

Being One Worthy of the Lord

Colossians 1:9-14

I. Introduction: Close to Home

Are you ready? Lord, I pray for your endurance that you may be brought glory from this teaching. Both Jennifer and I felt it was better to be bold than safe with where God led me with our teaching today. I pray that this will help bring the Living God deeper still into your lives for He is a good, good Father.

Several years ago there was a bit older family that adopted a precious little girl. No one knew who her dad was. Her tummy mom had some challenges preventing her from parenting. This little girl was born early and at under 2lbs, she had some obstacles to overcome...yet, it was clear that God had done yet another miracle...one that would testify of Him for decades to come.

The early years were filled with many sweet and funny moments, along with some intensely trying times. As time passed, there was a gradual increase in the struggles, but still many more good days than bad and a love that can rightly be said was given by the Lord Himself.

A later than usual diagnosis of autism along with some other conditions and the opportunistic work of the enemy using wolves in sheep's clothing led this little girl toward increasing darkness. The parents did everything they knew how, they did many of the things professionals indicated...and they cried, prayed, sought counsel, cried more, and prayed more...they chased any glimmer of hope and laid claim to any respite from the crushing trial.

Some in the family were driven to their knees over and over again...fear, confusion, helplessness, desperation, anger, and brokenness were constant companions. The family struggled to stay a family and hard things happened followed by hard decisions made with impossibly hard consequences.

The years have passed, seeming as though minutes. The precious little girl is not yet healed, the family is not restored, and sorrow still comes in waves. Despite the parents fervent prayers, she has drifted away from the Lord and the next chapters of her life do not look like anything like the parents hopes and prayers. The enemy's fiery darts of doubt and failure sometime hit the mark, threatening to get the parents eyes off of the Lord and onto their circumstances.

You might be wondering what this has to do with our passage today. I would say EVERYTHING! Our passage fastens our eyes and, I pray, our hearts on the person of Jesus Christ. You see, it is only by His wisdom, glorious power, and loving sacrifice that either the Colossians or we Aikenites can live a life pleasing to Him...a life strengthened by Him that we may have the patience and endurance leading to a Godly joy bringing forth a thankful and hope filled heart. You see, these parents hearts testify to the truth of the Gospel; that there is no one else to turn to. That they came to own it is only by welcoming and giving way to the Living God that we can be worthy of being a child of God complete with His joy in their trial.

One last thing if you will permit me. The parents know the odds for their little girl are not very good...but their trust is not in the odds of what man might or might not be able to do, but in the Living God, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is worthy and because He is able, victory for the little girl is just one "save me" cry away from eternity with Him. Lord, forgive their doubts, help them to endure I pray.

So the parents continually press in and ask God for His knowledge, wisdom, understanding, power, endurance, and joy. The trial has brought them to understand more deeply the riches of Christ and rejoice even in the hurt because the hope of Jesus is the hope of life for all mankind...including their precious daughter.

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II. Colossians 1:9-11: A Remarkable Prayer of Intercession

1. This prayer has great similarities to the one he opened with in his letter to the church in Ephesus.

2. In what is a great lesson for us, Paul, unable to travel, did what he could despite his limitations. **He prayed for churches and for souls.** He wrote letters filled with encouragement, admonition, exhortation, and God's word. **And yes, he did these things in the presence of others and in so doing, he was making disciples.**
3. One commentator noted Paul's shift from the ideal characteristics of true religion being faith, love, and hope to the characteristics needed (and their source) to live a life worthy of God...**a life in which the victory of Jesus becomes our victory as we mature in our faith**...a life in which the Spirit of God overcomes our flesh and walks us through the conflicts and difficulties of this life.¹

While helpful to grasp these verses, this also keeps the focus on the people and I think Paul is actually bridge-building that the reader may first see Jesus and only then see themselves in Him.

4. Right out of the gates we note that Paul's prayer focuses upon them having more of Jesus. **His prayer brings a laser like focus on the things this and all bodies of believers need most from their Lord.** A prayer that speaks of the source of everything right and good. **A prayer that rightly discerns flesh priorities from spiritual importance.** A prayer that offers purpose; that of fully pleasing God as we see in v10. **A prayer that draws in the importance of the HS for that is how we get spiritual understanding...by the Spirit of God.** A prayer that plumbed the depths of character of the Colossians church. **Do we pray like this?**

A. Do we pray God-in, so our brothers and sisters testimonies and those of our own will be full of Him?

- i. Do we pray like we are we excited and encouraging when God is moving in "their" lives; whoever they are. **Or does prayer elude us as we wonder more about why He is not moving in ours.**

¹ Robert W. Wall, *Colossians & Philemon*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Col 1:9–11.

- ii. Does the church, do I, do we celebrate and give God great thanks when other's in our church family are bearing much fruit? *Or are we not aware or maybe even a little jealous it's not me?*
- iii. Do each of us know the walk of others in this body that we may pray specifically for how they may walk worthy of the Lord? *Or are we too busy to engage or too proud that our shortcomings may show?*

B. Do we pray for the churches across town and down the street or do we see them as a "competitor"? *Do we celebrate the Lord's victories in and through them?*

C. Finally, what Paul did NOT pray for is as noticeable as what He did. *No prayers for bigger or more buildings, no prayers for money, health, jobs, and no prayers regarding a change of circumstances.* He prayed for them to experience the fulness of a personal faith with a personal God at the helm of their lives.

5. Next we note Paul's heart for the Colossians to grow, not in man-knowledge, but in the knowledge of the Lord. *In this, we are reminded of the words from Isaiah 55:8-9:*

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For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹"For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- Isaiah 55:8-9

6. What's more, words have meaning, sometimes great meaning. The word used for "knowledge" in our text is *epignōsis* and it is in the passive tense...meaning it is knowledge from outside of oneself...*more specifically, this knowledge and wisdom (which is the application of Godly knowledge for Godly living) is from the Holy Spirit.* This is why Paul gave a great warning to the Corinthians to renounce the things of man and Satan in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:

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But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
– 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

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7. You see, if one increases in the knowledge of God and His will, then through His wisdom he/she can increasingly live as God wills.

Let me say that a different way, a heart-level knowledge of the Lord leads to holiness while holiness leads us to hungering for more knowledge of Him.

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Insomuch as right knowledge can bring Godly living, wrong knowledge is the devil's playground leading us to disobedience and unrighteousness.

8. Further, being reminded that it is impossible to please God without faith (**He 11:6**), that faith comes from hearing the word of God (**Ro 10:17**), and that along with our gift of our salvation (in v12-14 still to come and as also seen in v6 above), we see Paul's calculus that:

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Grace begets faith, faith begets fruit (in the good works that He has prepared for us), fruit begets yet more grace and therein more faith and therein more fruit.

A. As Paul lays this out, we see having a maturing faith, meaning one continually growing in knowing God and walking in His wisdom, requires work on the believers part. Since it requires work to have a maturing personal relationship with Jesus Christ, it begs the question of if we are doing the work or do the things of this life crowd Jesus out?!

B. Further, Paul is also offering the very foundation by which to recognize and reject that which is NOT of God. No matter how attractive or reasonable to human understanding, the Colossians are to reject legalism and the "special knowledge"

being offered up by the false teachers known as Gnostics in their midst. They are to rely on the person of Jesus Christ and His word alone...for only He is life.

9. As we navigate to the end of these opening verses today, I think it helpful for us to consider the amazing depth of Paul's words in v11.

Here we are told that walking worthy of God translates into having patience and endurance (or being longsuffering) in overcoming life's trials. Did you notice though, that one does not overcome with an "I am so glad that is over", but with the joy of God Himself echoing through our hearts and minds.

10. Let's return to the beginning of verse 11 where we see Paul praying for them to be "strengthened" with God's glorious power. The verb for "strengthened", just as with epignōsis previously, indicates that this strength is from outside of us. We are overcomers solely in God's glorious strength and so we, again, can know of our dependence on the Holy Spirit as we thank the Lord.
11. Finally, let's take a moment to consider some other Scriptures offering us application points as to how we "may walk worthy of the Lord":
 - A. First up, we note that walking worthy means we are to please God and there are a number of Scriptures helping us grasp just what God has in mind...things that please God include:
 - i. our faith (He 11:6);
 - ii. our obedience (1 Jn 3:22; Gal 1:10);
 - iii. being a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2);
 - iv. doing good and sharing from what we have (He 13:16);
 - v. our working in His will (Phil 2:13); and
 - vi. AGAINST these which please God, we are reminded in **Romans 8:8** that those living in the flesh cannot please Him.

B. And Paul expands greatly on this in Ephesians 4:1-6 with a beautiful picture of the child of God being one with God:

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Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

- Ephesians 4:1-6, NASB

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III. Colossians 1:12-14: A Remarkable Prayer of Thanksgiving

1. Just for a moment, imagine that you were adopted into an King's family. *A benevolent King with unimaginable wealth and power. A King with understanding and wisdom of all things and all people. A King that cares enough to show you the ropes, to cheer you on, and to walk with you through all of life's trials.* A King, while knowing your history of a heart dead to Him and even waring against Him, offers you a new heart with a new home. *A King who gives you an eternal inheritance in His heavenly kingdom.*
2. Now, keeping in mind that several thousand years ago, we were disqualified from the King's family with the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden. *Our sin-stained hearts were bequeathed from Adam through the many generations that followed as mankind walked, NOT as worthy to God,* but as we learn in **Ephesians 2:2**, in disobedience and the lusts of our flesh according to the prince of the power of the air. But God!
3. But, as Paul prays here in Colossians 1, God inserted Himself into the fabric of time, delivering us from the power of darkness (or evil) into the kingdom of light (or good). *That is, in His grace, He qualified or enabled those stepping through His open door of forgiveness that we may rejoice in His free gift of a heavenly inheritance called eternal life.*

4. What's more, as Paul already prayed in our opening verses, God doesn't stop at Salvation, but offers us the opportunity to continually know and grow in Him and with Him.
5. If you will, return with me to the start of v12. [Having prayed for their Godly inheritance, he prays thanks to God.](#) This is a great example of right knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of God leading to right action, in this case, thanksgiving.
 - A. In some measure, Paul's prayer of thanks was recorded here that the Colossians and the Aikenites might be challenged to consider their and our own position in-OR-out of Christ AND, if forgiven by confessing Christ and Him crucified, has right knowledge led us to continual genuine thanks?!

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IV. Closing: Claiming Your Inheritance (or not)

1. Do you want the inheritance Paul speaks of to the Colossians? How badly?
 - A. Enough to purposefully and continuously invest your time and treasure in "Being One Worthy of the Lord"?
 - B. Enough to live your life to please Him? [Enough to confess your guilt and your need for Him?](#) Enough to receive His forgiveness?
 - C. Enough to reject wrong knowledge and wrong living in favor of righteous knowledge ruling and reigning in your life, leading to ever increasing righteous living?!
2. If you don't want or don't care about this heavenly inheritance or think you are unqualified for it, I pray that the Spirit of God will convict you of your need to be right with the Son of God.
3. If you want this heavenly inheritance, God has opened the door for you to step through and receive His free gift. [Thankfully, you don't](#)

need to wonder how...In **Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21**, we are told that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. In **Romans 10:9**, the Apostle Paul says “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” If this is you, don’t be shy, join me in this prayer...

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

I. Introduction: Close to Home

II. Colossians 1:9-11: A Remarkable Prayer of Intercession

- Paul did what he could.
- Being worthy of the Lord.
- Praying Jesus into other's lives

Additional Scripture References: Is 55:8-9; 1 Co 4:3-4; He 11:6; Ro 10:17; He 11:6; 1 Jn 3:22; Ga 1:10; Ro 12:1-2; He 13:16; Phil 2:13; Ro 8:8; Eph 4:1-6

III. Colossians 1:12-14: A Remarkable Prayer of Thanksgiving

- A kingly inheritance.

Additional Scripture References: Eph 2:2

IV. Closing: Claiming Your Inheritance (or not)

Additional Scripture References: Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Ro 10:9

5-Day Devotional Colossians 1:9-14 Being One Worthy of the Lord

Day 1: The Knowledge of God's Will

Reading: Col 1:9-14

Devotional: Paul's prayer for the Colossians reveals the importance of growing in the knowledge of God's will. This isn't just intellectual understanding, but a deep, spiritual wisdom that transforms our lives. As you read, reflect on your own journey of faith. Are you actively seeking to know God's will more deeply? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with spiritual wisdom and understanding, that you might discern God's purpose for your life. Consider how a deeper knowledge of God might change the way you live, love, and serve others.

Day 2: Walking Worthy of the Lord

Reading: Eph 4:1-6

Devotional: Paul urges believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling" they've received. This walk is characterized by humility, gentleness, patience, and love. As you meditate on these verses, examine your own life. Are you striving to live in a way that honors God? Remember, we don't do this in our own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for God's help to embody these qualities in your daily interactions. How might your relationships change if you approached them with more humility and patience?

Day 3: Strength in Suffering

Reading: 2 Cor 12:7-10

Devotional: The sermon touched on the reality of suffering in the Christian life, as illustrated by the story of the adopted girl. Paul's words here remind us that God's grace is sufficient in our weakness. When we feel overwhelmed by life's challenges, we can find strength in Christ. Reflect on a difficult situation in your life. How might God's power be made perfect in your weakness? Ask God to help you see your struggles through His eyes, and to rely on His strength rather than your own.

Day 4: Hope of Our Calling

Reading: Eph 1:15-23

Devotional: Paul prays for the Ephesians to know "the hope to which he has called you." This hope is rooted in our identity as God's children and the inheritance we have in Christ. As you read, consider the riches of God's grace in your life. How does the hope of eternal life with Christ impact your daily living? Ask God to open the eyes of your heart to more fully grasp the hope and power available to you as a believer.

Day 5: Giving Thanks in All Circumstances**Reading: 1 Thes 5:16-18**

Devotional: The sermon emphasized the importance of thanksgiving, even in difficult times. These verses call us to rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances. This doesn't mean we're happy about hardship, but that we trust God's presence and purpose through it all. Reflect on your current circumstances. What can you thank God for, even in the midst of challenges? Practice offering a prayer of gratitude for God's faithfulness, love, and constant presence in your life.

Small Group Study Guide

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

Opening Prayer: Begin by asking God to open your hearts and minds to His Word and to guide your discussion.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Paul's prayer for the Colossians focuses on them having more of Jesus, not on material blessings.
2. Growing in the knowledge of God leads to living a life pleasing to Him.
3. We are strengthened by God's power to endure trials with joy.
4. God has qualified us for a heavenly inheritance through Christ.
5. Right knowledge of God should lead to genuine thanksgiving.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon opened with a personal story about adoption and struggles. How did this story relate to the main message of the sermon?
2. Paul prayed for the Colossians to grow in the knowledge of God. How is this different from worldly knowledge? How can we pursue this kind of knowledge in our daily lives?
3. The sermon mentioned that "walking worthy of God translates into having patience and endurance in overcoming life's trials." Can you share an experience where God's strength helped you endure a difficult situation?
4. How does the idea of being "qualified" for God's inheritance through Christ impact your view of salvation? How does this differ from trying to earn salvation?
5. The sermon listed several things that please God (faith, obedience, being a living sacrifice, etc.). Which of these do you find most challenging in your own life? Why?

6. How can we cultivate a spirit of genuine thanksgiving in our lives, especially during challenging times?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Daily Knowledge: Commit to spending time each day this week reading God's Word and praying for spiritual wisdom and understanding.
2. Gratitude Journal: Start a gratitude journal, writing down three things each day you're thankful for, focusing on spiritual blessings.
3. Walking Worthy: Choose one area mentioned in the sermon (e.g., faith, obedience, doing good) and set a specific goal to grow in that area this week.
4. Prayer Partners: Pair up with someone in the group to pray for each other throughout the week, focusing on growing in the knowledge of God and living a life worthy of Him.
5. Share Your Story: Look for an opportunity this week to share with someone how God has qualified you for His inheritance through Christ.

Closing Prayer: Thank God for His incredible gift of salvation and ask for His help in living lives worthy of His calling.

Discussion Questions

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

1. How does the story of the adopted girl and her family's struggles relate to our own spiritual journeys and trials? In what ways can we find hope and perseverance in seemingly hopeless situations?
2. Paul's prayer focuses on the Colossians having more of Jesus rather than material blessings. How might this shift our perspective on what we should pray for ourselves and others?
3. The sermon emphasizes the importance of growing in the knowledge of God through the Holy Spirit. How can we practically pursue this kind of spiritual knowledge in our daily lives?
4. What does it mean to 'walk worthy of the Lord' in today's world? How can we apply the specific examples given in the sermon to our own lives?
5. The sermon mentions that right knowledge leads to holiness, while wrong knowledge is 'the devil's playground.' How can we discern between right and wrong knowledge in our spiritual growth?
6. Paul prays for the Colossians to have patience, endurance, and joy in overcoming life's trials. How can we cultivate these qualities in our own lives, especially during difficult times?
7. The sermon discusses our adoption into God's family and our heavenly inheritance. How does this perspective change the way we view our identity and purpose in life?
8. What does it mean to be 'delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of light,' and how does this transformation manifest in a believer's life?
9. The sermon challenges us to consider how badly we want the inheritance Paul speaks of to the Colossians. What sacrifices or changes might be necessary in our lives to pursue this inheritance wholeheartedly?
10. How does the concept of continual thanksgiving relate to our spiritual growth and relationship with God? In what ways can we cultivate a more thankful heart in all circumstances?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

1. Personal Testimony and Faith

The sermon shared a touching story about a family's journey with their adopted daughter and their unwavering faith. How has your faith been a source of strength in difficult times, and can you share a personal experience where prayer or your belief in God helped you persevere?

2. Prayer Focus

The sermon emphasized the importance of praying for God's wisdom and spiritual growth over material needs. How do you usually structure your prayers, and are there ways you can incorporate more focus on spiritual growth and understanding?

3. Understanding Worthiness

We learned that being "worthy of the Lord" involves growing in the knowledge of Him and living a life that pleases Him. What are some characteristics that you believe are essential for living a life worthy of God, and how can we support each other in embodying these traits?

4. Community and Support

The sermon mentioned praying for other churches and celebrating their triumphs rather than seeing them as competitors. Why do you think it's important for communities of faith to support each other, and what are ways we can do this in our own community?

5. Thankfulness and Inheritance

The idea of being adopted into the King's family and receiving an eternal inheritance was a powerful image. What are some things you're grateful for in your spiritual journey, and how can we cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving within our family daily?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Showing Kindness**: Encourage young children to share and play nicely with their friends, reflecting God's love and patience as described in the sermon.

Discussion Question: How do you feel when you share your toys with a friend? How do you think it makes them feel?

2. **Thankful Hearts**: Teach children to express gratitude, aligning with the sermon's message about being thankful for God's blessings.

Discussion Question: Can you think of one person you are thankful for today? How can you say thanks to them in a nice way?

3. **Respecting Boundaries**: Guide children in understanding the importance of asking permission before taking or using someone else's things, just as we respect God and others.

Discussion Question: If you want to play with a friend's toy, what should you do first? Why is it important to ask?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Choosing Friends Wisely**: Encourage children to seek friendships that support positive growth, much like seeking God's wisdom and understanding.

Discussion Question: What are some things that make a good friend? How can you be a good friend to others?

2. **Praying for Guidance**: Help preteens incorporate prayer into their daily routine, asking God for wisdom in social situations.

Discussion Question: When you feel confused or unsure about what to do, how can prayer help guide you?

3. **Digital Kindness**: Discuss the importance of being kind and respectful in digital conversations and social media interactions.

Discussion Question: How can you make sure your comments or messages online show kindness and respect to others?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Standing Up for Faith**: Encourage teenagers to stand firm in their faith and values, even when peer pressure is strong, reflecting the sermon's message of endurance and patience.

Discussion Question: Can you share a time when you stood up for what you believe in? What helped you stay strong?

2. **Reflective Online Presence**: Guide teens to think about how their online behavior can reflect their beliefs and values.

Discussion Question: How do you decide what to post or share online to make sure it aligns with your faith?

3. **Faith's influence in Relationships**: Discuss how representing their faith can influence and improve their relationships by promoting love, honesty, and understanding.

Discussion Question: How can your faith help you be a better friend or family member? What does a supportive relationship look like to you?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Colossians 1:9-14

Being One Worthy of the Lord

1. Unity and Encouragement

Bible Basis: Ephesians 4:1-3 encourages believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling," emphasizing humility, gentleness, and maintaining unity through the bond of peace.

Scenario: When working on a group project, remind yourself to be patient and listen to others' ideas. Appreciate the diversity of your team, just as Paul taught about unity in Christ.

Discussion Question: How can you ensure that everyone in your group feels heard and valued, even if you disagree with their ideas?

2. Love and Forgiveness

Bible Basis: Colossians 3:13 talks about bearing with each other and forgiving grievances, just as the Lord forgave us.

Scenario: In friendships or romantic relationships, conflict is inevitable. Approach disagreements with a willingness to understand and forgive, reflecting God's grace.

Discussion Question: How can applying forgiveness in your relationships change the dynamics and help you grow closer to others?

3. Positive Influence and Integrity

Bible Basis: Philippians 4:8 urges believers to focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

Scenario: On social media, be mindful of the content you post or engage with. Strive to share messages that inspire and uplift others, reflecting the character of Christ online.

Discussion Question: What types of content can you share or promote online that align with Philippians 4:8 and positively influence your followers?

4. Standing Firm in Faith

Bible Basis: Romans 12:2 advises against conforming to the pattern of this world but encourages being transformed by the renewal of the mind.

Scenario: When faced with peer pressure, whether at school or online, remember to stand firm in your values and make choices that align with your faith.

Discussion Question: What are some strategies you can use to resist conforming to peer pressure and stay true to your faith?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.