

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE START THE NEXT SECTION OF COLOSSIANS, ~ 1: ~ 9-14.

▶▶ To see ~ where we're going and what this paragraph is about, ~ we can look at a basic breakdown of it.

▶▶ In *verse 9a*, ~ Paul informs the believers in Colossae ~ that he and his missionary team are continually praying for them.

▶▶ In *verse 9b-c*, ~ he tells them what they're asking God for on their behalf.

▷▷ As we'll see, ~ they were asking God for two things on behalf of these believers.

↳↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ they were praying that God would fill them "with the knowledge of his will."

↳↳ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ they were praying that the Lord would give them "all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

▶▶ In *vs 10a*, ~ Paul informs them of the purpose of the prayer.

▷▷ And that is ~ in order that we may live in a manner worthy of the Lord, ~ fully pleasing to him.

▶▶ In *verses 10b-12a*, ~ he lists four characteristics of a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

▷▷ 1. bearing fruit in every good work.

▷▷ 2. increasing in the knowledge of God.

▷▷ 3. being strengthened with all power, ~ according to his glorious might, ~ for all endurance and patience with joy.

▷▷ And 4. giving thanks to the Father. ↴↴ 1/10

▶▶ He then finishes in **verses 12b-14** ~ by listing 3 reasons why we should give thanks.

▷▷ **1.** For qualifying believers "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

▷▷ **2.** For rescuing us from the domain of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

▷▷ **And 3.** for "redemption, ~ the forgiveness of sins."

OK, ~ THAT'S IT ~ IN A NUTSHELL. ~~ AND TODAY ~ WE WILL COVER VERSES 9-10a.

AS WE NOTED, ~ IN VERSE 9a, ~ ¶¶

PAUL INFORMS THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE, ~ FROM THE DAY WE HEARD, ~ WE HAVE not ceased to pray for you.

▶▶ The phrase ~ "from the day we heard," ~ points back and refers to these believers' loyalty to Jesus ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and their Christ-like love for all believers, ~ mentioned in the previous paragraph.

▶▶ I.e., ~ he is saying, ~~ ¶¶

▷▷ And so, ~ from the day we heard about your loyalty to Jesus and your Christ-like love for your fellow believers, ~ we have not ceased to pray for you.

IT LOOKS LIKE INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR BELIEVERS ~ WAS A ROUTINE PART OF Paul & his team's daily lives.

▶▶ It should be ours as well.

THE NEWS OF THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS' LOYALTY AND LOVE ~ PROMPTED PAUL AND his team ~ to constantly intercede for them. ¶¶ 2/10

NO DOUBT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT PROMPTED THIS CONSTANT  
intercession.

▶▶ Recall the background to this letter.

▷▷ False teaching was threatening this church.

↳↳ And Paul writing to combat this heresy.

▶▶ So, ~ more than likely ~ he and his missionary team were also constantly praying because of this.

▷▷ I.e., ~ they no doubt were praying that these precious believers ~ would not fall prey to the false teachers.

▶▶ Something, ~ by the way, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that we should be praying for on behalf of each other, ~ that we not fall prey to false teaching.

AND WHY SHOULD WE BE PRAYING FOR THIS?

▶▶ Because, ~ as we've discussed before, ~ because of the prevalence and danger of false teaching in our day.

▶▶ Just think of all the churches and pulpits that are being filled with teachers and preachers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ who claim to be true followers of Christ ~ but are really not.

▶▶ Just think of all the books, ~ the radio, ~ and TV programs, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and what goes out over the internet, ~ all claiming to speak in the name of Jesus.

↳↳ And yet ~ Jesus has not sent them to speak for Him. ¶¶ 3/10

▶▶Furthermore, ~ as we've noted on at least a few occasions, ~ false teaching is not neutral, ~ innocent, ~ or beneficial

▷▷It is dangerous. ~~ Destructive. ~~ Hidden reefs. ~~ Mutilators.

▶▶So we see the need to pray for ourselves and each other ~ that we will not fall prey to false teaching.

▶▶But we also need to take action. ~~ Study. ~~ Sound teaching. ~~ Bereans.

### NOW LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE TWO PRAYER REQUESTS IN COL. ~ 1.

AS NOTED, ~ PAUL & HIS TEAM ASKING THE LORD TO GIVE THESE believers two things.

▶▶1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the knowledge of his will. ~~ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ spiritual wisdom and understanding.

▶▶Obviously, ~ this is something the Lord wants for all of his children, ~ ¶¶

▷▷to have the knowledge of his will ~ along with spiritual wisdom and understanding.

▷▷So, ~ it is incumbent upon us, ~ believers here at NHCC, ~ ¶¶

↳↳to understand what is involved in these 2 prayer requests as much as possible, ~ ¶¶

→→and also to pray for them for ourselves and for our fellow believers.

### THE FIRST PRAYER REQUEST IS IN VERSE 9b.

"ASKING THAT GOD WOULD FILL THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS ~ WITH THE knowledge of his will."

▶▶Now, ~ what does Paul mean by God's will here? ¶¶ 4/10

▶▶ Let's consider the immediate context.

▷▷ Verse 10a speaks about living "in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him."

▷▷ Paul then goes on to list four characteristics of a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

▶▶ Based on the context then, ~ I would suggest that God's will here ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is specifically ~ his will for the conduct of the Christian life.

▶▶ TPID, ~ God's will here ~ refers to how he wants us, ~ i.e., ~ his people, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to daily conduct our lives in thought, ~ word, ~ and action, ~ ¶¶

→ → as we live out our lives in this fallen, ~ sinful world.

AND OF COURSE, ~ GOD'S WILL FOR THE CONDUCT OF OUR LIVES IS REVEALED IN HIS word.

▶▶ It's not something mysterious.

▷▷ We find it clearly spelled out in his word.

▶▶ Which leads us, ~ I believe, ~ to this implication: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ We are not passive bystanders in this.

▶▶ This does not happen by osmosis.

▷▷ We don't sit next to our Bible ~ and God's will for the conduct of our lives magically seeps in.

▶▶ No. ~ ~ This indicates ~ that we are expected to be active participants.

▷▷ We are to open God's word ~ and read and study it thoroughly. ¶¶ 5/10

▶▶ And as we do so, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ God will fill us ~ with the knowledge of how he wants us to daily conduct our lives ~ ¶¶

↳↳ in thought, ~ word, ~ and action ~ as we live out our lives ~ in this fallen, ~ sinful world.

PAUL & HIS TEAM PRAYED THAT THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS WOULD ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "be filled with the knowledge of God's intention for the conduct of their lives."

▶▶ "knowledge" here, ~ goes beyond simply knowing God's will for our lives.

▷▷ It includes a thorough understanding of that knowledge.

▶▶ So the Lord does not want us to just have a simple knowledge of this will for our lives.

▷▷ He wants us to also have a thorough understanding of his will for our lives.

▶▶ Consequently, ~ as believers study God's word, ~ and gain the knowledge of his will, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the Lord will also give us a profound understanding ~ ¶¶

↳↳ of how he wants us to daily conduct our lives in thought, ~ word, ~ and action, ~ ¶¶

→→ as we live out our lives in this fallen, ~ sinful world.

NOW LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE 2<sup>nd</sup> REQUEST IN VERSE 9c.

PAUL INFORMS THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that he and his team had also been asking God ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to give them spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¶¶ 6/10

▶▶ At first glance, ~ this doesn't look like an additional prayer request.

▷▷ It just reads, ~ "in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

BUT AT THE OUTSET, ~ WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND ~ HOW THIS PHRASE ~ CAN BE viewed.

▶▶ This prepositional phrase can be looked at ~ as an additional request.

▶▶ And ~ "spiritual," ~ can refer to wisdom and understanding that the Holy Spirit gives to us.

▶▶ The idea is this: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "We ask God ~ to give you the wisdom and understanding that the Holy Spirit gives."

EXPLORING THIS VERSE MORE CLOSELY, ~ THE GREEK WORDS FOR "WISDOM" AND "understanding" are synonyms.

▶▶ Subsequently, ~ they probably should not be treated separately ~ but should be looked at as expressing a single thought.

▷▷ Most likely it refers to God-given discernment.

↪↪ I.e., ~ God-given, ~ or spiritual, ~ discernment ~ as opposed to human discernment.

▶▶ So the second prayer for the Colossian believers was this: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "We ask God ~ to give you spiritual discernment.

BUT ~ WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT MEAN?

▶▶ Based on our study of Philippians, ~ in which we talked about this, ~ and the overarching theme of Colossians, ~ ¶¶ ¶¶ 7/10

▷▷i.e., ~ Paul's refutation of false teaching, ~ ¶¶

↳↳I suggest ~ that God-given discernment means this.

▶▶The ability ~ to clearly distinguish between ~ truth and error, ~ good and evil, ~ right and wrong, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and to always choose what is true, ~ good, ~ and right.

## AND WHAT ABOUT FOR US, ~ BELIEVERS HERE AT NHCC?

▶▶Well, ~ The prayer for spiritual discernment ~ implies ~ ¶¶

▷▷that we cannot safely rely on our human discernment in these matters.

▶▶Prov. 3:5, ~ "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, ~ and do not lean ~ [or, ~ depend] ~ on ~ your own understanding.

▶▶Why? ~ Well, ~ for one thing, ~ we are imperfect, ~ so our understanding is faulty.

▷▷Job's friends.

↳↳Their thinking: ~ "All suffering is punishment for sin.

→→Job is suffering. ~ Therefore, Job is a sinner."

↳↳But 3x ~ in first two chapters ~ Job is described ~ ¶¶

→→as blameless and upright, ~ one who reveres God ~ and turns away from evil.

↳↳And twice ~ God is doing the describing.

▷▷John's gospel . . . .

↳↳"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

▷▷Our understanding is faulty. ¶¶ 8/10



▶▶Furthermore, ~ Prov. 14:12 and 16:25 make it abundantly clear that we can't trust our own judgment.

▷▷"There is a way that seems right to a man, ~ but its end is the way to death.

▷▷That doesn't instill a whole lot of confidence in our ability to clearly distinguish ~ 77

↳↳between ~ truth and error, ~ good and evil, ~ right and wrong, ~ 77

→→and to always choose what is true, ~ good, ~ and right, ~ does it?

▷▷Rather, ~ it points out a large capacity within us ~ for self-deception or for being fooled, ~ doesn't it?

▶▶Consequently, ~ clearly see our need to ask the Lord for spiritual discernment.

### IN VERSE 10a, ~ 77

PAUL INFORMS THEM OF THE PURPOSE FOR HIS AND HIS TEAM'S prayer requests.

▶▶so as to ~ [or, ~ in order to] ~ walk ~ [i.e., ~ live] ~ 77

▷▷[in order to live] ~ in a manner worthy of the Lord, ~ fully pleasing to him.

▶▶The phrase ~ "fully pleasing to him" ~ explains, ~ or defines, ~ the phrase ~ "in a manner worthy."

▶▶We, ~ believers, ~ need the knowledge and a thorough understanding of God's will ~ for the daily conduct of our lives ~ 77

▷▷and also spiritual discernment ~ for this purpose.

↳↳In order ~ to know how to live a life that is fully pleasing to the Lord. 11 9/10

▶▶ A life fully pleasing to the Lord ~ ¶¶

▷▷ refers to a lifestyle ~ that reflects God in every way, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that asks in every decision ~ "What would God have me do?"

## CONCLUSION.

A BRIEF CLOSING THOUGHT TO SET PAUL AND HIS TEAM'S PRAYER IN THE OVERALL context of the letter.

▶▶ Recall that Paul's primary theme in Colossians ~ is a refutation of false doctrine and false Christian practice.

▶▶ As we noted in the past, ~ often false teaching leads to ungodly living.

▶▶ Having spiritual discernment ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and also the knowledge and a thorough understanding of how God wants us to live out our daily lives, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will help shield us ~ from following false doctrine ~ ¶¶

→→ and from being fooled into thinking that we can lead ungodly lives.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 10/10