

SLIDE 1: Praying for a Life that Pleases God Colossians 1:9-14

Introduction: In today's passage Paul writes that he never stops praying for the Colossians.

He moves from earlier thanking God for the gospel, to praying for their spiritual growth and a life that pleases God.

Paul's prayer for the Colossians isn't focused on personal comfort, healing, or finances—it's focused on growth. **Spiritual growth.** It's a prayer for depth, maturity, and transformation.

And it's not just for us individually, but for others too. What if our prayers weren't just petitions for relief, but blueprints for renewal?

Today, we take Paul's example how to pray with purpose—prayers that shape lives, strengthen faith, and stir deep gratitude for what God has done.

This prayer isn't a checklist—it's a blueprint.

A blueprint that doesn't just shape a good Christian—it **shapes a fruitful one.** And through prayer, we don't just ask for what we want—we receive what heaven longs to give.

This morning we unpack this blueprint which highlights fruit bearing lives, strength for trials, endurance, and joy—not just in receiving the Gospel, but in walking worthy of it.

Three times in the first ten verses of this letter the Apostle Paul told the Colossians that he's always praying and thanking God for them.

This passage is a call to a Christianity that is more than religious mumbo-jumbo. It's a summons to a relationship with Christ that will transform us. An invitation to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

And it begins with a life saturated in prayer.

How astounding it is to hear the directive of Hebrews 4:16 for believers to come boldly before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Can you think of any greater honour than to have an audience with the One who rules over ALL creation?

We've been invited to talk with the one who put the stars in place.

We're invited to seek counsel from the One who is truth and wisdom.

We're invited to sit down with the One who knows all things.

In the four Gospels we find Jesus himself highlighting prayer by coming aside often to pray?

Prayer makes a difference. I can't tell you how it "works." But I do know this. I know that circumstances change when people pray.

Diseases are sometimes healed, strength is imparted, guidance is given, hearts are softened, and needs are met.

I know that when I pray for others it helps them. **But I also know that when I pray, I am changed.**

In our text Paul is not primarily concerned with the Colossians comfort . . . He's concerned for their spiritual growth.

He started praying for the Colossians as soon as he heard about them. And once he started praying for them, he never stopped.

For him, prayer was as natural as breathing.

SLIDE 2: When you pray, WHAT do you pray for?

His words are a textbook on “WHAT” to pray for other people

SLIDE 3: When you pray, WHO do you pray for?

Family, friends, people you know at church, people you know at work, people you know at school – praying for others and their spiritual growth.

Paul is in prison, and yet here we find him praying specifically for the Colossians spiritual growth.

SLIDE 4: Never Stop Praying for Others. Colossians 1:9

Paul writes: *“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.”*

Here Paul lifts the curtain on one of the most beautiful habits of Christian love: persistent prayer for others.

He doesn't say, “we prayed once,” or “we think of you often.” He says, *“we have not stopped praying for you.”* That's not casual—it's committed.

Paul is writing to believers he's never met, yet he's deeply invested in their spiritual growth. Why? Because in the body of Christ, we don't have to know someone personally to care about them prayerfully.

This kind of intercession moves us beyond self-focused petitions and into Gospel-shaped love. It stretches our hearts wide open to include others, and it anchors us in the belief that prayer truly changes things.

SLIDE 5: Why We Should Pray for Others

- It models spiritual maturity. Mature believers pray beyond themselves.
- It builds unity. Praying for others creates spiritual connection, even across distances.

- It activates faith. When we pray for someone's growth, we trust God is working beyond our sight.
- It reflects Jesus. Christ intercedes for us without ceasing—Paul's example echoes that rhythm.
- Knowledge of God's will is essential for spiritual growth.

Paul is not necessarily speaking of God's specific will for your life, although that would be included here, but rather God's will and desires as reflected in His word.

SLIDE 6: Bearing Fruit Is Evidence of The Life That Pleases God - Colossians 1:10

The Apostle gives us some ideas on what a life pleasing to God looks like. We see four characteristics of a life pleasing to the Lord in verses 10-12.

They are: "bearing fruit"; "growing in knowledge"; "being strengthened"; and "giving thanks".

The idea of "bearing fruit" is not that foreign to us. If we purchased a fruit tree, planted it, and took care of it, we would expect to be getting fruit from that tree in a matter of years.

If after many years the tree was not yielding fruit, we would feel that the tree was defective or really not a fruit tree at all. **Fruitfulness takes time.**

The same is true for followers of Christ. The change might not be immediately discernable. However, over time we should be seeing a difference in the way people live.

Jesus says the same is true of people who profess faith. He says,

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit." (Matt. 7:15-17)

Jesus says we can tell by watching people's lives. If there's not a change in their living then we can conclude there is no change in their heart. **Our heart and our lives go together -** they are not separate.

That's why Paul writes in Corinthians, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; and all things have become new.*

At the heart of Paul's prayer lies a bold challenge that touches each of us: **to live a life worthy of the Lord.** That's not about perfection—it's about direction. It's not trying harder, but walking closer.

Every day presents a thousand decisions.

How you respond to conflict, spend your time, speak to others, steward your resources. Colossians 1:10 reminds us that each of these choices can be shaped by Christ—and can reflect Him.

Pleasing God "in every way" isn't limited to Sunday worship or devotional moments.

It's found in quiet patience, humble service, and unseen kindness. It's about bearing fruit in every good work—not just grand acts, but simple faithfulness.

The fruit Paul speaks of is visible evidence that God's life is flowing through yours.

- At work:
- At home:
- In our neighborhood:
- In our heart: Staying rooted in truth even when no one sees.

Listen to these words of Paul to the Galatians.

But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The person who is living to please God will see a change in their values in everyday living, and a notable change in their behaviour, in their relationships, in their business dealings, in their speech, in how they spend their money.

In how they do their job; how they treat their co-workers; the tactics they use and won't use to make a profit; the way they handle their mistakes; the way they treat our families.

SLIDE: 7 Longing to Know God Better Is Evidence of The Life That Pleases God Col. 1:10

The life that pleases God is the one that *"keeps on growing in knowledge."* It's continually seeking to know God better.

Growing in the knowledge of God is not the same as growing in knowledge ABOUT God.

You can have your head full of information about God and still not have a relationship WITH Him.

Some of us have known folks totally absorbed with "studying the deeper truths of the Bible."

But the "deeper truths" they discover only detour them from practical Christian living. Instead of getting burning hearts of devotion to Christ (Luke 24:32), they get swelled heads and start creating problems in their homes and churches. They can quote chapter and verse in the blink of an eye.

Let's ever be alert to the danger of substituting facts for a relationship.

A life fully pleasing to God is the one that yearns to know more about God so that they can know Him better.

I think this kind of person, reads the Bible not just for factual information, but to discern the heart of God. **They look for directions, not merely information.**

They want to read or to be taught anything that might help them know God better.

SLIDE: 8 Pray That They Will Joyfully Give Thanks for Their Salvation. Colossians 1:12

"Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light."

Here is a prime indicator of genuine spiritual growth - joyfully giving thanks to God for your salvation.

This gratitude begins when we realize we don't deserve the inheritance that has been reserved for us.

Paul calls us to live joyfully thankful, and the reason is stunning: God has qualified us to share in His inheritance. He hasn't just invited us to watch from the sidelines; He's brought us into the light and placed a claim on our eternity.

That word "qualified" is rich with meaning. It tells us something we desperately need to hear. We didn't earn this. God took the initiative. He made us worthy through Christ. We were spiritually disqualified—**yet by grace, we now belong.**

To be "qualified" means we never have to live our lives from a place of shame or uncertainty.

But here's the most mind-blowing thing! When it comes to our salvation, we don't qualify ourselves. Rather it's God who qualifies us.

It's already happened in the past. It's a done deal. God qualified us for salvation two thousand years ago when Jesus died on the cross.

All of our sins were laid upon Christ, and God credits His righteousness to everyone who believes. It's good news that God qualified us for salvation because without Christ we are completely unqualified. We could never pass on our own.

And what exactly have we been qualified for? Paul says: *"to share in the inheritance of His holy people."* This is Old Testament language reflecting Israel and the Promised Land.

Israel inherited the land; **we will inherit heaven**, or as it says here: **the kingdom of light.**

The Lord has taken our dead-end lives and set them on course for eternity. Where we would be if He had not drawn us to Himself?

An attitude of gratitude grows as we learn to open our eyes to the blessings we take for granted.

When was the last time we thanked God for seeing another sunrise, for every breath we have been able to take, or the blue sky, or the song of a robin?

When did we last thank Him for the Bible, for fellow believers, for music that lifts our soul? When did we last thank Him for a warm home and the love of our families?

God has already begun this good work in us through the gospel. Now He is carrying it on to completion, bearing fruit in all things—at work or at home, at school or in service at the church. God wants us to be fruitful believers.

We also grow in our gratefulness as we consider Calvary and see how wonderful our Saviour is. "That bearing shame and scoffing rude" etc.

SLIDE 9: Remember That We Have Been Rescued by God (Colossians 1:13-14)

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Always, always, always remember that we have been rescued by God

This is something that has already taken place in the past. Paul is not talking about Jesus on the cross this time but rather our conversion.

The word “rescued” is a dramatic word indicating deliverance from danger.

We are in a fierce battle. Constantly we’re warned of the Devil’s intention to neutralize and demoralize believers.

We’re told that *“our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Eph. 6:10).

The enemy has marshaled his armies . . . **and when we neglect prayer, we go into battle unarmed.**

We’ve been brought into the kingdom of God’s Son, delivered out of darkness and into the kingdom of Jesus, the Son whom God loves.

SLIDE 10: In Jesus We Have Redemption, The Forgiveness of Our Sins. Colossians 1:14

The word “redemption” means complete freedom and release based on the payment of a price. The cost of Israel’s freedom cost was the price of the firstborn sons of Egypt.

The cost of our freedom was the price of Jesus’ death on the cross.

We read in 1 Peter 1: *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

We have been bought by the blood of Jesus, and we have been set free. We no longer belong to the kingdom of darkness.

This redemption means the forgiveness of our sins. The word “**forgiveness**” here means release from a debt. Until your sins were forgiven you owed a debt you could not pay.

SLIDE 11: Final Thoughts:

Let this blueprint guide your prayers this week

May we all be a people who never stop praying for others

And seek to live a life that pleases God.

Conclusions: Remember always, **Paul is pointing to the goal.** This is what we are working toward, not where we should already be. we cannot bear fruit apart from Christ. **Remember always that the key is not to work harder . . . it is to draw closer.**