is authority! God is dominion! God is protector! God is defender! God is strong tower! God is peace! God is provider! God is restorer! God is healer! God is DELIVERER!

The enemy doesn't decide your destiny, your portion, or your reward...God prepared the table before you even when HE saw the enemy coming. Let your enemy watch! I am exhorting you to SIT DOWN AND FEAST! God's got you!

**Through His Blood! Restoration happens! Our sins are forgiven! Surrender happens!
Allow God to write His story through you!**

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)

*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him **endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

Jesus is our focus – no need to look anywhere else.

Jesus is our inspiration – to accomplish what He has called us to do.

Jesus is our example – to serve and love those that are around us.