

Gratitude in Prayer
Colossians 1:1-14
2025 WOC Summer Study, Week 1
Donna Evans

Key Verse: *“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...” Colossians 1:3 (NIV)*

- I. Paul’s Commission & Salutation (Colossians 1:1-2)**
 - a. Apostle Paul
 - b. Grace
 - c. Peace

- II. Context**
 - a. Who? When? Why? Author? Genre?
 - b. Historical context
 - c. Circumstances of original audience

- III. Paul’s Commendation- Colossians 1:3-8)**
 - a. Gratitude – “euchristeo”
 - i. God gives gifts of grace; we give thanks; result is joy
 - ii. Sacred echo
 - 1. Thank God - Col.1:3
 - 2. Joyful thanks- Col. 1:12
 - 3. Thanksgiving – Col. 2:7
 - 4. Be thankful- Col. 3:15
 - 5. Gratitude in your hearts – Col. 3:16
 - 6. Giving thanks to God the Father – Col.3:17
 - 7. Watchful in thanksgiving – Col. 4:2
 - b. Faith
 - c. Love
 - d. Hope

- IV. Content of Paul’s Prayer (Colossians 1:9-14)**
 - a. Knowledge of God’s will Col 1:9
 - b. Wisdom & understanding
 - c. Live a life worthy of Christ
 - d. Please him in every way
 - e. Bear fruit & grow
 - f. Strengthened in God’s might & power

V. A Christian's Conduct (Colossians 1:10-12)

- a. Worthy walk
- b. Knowledgeable walk
- c. Powerful walk
- d. Thankful walk
- e. Result
 - i. Endurance – perseverance, steadfastness with difficult circumstances
 - ii. Patience -longsuffering with difficult people
 - iii. Joy-Fruit of the Spirit
 - iv. Gratitude – thanksgiving to God

VI. Takeaway & Application

- a. The Apostle Paul didn't struggle with prayer; he struggled _____ prayer.
- b. What if???
- c. I always thank God when I pray for you _____

Questions for reflection:

- How does your current prayer life differ from the Apostle Paul's?
- Why is gratitude such an important component of prayer?
- What does it mean to grow in the knowledge of God and how can we do it?
- What does a Christian's "worthy walk" look like?
- Is my life currently pleasing to Christ? If not, what needs to change?
- What is one thing I can do this week to better know Christ?
- Name at least five things for which you're thankful to God today.

thirty-one ways to pray for your children

“Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, and you shall commit to me the work of My hands.” –Isaiah 45:11 (NAS)

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|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|------------------------|
| <p>SALVATION Father pour out your blessing and Spirit on my children. May each one receive Your gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. ISAIAH 44:15</p> | <p>FEAR OF THE LORD O God, may the fear of the Lord be my children’s treasure. Be their stability and security throughout their lives ISAIAH 33:6</p> | <p>BALANCED GROWTH May my children follow Jesus and grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. LUKE 2:52</p> | <p>GOD’S GRACE Lord, enable my children to grow in Your grace and knowledge. 2 PETER 3:18A</p> | <p>LOVE Father, may my children love You with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. MATTHEW 22:37,39</p> | <p>COURAGE May my children be strong and courageous in their character and conduct. DEUTERONOMY 31:6,8</p> | <p>SELF-CONTROL Father, may my children discipline their emotions and control their speech. PROVERBS 17:27</p> | |
| <p>TEACHABLE Lord, teach my children Your truth and Your ways. Help them to learn well. ISAIAH 54:13</p> | <p>A SERVANT’S HEART O God give my children a willing heart to serve You and others faithfully. MARK 10:43,45</p> | <p>PROTECTION O God, protect my children from physical harm and spiritual or emotional damage. PSALM 91:11</p> | <p>EXCELLENCE My children cultivate a life of excellence in word, thought and deed. PHILIPPIANS 4:8</p> | <p>LIFE PURPOSE Father, may my children find their life purpose in knowing You and making You known. EPHESIANS 3:16-19</p> | <p>ACCOUNTABILITY May my children be accountable in You for each decision they make. ROMANS 14:12</p> | <p>DILIGENCE Help my children to be diligent in preparation, study and hard work. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15</p> | |
| <p>PRAYERFULNESS Lord, teach my children to pray. May they look to You for wisdom, strength, and counsel. LUKE 11:1</p> | <p>CONFIDENCE May my children’s strong confidence come from their knowledge of You. PROVERBS 14:26</p> | <p>COMMITMENT Father, enable my children to be whole-hearted and unwavering in their commitment to You. PROVERBS 16:3</p> | <p>CONVICTION O God, help my children to stand firm with courage, confidence and conviction. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:13</p> | <p>WISDOM Father, grant my children wisdom from Your Word and by Your Spirit. JAMES 1:5</p> | <p>HONESTY/INTEGRITY Lord, enable my children to walk before You in integrity, honesty and truth. PROVERBS 10:9</p> | <p>FAITHFULNESS Father, may my children be faithful in their love, devotion, and service to You. PROVERBS 12:22B</p> | |
| <p>CLEAR DIRECTION O God, direct my children’s steps as they face critical life decisions. Help them to make wise choices. PROVERBS 16:9</p> | <p>CONDUCT Father, enable my children to live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. PHILIPPIANS 1:27</p> | <p>HUMILITY Lord, let my children demonstrate unselfishness and regard others as more important than themselves. PHILIPPIANS 2:3-8</p> | <p>PURITY O God, enable my children to live lives that are pure and holy. 1 TIMOTHY 4:12</p> | <p>MATURITY O God, help my children to become mature men and women in Christ. Grow them up in Jesus. EPHESIANS 4:13-15</p> | <p>KINDNESS Lord, may my children be kind, merciful, compassionate, and forgiving to others. EPHESIANS 4:32</p> | <p>PERSEVERANCE O God, help my children to pursue their relationship with You throughout their lives. Help them to finish well. PHILIPPIANS 3:14</p> | |
| <p>GRATITUDE Father, help my children to cultivate a grateful and thankful heart. COLOSSIANS 3:17</p> | <p>BOLDNESS O God, give my children boldness in both speech and conduct as they share with others the good news of Jesus. COLOSSIANS 4:3-6</p> | <p>GOD’S GLORY May my children be living testimonies to the value of knowing You. Use them for Your Glory! ISAIAH 61:3C</p> |  <p>donna evans</p> | | | | <p>donna-evans.com</p> |

Colossians
The Supremacy & Sufficiency of
Christ

Colossians 1:1-14

Gratitude in Prayer

Summer WOC Week 1

Donna Evans

Keller quote

- Tim Keller died in 2023
- Someone asked Keller shortly before he died, “Is there anything you would have done differently?”
- Absolutely! I would have prayed more!
- Prayer is the litmus test of our relationship to God

Colossae

- City located in modern day Turkey
- 80 miles from Ephesus in Lycus Valley
- Small town in shadow of Laodicea & Hierapolis
- Paul never went there himself
- Acts 19:10- 2 years in Ephesus
- Church established by Epaphras
- Church met in home of Philemon (Phil 1,2)

Paul & Urban Missions

- Cultural center of Ephesus
- Intellectual center of Athens
- Center of immorality – Corinth
- Center of OT Revelation – Jerusalem
- Leading colony in the Roman Empire – Philippi
- Military and political Center – Rome

Colossians Overview

- Who wrote it? Paul
- When was it written? 60-62 AD
- To whom? Christians at Colossae
- Why was it written? Refute heretical teach
- Theme –Sufficiency & Supremacy of Christ
- What genre? Pastoral epistle
- Delivered to the Colossians by Tychicus

Colossians 1:1-14 Outline

- Paul's Commission & salutation (1:1&2)
- Context of the letter
- Commendation (1:3- 8)
- Content of Paul's Prayer (1:9-14)
- Christian's Walk (1:10-12)
 - Worthy
 - Knowledgeable
 - Powerful
 - Thankful

Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles

- Religious terrorist
- Converted on the road to Damascus-Acts 9
- Requirements for an Apostle
 - Chosen by God
 - Been with Jesus
 - Witness of the Resurrection
- “Nobody else would have dared shared the gospel with Paul so Jesus did!” P.Brown

The Hater Becomes the Hated

- Remarkable transformation
- Saul becomes Apostle to the Gentiles
 - Chosen by God
 - Spent time with Jesus
 - Eyewitness of resurrection
- Leads the Church in spreading Christianity
- To the ends of the earth
- Writes 13 NT letters

Paul, the Prisoner

- Chained to a Roman guard
- Under house arrest for at least 2 years
- Already been falsely accused
- Unjustly imprisoned for over 2 years
- Appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen
- Continues to preach the Gospel
- Uses letters to & prayers for the churches to encourage, instruct, strengthen & correct

Others

- Timothy
 - Paul's Co laborer
 - Pastor, the church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3)
 - Intercessor with Paul in prayer
 - Scribe for Paul's letter
- Epaphras – Colossian planted the C church
 - Travels 1200 miles by land & sea give report
- Tychicus
 - Delivers Paul's letter to the Colossians

Salutation

- Who's writing? Paul & Timothy
- Grace & peace to you (God is the source)
- Christian blend of Hebrew&Greek greetings
- Greek “chairen” = greeting
- Paul uses the word charis = grace
- Peace, Hebrew word = shalom
- Well being springing from sense of presence of God
- Grace (God's work) comes before peace (our new relationship)

To the Saints, Every Christian

- Saint – set apart one
- Sinner saved by grace
- Servant of the Master
- Steward of the Master
- Soldier in the King's army
- 2 environments- those
 - In Christ
 - at Colossae

In Christ

- Sacred echo throughout Paul's writings
- Union with Christ
- We partake of all Christ has done, all that he is and all He ever will be
- Colossians are holy & faithful brothers
- Brothers -More than a title; a declaration of partnership in the grace of God
- Note family language – brothers, Father

Adoption

- Adoption is a Christian's highest privilege
- What is a Christian? One who has God as his father
- Sonship; Part of the God's family
- The Holy Spirit as our witness
- Freedom from slavery and fear of death
- God as our Father
- Co-heirs with Christ; rich inheritance

In Christ

- New birth
- New heart
- New identity
- New record
- New family
- God as our Father
- Freedom from slavery of sin
- Forgiveness
- Fulfillment of all God's promises

Birdie & Poppie story



Gratitude- Euchristeo

- 1000 Gifts, Ann Voskamp, paradigm
- God gives gifts of grace
- We give thanks
- Result is joy
- Col. 1:1-8 Paul celebrates & commends the Colossian church
- A poor pagan people had heard, believed, and received the good news that Jesus saves sinners & lives are changed

Gratitude Sacred Echo

- Thank God – Col. 1:3
- Joyful thanks Col 1:12
- Thanksgiving – 2:7
- Be thankful – 3:15
- Gratitude in your hearts – 3:16
- Giving thanks to God the Father – Col 3:17
- Watchful in thanksgiving – 4:2
- A poor pagan people without God and without hope had found Christ and lives were changed.

Ellen Vaughn, Radical Gratitude

- *10 lepers*

- *"Be the one who thanks Jesus. Let others go where they may. You be the one who is grateful....Cultivating a grateful heart is not just an add-on nicety, a civil tip of the hat to God as we steamroll through our day. A posture of purposeful, perpetual thanks to God is absolutely central to Christian character. It gives glory to Him....It is the hallmark of heaven. It does not exist in hell. A grateful heart is a gift of grace.*

Gratitude & Commendation

- Faith – Heb. 11:1; Christ is object of faith
- Love – agape, God so loved that he gave
- Hope – a faith that looks & leans forward
- Faith, hope & love – triad used as apostolic shorthand for genuine Christianity
- Galatians 5:6 “the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”

Agape Love

- Faith reaches up; love reaches out
- Love is the mark of a Christian
- Love is the result of our faith Gal.5:6
- Fruit of the Spirit
- Evidence that our faith is real
- Faith without love is dead
- Colossians' love for all the saints was evidence their faith was real

Stephen Kneale

- “Love for God’s people, the connection and community that is Spirit empowered is a key apologetic for the church. It’s not just what they hear, but what they see...the content of the gospel visibly displayed.”

Hope

- Faith reaches up & lays hold of promises
- Love reaches out
- Hope reaches forward & is taken up with the good things promised
- We will see Jesus; that's our hope
- Confident expectation inheritance & reward beyond the grave
- God will keep me to the end
- Hope comes thru the gospel
- Founded on the word of God

Types of Prayer

- Ejaculatory – quick dart prayers
- Logistical- practical needs
- Tactical – meaningful not ultimate
- Imprecatory -judgment God's enemies
- Thanksgiving – gratitude in prayer
- Strategic- ultimate purposes
 - God's glory

Paul's Prayer for the Church Col.

1:9-14

- Prayer for knowledge (v9) of God's will
- Colossians were under siege by people who were telling them they needed a better knowledge, a gnosis
- Paul's prayer for epignosis- "full knowledge that would instill a wisdom and understanding that is significantly spiritual
- Deep, growing knowledge of Christ & his will
- Spiritual knowledge is foundational to a sound, fruitful Christian life.

Gnostics

- People in the know, superior intellectuals
- Spiritual elite with all the answers
- Matter is evil; spirit is good
- To the Gnostics Christ was not the Creator; the Incarnation was not real; & Christ was not enough
- System to work your way up to God
- Ascetic disciplines; secret password; astrology; complex intellectual

Paul's Prayer

- Filled c Knowledge of God's will
- Wisdom & understanding
- Live a life worthy of Christ
- Please him in every way
- Bear fruit in every good work
- Grow in knowledge of God
- Strengthened with his might & power

Prayer about Conduct 1:10-14

- “Live” means “walk” or conduct
 - Col. 1:10, 2:6, 3:7
- Mind, knowledge, conduct woven together
- Worthy walk
 - Know it; do it!
 - Walk the talk
- Result is bearing fruit in every good work
- Bearing fruit is continuing & ongoing

End Goal

- Endurance- perseverance, steadfastness
 - Difficult circumstances
- Patience (with difficult people)
- Joy – fruit of the Spirit
- Gratitude – thanksgiving to God

Grammar of Grace

- But now, and yet
- Gospel is never causative, but always contradictory
- All other faiths are based on a “therefore” system. I _____, therefore God _____
- All other religions are causative
- Gospel is never “so that” but “and yet”
- No logical or causative connection at all

A Christian's Walk

- A worthy walk
- A knowledgeable walk
- A powerful walk
- A thankful walk

Knowledgeable Walk

- Growing in the knowledge of God
- Dynamic connection between action & knowledge
- Fundamental law of spiritual growth
- Know it; do it; grow!
- James Bruce – failure to grow

Powerful Walk

- Strengthened with a steady supply of God's power (dynamo)
- Endurance – adverse circumstances
- Patience – difficult people
- Joyfully – with joy
- Pray for God's people to have endurance/perseverance with joy in difficult circumstances and patience with people.

Thankful Walk

- Salvation
- Inheritance of the saints
- Out of dominion of darkness into light & the Kingdom of God
- Redemption & forgiveness of sin
- KOG- the redemptive reign & rule of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ
- Alec Motyer quote

Stories

- Redeemer beginnings Matt Smethurst
- PCA Women 400 churches praying
- 1/3 funds for Redeemer came from women
- Barker – CO 1978
- Caroline Montgomery – prayer warrior
- Evans adoption 2 babies in 12 months

Takeaways

- Paul didn't wrestle with prayer; he wrestled in prayer.
- What if??? An opportunity
- I always thank God when I pray for _____

Questions for Reflection

- How does your current prayer life differ from the Apostle Paul's?
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