

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:9 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Gaining Knowledge Of God's Will

INTRODUCTION: For those of us who have been a true believer for many years, do we pray for other believers and for new believers? If so, what should we pray? In our praying for believers, what is necessary for us to produce prayers that God would most likely respond to? For guidance from God, let's study further the true-life example of the believers in Colosse.

READ: Colossians 1:9, with vv.3-4 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - From the authority directly given to him by God, Paul is writing authoritatively to the believers in Colosse, as well as to all believers today. (v.1)
 - - It is the will of God that believers read, study, learn, and fully implement in their lives the teachings in the Book of Colossians. (vv.1-2)
 - - God intends that faith in Jesus as the Christ is to be accompanied by having 'love for all the saints' and other spiritual dynamics, which are to be produced through the gospel. (vv.4-6)
 - - And furthermore, God intends for the gospel to "bear fruit" in the lives of people "all over the world", like it was doing in the lives of the Colossian believers. (v.6)
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from v.9a - READ - **"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you..."**

[Lesson Questions: Within verses 1:1-9, what reasons are cited as to why Paul and Timothy "have not stopped praying" for the Colossian believers? From those reasons, what can be concluded about the perspective and approach that Paul and Timothy have?]

SECTION POINT: Paul and Timothy possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", in their approach to addressing the situation of the believers in Colosse.

- - Within verses 1:1-9, Paul and Timothy state that they continue to pray for the Colossian believers because: of the love the Colossians have in the Spirit (v.8) for all the saints (v.4), their faith in Christ Jesus (v.4), the gospel is bearing fruit and growing among them (v.6), and they need to know God's will (v.9).
- - These are evidences of the reality that the Colossians have true faith and are acting in accordance to it. (v.4)
- - But the evidence here also suggests that the Colossian believers are relatively new to the faith, not yet being fully grounded (not "established and firm") in the basic doctrines of the faith. (v.23)

- - So, the danger then is that these new believers may easily, quickly, and unwittingly fall to false doctrines (v.2:8), thereby being "moved from" (v.1:23) "the word of truth, the gospel" (v.1:5).
 - - To avoid this falling into false doctrines from occurring, therefore these new believers urgently need to acquire "spiritual wisdom", "understanding", and "knowledge of God's will" - thus Paul and Timothy's urgency in prayer for them. (v.1:9)
 - - Paul and Timothy see the seriousness of this danger and the urgency to preclude it before it occurs.
 - - So, Paul and Timothy are urgently and persistently interceding before God "on the behalf" of and for the benefit of the new believers in Colosse, even though Paul had never met them personally. (v.1:9, Strong's #5228, #5216; vv.1:7, 2:1)
 - - Additionally, Paul and Timothy "always thank God" for the believers in Colosse (v.1:3), writing to them (vv.1:1-2), and "struggling" for them (v.2:1), even though Paul had never met them.
 - - Fundamentally, Paul and Timothy are acting from and praying from a perspective that understands and prioritizes God's Kingdom, rather than from a perspective that prioritizes their own little kingdom of their own ministry. (cf. v.4:11)
 - - Therefore, Paul and Timothy possess a spiritually mature, secure, and wise understanding about God's Kingdom and God's will for them in relation to their interactions with the believers in Colosse.
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from v.9b - READ - "**...and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.**"

[Lesson Question: In this part of verse 9, how do these cited aspects interrelate and why are they important individually as well as collectively?]

SECTION POINT: We believers are to possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", so that we can correctly determine and comprehensively live in accordance to God's will.

- - In their interceding before God on the behalf of the Colossian believers, Paul and Timothy are "asking God to fill [the Colossian believers] with the knowledge of [God's] will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding".
- - Apparently, God does not automatically fill His believers with the knowledge of His will.
- - And apparently, God does not automatically fill His believers with spiritual wisdom and understanding.
- - These imply God has to deliberately orchestrate that we believers acquire "the knowledge of His will" -- and in fullness ("fill") -- and in "all spiritual wisdom and understanding".
- - We believers have available to us a general knowledge of His will, as recorded in the Scriptures, but apparently we also need to acquire His will specifically for our own life, and it needs to be in fullness, presumably in order to be complete or comprehensive.

- - "Spiritual" wisdom and understanding relate to the realm of being "spiritual" in nature and being about the Kingdom of God, which is in contrast to ordinary, or common, or secular wisdom and understanding, which are essentially devoid of this distinct spiritual element.
 - - And logically, we need both knowledge and we need understanding in order to have and act in wisdom.
 - - So the obvious conclusion then is that we believers naturally have a corrupted perspective on life, which thereby requires uncorrupted enlightenment from God Himself in order for us to gain that spiritual perspective correctly. (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)
 - - When we believers "hear... the word of truth" (v.5) (the Scriptures), "learn" it (v.7), and "understand" it (v.6), we gain some God-given "spiritual wisdom" and God-given "spiritual... understanding" (v.9) that improve our ability to determine what God's will is, so that with this gained God-given knowledge we can then proceed to live in comprehensive accordance to God's will. (cf. James 1:22)
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BIG IDEA: Due to our corrupted perspective, we believers need increasing enlightenment from God through gaining spiritual knowledge from His Word, in order to improve our ability to determine and live in accordance to God's will.

APPLICATIONS:

- - What evidences are visibly apparent from you by which other people can see whether or not you have true faith and are acting in accordance to it?
- - Are you proceeding towards being fully grounded, established, and firm in the basic doctrines of the faith? Or instead, have you been proceeding away from "the word of truth, the gospel", and genuine "spiritual wisdom"? (vv.5,9)
- - Do you possess a perspective that prioritizes God's Kingdom, rather than a perspective that prioritizes your own little kingdom of your own interests and efforts?
- - In your interactions with other believers and ministry workers, do you possess a proper spiritual maturity, security, and wise understanding about God's Kingdom and God's will? Or instead, by your words and actions, do you demonstrate that you are significantly worldly and foolish by being selfish, demanding, manipulative, angry, insecure, critical, or arrogant?
- - When facing some matter, issue, or decision in your life, do you attempt to determine God's will? Or instead, do you proceed without consulting God in any significant way and then afterward you expect God to bless you?
- - What process do you use to determine God's will regarding some matter, issue, or decision in your life? Is it based on the Scriptures, "the word of truth" (v.5) interpreted properly, along with extensive prayer? Or instead, is it based on a mystical approach, for examples, such as supposed dreams, visions, feelings, prophecies, signs, or voices in your head that you assume come from God?

- - Do you intercede before God on the behalf of and for the benefit of other believers?
For people you have never met personally, or who are outside of your realm of contact?
Urgently and persistently?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What should we ask God to do when we pray for believers long-term? How should we pray that will maximize the potential for effectiveness from our prayers? And should adjustments be made to the contents of our prayers for other believers that is dependent upon whether they are spiritually-oriented in godliness or in worldliness?

- - From this verse in Colossians 1:9, does God make His will known to believers who are not seeking to determine and know it, who essentially are oblivious and unconcerned about God's will for them? And if no one is praying for them to know His will? Contemplate, analyze, and then formulate a biblically-aligned solution to this inquiry.

- - If we believers are to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7 NAS), then is the will of God truly knowable at the time, in the moment? Contemplate, analyze, and then formulate a biblically-aligned solution to this inquiry.

- - Is the will of God truly knowable corporately? In advance?]

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