

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS COMMENTARY

Exposition: English
Part Two: Exposition

Volume 15, Pericope 3

Colossians 1:9-11a



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INTRODUCTION

After developing a historical understanding of Colossians 1:9-11a in the Part One: Exegesis study, we are now ready to explore the relevancy of this scripture text to our day and time.

The following aspects will receive our attention:

- 1.0 Identify the Central Idea of the Text.
- 2.0 Develop an Exegetical Outline of the Text.
- 3.0 Develop a Semantic Outline of the Text.
- 4.0 Develop a Sermon Brief of the Text.
- 5.0 Develop a Teaching Outline of the Text.

The strategy used here is to present examples of each of these activities as a stimulus for you to develop your own understanding of the text. Your world and potential audiences are different from mine. On the “now” side of the interpretive process, the identification of the world that you live in becomes critical. As you prepare to preach or to teach this text, you will need a thorough understanding of the anticipated audience for this preaching or teaching. Only then can you discover legitimate links between your audience and the scripture text. Out of this should be the realization that no one application of this text can ever be viewed as the definitive application. This does not imply that any application is legitimate. The validity of a sermon or teaching plan based on this text is measured by how directly the sermon or teaching plan links up its audience to valid spiritual and ethical values existing in the scripture text.

This assumes the Analogy of Scripture principle of hermeneutics. As you discover overlapping connections between ethical and spiritual values in the text and identifiable needs in your audience, helpful sermons and teaching plans can be developed that will give genuine guidance to your audience from the scripture text. And such methodology assumes the di-

vine inspiration of the text as sacred scripture, rather than being merely an ancient written text. From a Protestant theological perspective, this scripture text stands as the foundational authority for our beliefs and practices as Christians. Why? Because when we listen closely to what the text is saying, we can experience God speaking to us.

Now, let's begin this exploration of the text. Remember that we are building much of this understanding off [the previous exegesis](#) of the text.

1.0 Identify the Central Idea of the Text.

The CIT statement merely attempts to express in a concise sentence the core principle found in the exegesis of the passage. It will be the first of several summary statements that we will develop. It should reflect clearly the exegetical conclusions reached in the Part One treatment of this passage. The following is one attempt at this:

In this letter, Paul and Timothy affirmed an ongoing intercessory prayer ministry for the Colossians.

This statement builds off the main clause of the long sentence found in verses nine through twenty. The Block Diagram illustrates the role of the main clause in verse nine: ἡμεῖς... οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, “We...do not cease praying for you and asking.” The heart of what they asked God to do was to fill the Colossians with a knowledge of His will. The noun τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν, “with understanding,” stresses deep comprehension. Remember that in verse one Paul's apostleship claim rests on θελήματος θεοῦ, “God's will.” As the Colossians increased their understanding of τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “His will,” they would sense increasingly the divine calling of Paul as the appointed messenger of the Apostolic Gospel, which Epaphras had brought to them in his ministry.

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But this increasing grasp of God's will has the goal of promoting a lifestyle that reflects God's character as our Heavenly Father: περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου, "in order to walk worthy of the Lord." Increased knowledge enables a pattern of living that makes God very happy with us.

Four ongoing traits define this worthy walk:

(1) ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ **καρποφοροῦντες**, "in every good deed **bearing fruit**." (verse 10)

(2) **αὐξανόμενοι** τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ, "**growing** in the knowledge of God." (verse 10)

(3) ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει **δυναμούμενοι** κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν, "with full power **being enabled** according to the might of His Glory for complete endurance and long-suffering." (verse 11)

(4) Μετὰ χαρᾶς **εὐχαριστοῦντες** τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς, "with joy **giving thanks** to the Father who has strengthened you." (verses 11b-20)

These four traits here define the worthy walk that makes God happy with us. They are the outcome of being filled with knowledge of God's will. This was the intercessory prayer ministry of Paul and Timothy for the Colossians. Their intention in praying this way was for continued spiritual development of the Colossians. This would generate a spiritual maturity that would help these believers reject the false teaching that was surfacing in Colossae. More importantly, it would build a healthy spiritual community of believers who looked forward to meeting God in eternity.

2.0 Develop an Exegetical Outline of the Text.

How can we develop an outline of the content of this Greek sentence in verses nine through twenty? As we concluded from the previous exegesis of this passage, this long sentence contained three distinct thematic subtopics: verses nine through eleven a; verses eleven b through fourteen; and verses fifteen through twenty.

So our focus here is on the first of these three subtopics found in verses nine through eleven a. When considering only the first third of this long sentence, the best way to outline the details is to approach it from the primary and the secondary ideas presented. Clearly, the foundational theme of the entire sentence is dealing with intercessory prayer. And this is particularly true of the first segment found in verses nine through eleven a.

Thus under the theme title, "How should I pray for others," here is a possible exegetical outline:

I. Paul and Timothy lifted the Colossians to God in asking Him to act in their behalf. (verse 9 a)

A. Their intercession was central to their prayers.

B. Their intercession was consistently ongoing.

II. Their requests to God highlighted the granting of greater knowledge of God's will. (verses nine b through eleven a)

A. The heart of their intercession was a divine filling.

B. This filling was to produce a distinctive lifestyle.

Observations about the outline:

1. The first point centers on the main clause in the original Greek sentence.

2. The second point then centers on the key secondary idea of the sentence as found in the ἵνα clause beginning in verse nine b and ultimately reaching to verse twenty.

3. The clear connection between 'filling' and 'walking' in the sentence is implied in the grammar structure of the ἵνα clause.

4. The very significant references in this ἵνα stress what God is asked to do for the Colossians. These are mostly nouns: τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν (knowledge); τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ (His will); πάσῃ σοφίᾳ (complete wisdom); συνέσει πνευματικῇ (spiritual understand-

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ing), πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν (full pleasing); τῆ ἐπιγνώσει (knowledge); τοῦ θεοῦ (of God); πάση δυνάμει (full power); τὸ κράτος (the might); τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (of His glory); πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν (complete endurance and long-suffering). The composite picture is clearly of God sharing Himself with His children so that the pattern of their living is pleasing to Him. The picture stresses achieving mature levels of mental comprehension and significant behavior that reflects whose children they are as Christians.

5. By contextual implication, there is recognition that such is only possible in the Apostolic Gospel preached to them from the beginning by Epaphras. It is not possible from the alternative message of the false teachers at work in Colossae.

3.0 Develop a Semantic Outline of the Text.

Here is the point of shift from the “then” to the “now” perspective on the text. First, we must modify the CIT statement to focus on application of the text. Then, an outline can be built around this modified CIT statement.

This makes it necessary to decide upon an identifiable need or needs present in our anticipated audience. As one possible example, I will anticipate a Wednesday evening church service led by the pastor. The perceived need in my audience relates to inadequate knowledge about intercessory prayer. In the sermon, I will seek to motivate them to engage in intercessory prayer more in their Christian walk. In the teaching plan, I will seek to inform them about the details of intercessory prayer as taught in Colossian 1:9-11a. This need will be addressed in two different ways, as reflected in the Sermon Brief and the Teaching Outline below.

Now for the modified CIT statement, that is followed by the updated outline.

Intercessory prayer should be a major element in our

praying to God for others.

Observations about this CIT statement:

1. The action of Paul and Timothy serve as a model for all believers in their prayer life. This is the central timeless truth concluded from this passage.
2. Intercessory prayer is a duty not just for spiritual leaders, but for all who call themselves Christians.
3. Along with thanksgiving for others, intercessory prayer should be a major focus of our praying.
4. Intercessory prayer helps bring greater unity among believers.
5. While this passage does not discuss the full details of intercessory prayer, it does provide us with basic principles of interceding to God on behalf of others.

How can we outline the passage from this application-al perspective? Here is one possibility:

- I. We should lift other believers up to God asking Him to move in their lives. (verse 9 a)*
 - A. This intercession should be central to our praying.**
 - B. This intercession should be ongoing, not spasmodic.**
- II. Our intercession on behalf of others should highlight asking God to fill them with His knowledge. (verses 9b - 11a)*
 - A. Their deepest need is to know God’s will.**
 - B. Out of this knowledge comes a Christian lifestyle.**

Some observations about this outline.

1. It preserves the twofold emphasis on primary and secondary elements in the biblical text. Point one reflects the main clause in the Colossians text. And point two develops the secondary ideas in the Greek sentence found especially in verses nine b through eleven a.
2. It accurately develops the idea of the modified CIT statement and remains true to the Colossians text.

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3. Although the applicational move goes from Christian leaders to Christians generally, this direction is consistent to the role of example in the Bible. Christian leaders must set an example for Christians in general to follow. Much of what believers understand about living the Christian life comes from observing how their leaders live. This was particular true in the first decades of Christianity when they did not possess scriptures beyond the Old Testament documents.

4.0 Develop a Sermon Brief of the Text.

With the above semantic based CIT statement and outline in place, we can now build a sermon in abbreviated form based on Colossians 1:9-11a. This Sermon Brief contains two essential elements: a) a CIT statement, and b) a sermon outline with the three standardized elements in summary form (Explanation, Illustration, and Application).¹

¹For a detailed explanation of the Sermon Brief, see [SERMON REPORT FORM](#), Greek 202, 302 at cranfordville.com. These guidelines have been somewhat modified in this commentary procedure.

SERMON REPORT FORM

Greek 202/302

Format:

Text:
C.I.T.: (S.S.T. etc.)
Thesis:
Major Objective:
Specific Objective:
Title:
Body:

Explanations of above terminology¹

Text:
The chapter and verse reference to the passage which is the scriptural basis of the sermon (Steps, 34-37, 54-65).
C.I.T.:
Central Idea of Text, a short, clear statement (simple sentence) with past tense verb of what the basic meaning of the text was to those who first heard the passage (Steps, 42-46).
Thesis:
The statement of the C.I.T. with present tense verb, as to the contemporary meaning of the passage. Thesis always grows out of C.I.T., but especially with highly historically conditioned texts, it

may not be the same as the C.I.T. (Steps, 42-46).

Major Objective:

The designation of a general direction for the sermon in one of the following areas: Evangelistic (to reach the lost); Devotional (to lead Christians to love, adore and worship God); Doctrinal (to inform the congregation concerning a specific doctrinal truth); Ethical (to challenge the congregation to develop some area of Christian relationship); Consecrative (to lead the congregation to commitment for some area of service to God); Supportive (to give encouragement to those in times of suffering) (Steps, 15-18).

Specific Objective:

A simple sentence relating directly to one aspect of one major objective in one sermon to one audience on one occasion. The statement should be formulated following these guidelines: should reach for the most pressing need in the congregations discoverable, should be a single thrust, should be the controlling factor for the entire sermon, should be biblical, that is, grow out of the C.I.T. and Thesis (Steps, 18).

Title:

A well phrased, precisely stated summation of the sermon idea. It may be structured as an emphatic word phrase, limiting word phrase, interrogative sentence, imperative sentence or declarative sentence. The title should follow the following guidelines: clarity, accuracy (to text, CIT etc.), narrowness of scope, brevity (2 to 7 words), suitability for pulpit use, relevant to needs of people and originality (Steps, 95-105).

Body:

See Steps, 105-129, for important discussion. The headings must be in simple complete sentence, not in phrases or key words. Under each heading supply some detail as to the intended development of that point through the use of explanation, illustration and application. For the purposes of this assignment, give greatest detail to the explanation section. This should be in line, although in simplified form, with the exegesis section of this portion of the text in the paper.

Sample Report

Text: James 2:14-26

C.I.T.: James asserted the falseness of separating faith from works.

Thesis: Saving faith is always a serving faith.

Major Objective: Doctrinal

Specific Objective: That my congregation would understand the true nature of saving faith.

Title: I Believe!

Outline of Body of Sermon:²

I. Faith cannot be separated from service. vv. 15-17, 19

James emphatically stresses this point in the reoccurring phrase: faith without works is death (vv. 17, 20, 24, 26). He amplifies the principle negatively by declaring its worthlessness both practically

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Here is a sample of a sermon brief based on Colossians 1:9-11a.

1) Sermon CIT:

Building off the first two expressions of a CIT statement, the following provides a thematic direction for a sermon based on Colossians 1:9-11a.

I want to motivate my audience to engage consistently in intercessory prayer for others.

Observations:

This CIT develops naturally out of the previous two CIT statements. It seeks to emphasize the importance of (vv. 15-17) and doctrinally (v. 19).

These negative points will be illustrated under the principle of severed faith is verbal soup (15-17), a comparison to liquid soup in a hospital diet; and also, severed faith is dead orthodoxy (v. 19), a comparison to so many inactive church members.

The application is to stress the importance of Christians serving God faithfully as the natural outgrowth of genuine faith.

II. Faith and service compliment one another. v. 18, 22

James reveals the close relation of faith and works in two ways: service proves the presence of real faith (v. 18) and service is the major way of developing one's faith (v. 22) as his commentary on Abraham asserts.

This important principle can be illustrated in everyday life such as actions proving the truth of one's professed love for his wife. The application centers on a challenge to go to work in God's service as a key to developing one's faith, e.g., teaching a SS. class.

III. Faith is trust and obedience. vv. 20-26

The composition of true faith is described by James, rather than defined, by two extremes of examples. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, illustrates this in the instance of Isaac (vv. 21-23), and Rahab, a Gentile prostitute in Jericho, also illustrates the concept of trust and obedience (v. 25).

The character of real faith can be illustrated over and over by contemporary Christians who exemplify real faith. This is applied to the congregation as a challenge to move toward that level of confidence in God as daily problems are faced. The words to the hymn, Trust and Obey, underscores this principle.

¹For a very helpful discussion, see Brown, Clinard & Northcutt, *Steps to the Sermon* (Broadman Press, 1963).

²For the purposes of this report, neither the Introduction nor the Conclusion elements of the sermon need to be included.

intercessory prayer in a spiritually healthy Christian life. This sermon is focused on a call to action in adopting a pattern of intercessory prayer. Basic guidance on how to do intercessory prayer will be given.

2) Sermon outline:

Below is an example of how to approach the topic from a motivational perspective. And it must stay true to the scripture text on which the sermon is based. The title is "Asking God."

INTRODUCTION

How often do you ask God to do something? As His children, we are granted the privilege of petitioning our Heavenly Father. I suspect that a lot of your praying is asking God for something. We really like that fourth petition in the Model Prayer (Matthew 6:11): τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον, "Give us today our daily bread." Unfortunately, we tend to twist it into saying, "Lord, give me what I want." This, rather than the proper, "Lord give me what You know I need."

When we start looking at the larger picture of intercessory prayer in the New Testament, the discovery comes that asking God overwhelmingly is for something to be done for the benefit of others, rather than ourselves. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, the topic of intercessory prayer surfaces in chapter one, verses nine through twenty. In the first segment (vv. 9-11a) of this single Greek sentence, we discover the major theme in the main clause of the sentence: ἡμεῖς...οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, "we do not stop praying for you and asking." Paul epitomizes the idea of intercessory prayer in his assertion of his use of this kind of praying for the Colossians.

In the secondary details playing off this main clause, he gives several aspects of such praying. These serve as a model for Christians of all ages to emulate into their praying. Thus, we can find much encouragement to put this pattern of praying into our prayer life.

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What then is intercessory prayer? For Paul, it was the asking God to do something beneficial to others. How important was intercessory prayer? For Paul, it occupied a major role in all his praying. To be sure, Paul's letters represented his voice in written expression due to circumstances preventing him from physically being present with his targeted readers. But intercessory prayer was no glib "I will pray for you" kind of excuse to keep us from having to do something more for the benefit of others. Paul's intercession for the Colossians was foundational to the writing of the letter to them while he was confined to prison. That is, it prompted action for the benefit of the Colossians. So should it be for our intercession for others.

Now let's take a close look at the first part of this long Greek sentence as we examine verses nine through eleven.

9 Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, 10 περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπίγνωσει τοῦ θεοῦ, 11 ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν,

In English, this text declares the following:

9 Because of this, we also, from the day that we heard, do not cease praying for you and asking, so that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 in order to walk worthy of the Lord in full pleasing, in every good deed bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God, 11 in full power being enabled according to the might of His glory for complete endurance and long-suffering.

This long Greek sentence continues on through verse twenty. But everything in the sentence is built off the

main clause declaration in verse nine: "we do not stop praying for you and asking." The content of his asking God is spelled out in the lengthy "so that" (ἵνα) clause beginning in the middle of verse nine and extending through verse twenty. In this sermon, we will only consider the material through the first part of verse eleven. This because verses nine through eleven constitute a subdivision of the sentence.

From this text arises powerful motivation to engage in this kind of intercessory prayer. When we realize just what it is and how to do it, I believe we will eagerly seek to implement this kind of praying into our prayer life as a follower of Christ. Such praying is very important in Christianity. It will effect change and betterment to all who engage in it.

I. Make intercession a vital part of your praying. (v. 9a)

Explanation:

As the key to developing the sermon on this passage, we will look first at the main clause with the implications coming out of the Greek text. Then in point two, we will look at the secondary elements that build off the main clause.

Several insights emerge from careful examination of the main clause of this sentence. First, the stating of the first person pronoun ἡμεῖς, "we," at the beginning of the sentence adds significant emphasis on Paul and Timothy praying for the Colossians. This emphasis is heightened even further with the verb παύομεθα from παύω in the Greek

intensive middle voice function. It creates something of the sense "we ourselves personally do not cease." The emphatic point is made that these two Christian leaders seriously engage in intercession for the Colossians.

Next, the use of the Greek present tense in both the verb παύομεθα and the two Greek complementary

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participles προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, “praying and asking,” stress ongoing action. They consistently pray for the Colossians on a regular basis. The highlighted adverbial temporal relative clause ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, “from the day that we heard,” located between the subject and the verb, stresses the starting point of this ongoing intercession for the Colossians. It began immediately upon Epaphras making his report to Paul on the initial visit (cf. verses 4 and 8). From that time through the writing of the letter, every time Paul and Timothy remembered the Colossians in their daily prayers, intercession to God was included.

The prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο, “because of this,” at the beginning of the sentence affirms a powerful incentive for this kind of intercession. The “this” refers back to verse eight and Epaphras’ reporting of how much the Colossians loved and supported the apostle. Learning of their love for him prompted the apostle to intercede for them all the more.

The picture emerges very clear. Paul and Timothy dearly cared for the Colossians. In addition to thanking God for them, these two leaders passionately interceded to God on behalf of these Colossian believers. Repeatedly they held up these folks to God in intercession from the moment they learned about what God was doing in the Lycus River valley.

Illustration:

I’m sure all of us know of answered prayers that either we or someone we know have prayed in behalf of others. Out of my personal experience comes an illustration of how God answers our intercessions to him. My dearly beloved maternal grandmother was a devoted Pentecostal lady who prayed earnestly that God would call one of her sons into the Pentecostal Christian ministry. God answered that request rather ironically. He didn’t call any of her sons into Christian ministry. But he did call me, one of her grandsons, into a Baptist ministry! When she shared that with me years ago,

she had somewhat mixed feelings about how God had answered her petition to Him. But basically she saw my calling as God’s answer to her prayer. Her daughter and my mother served as minister of music at our Baptist church for over a quarter of a century, before her passing in 1975. She and our long time pastor, Bro. McQueary, led in over 1,500 funeral services before his passing in the 1940s through the 1960s. Additionally, mother met with countless numbers of young wives in the area to encourage and share her wisdom about building sound marriages during those days. This family counseling tendency continued through my sister, who, as a nationally known family therapist, and with a colleague, pioneered the divorce mediation option which now is attached to almost every family court in the US.

Application:

So the issue comes down to you personally and individually. Just how important is intercession to your prayer life? The example of Paul and Timothy challenges us to make intercession a major element of our praying. God blessed their intercession by granting their requests. And when we follow their example, we can expect God to hear and respond to our requests.

It was this kind of Christianity that dramatically changed the ancient world. And that brought Christianity to a majority status in the Roman Empire within two centuries of its beginnings. We live in a problem filled world just like that of Christians in the first few centuries after Christ. But they sought and found God’s transforming Presence that brought about deep improvements to their society. And the kind of intercessory praying illustrated here in our text played an important role in the transformation of their world.

II. Develop your intercession around the model of Paul and Timothy’s praying. (vv. 9b-11a)

Explanation:

Just what is intercessory prayer? The lengthy ἵνα clause

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beginning in the middle of verse nine and extending through verse twenty provides insight into the content of intercession to God on behalf of others. In this sermon, we will look at the major elements of it as found through the first part of verse eleven.

Remember that the contents of this intercession were customized to the understood needs of the Christians at Colossae in the fifth and sixth decades of the first Christian century. This becomes clear from comparing similar expressions of intercession found.

In Romans 1:9-10, Paul's intercession centers on asking God to make it possible for him to visit the Roman Christians for the mutual benefit of both. I seriously doubt that Paul anticipated the rather strange way that God answered that petition. In the intercessory prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul's petition to God is similar to the one found here in Colossians.² This is not surprising since the two letters were to be read together, along with Philemon, to the various congregations in the province of Asia. In Philemon 6, we find the intercession of Paul directed to the individual Philemon, who lived in Colossae.³ It focuses on God energizing the faith of Philemon.

In the intercessory prayer in Phil. 1:8-11, the central focus is that their love may abound with knowledge

²Eph. 1:17, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης, δώῃ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψει ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ,

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in His knowledge,"

³ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργῆς γένηται ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστόν,

"I pray that the sharing of your faith may be energized in the knowledge of all the good being done in us for Christ."

and full insight.⁴ In 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, the intercessory prayer is also introduced by ἵνα.⁵

From these examples of an intercessory prayer in the New Testament, we can clearly see customization of the specific contents to suit the needs of the targeted readership. Yet there is a general cohesiveness among all of these prayers. It was the need of God moving among the readers to deepen their understanding of how God wanted them to live and serve Him.

In the ἵνα clause of the prayer beginning in verse nine, the foundational request for the Colossians was that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will. This involved deepening their wisdom and spiritual understanding. Now the objective of this was not to make the Colossians smarter Christians. Rather, it was to enable them to live day by day in a manner worthy of the Lord (v. 11). This worthy walk is then defined from both the divine and the practical perspectives. On the one hand, it was to be a manner of living that made God happy with them. And on the practical side, four Greek participles define how this walk could be worthy: (a) καρποφοροῦντες, "being fruitful"; (b) αὐξανόμενοι, "growing"; (c) δυναμούμενοι, "being empowered"; and (d) εὐχαριστοῦντες, "giving thanks," in verses twelve through twenty. With either a Gentile pagan background or a Jewish legalistic background, the Colossians were changing their lifestyles drastically

⁴Phil. 1:9, Καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει,

"And this I pray, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight,"

⁵2 Thess. 1:11, Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσει τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,

"For this we also pray always for you that our God will make you worthy of His calling and will fulfill every resolve for goodness and deed of faith by His power."

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in their new Christian faith. It could successfully continue to happen only in a deepening knowledge of God's will for them. Given the presence of false teachers in the city with a conglomerate mixture of Jewish and Greek ideas on religion and living, they needed this filling from God through the Apostolic Gospel even more urgently.

Illustration:

How do you discover God's will for yourself? We live in a time with almost endless options. But most of them are dead ends leading to heresy. One of the worst options would be to turn to the internet and in a search engine to google "God's will."⁶

⁶List of 'resources' from Google search "God's will." Accessed August 30, 2023.

About 25,300,000 search results

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sonal desires. As you seek God's will, it's important to be sure you are fully open to whatever God... 2. Meditate on God's Word. The Bible can light the way as you choose your next steps. When you make a decision, it... 3. Spend focused ...

Videos

GODS WILL - Full Walkthrough - ROBLOX25:12
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www.biblestudytools.com › topical-verses › bibleBible Verses about God's Will - Bible Study Tools

Jeremiah 29:11. 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

1 Timothy 2:3-4. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 Thessalonians 5:18. 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:3. 3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

www.desiringgod.org › messages › what-is-the-will-ofWhat Is the Will of God and How Do We Know It? | Desiring God

Aug 22, 2004 · The Two Wills of God 1. God's Will of Decree, or Sovereign Will Let's see the passages of Scripture that make us think this way. First... 2. God's Will of Command

www.gotquestions.org › know-God-willHow can I know God's will for my life? - GotQuestions.org

Jun 26, 2023 · God's will is knowable and provable. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Images

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From this you would be very fortunate to find something that authentically helps you understand the will of God. A lot of time and effort would be wasted on coming to a false dead end in your quest. Even turning randomly to commentaries either in print form or digital form can be very risky. Many have been led into fundamentally false conclusions about God's will because of questionable sources for understanding the idea.

Application:

So how do you discover God's will? In a Protestant Christian perspective, the answer is rather simple. Go to the scriptures! The Bible is the sole authority for authentically determining God's will. But solid interpretive methods must be used in coming to such an understanding. And one very critical aspect of such methodology is sincere openness to the filling by God with the knowledge of His will.

Here in Colossians that discovery will bring you to the realization that God's will means a awareness of His desires which will put you into a spiritual lifestyle that reflects the character of your Heavenly Father. Now you must ask God for this knowledge. And it is vitally important that fellow believers are also asking God on your behalf. Christianity is a community of believers

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God's Will | San Francisco Book Review

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The One Thing We Really Want To Know: God's Will - Life Palette

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who encourage and pray for one another.

CONCLUSION

We have looked at intercessory prayer in Colossians 1:9-11a. Here we discover a beautiful example of how to do it from Paul and Timothy. Out of their love and devotion to the Christians at Colossae in the late 50s of the first Christian century, they affirmed their ongoing prayer that God will fill the Colossians with ever deepening knowledge of His will. This was essential to the continued spiritual health of the believers there. It was out of this deeper understanding that the Christians could live their daily lives in a manner that was pleasing to Almighty God.

I want to challenge you to develop your intercessory prayer life. Fellow Christians around you need your prayers for them. The spiritual health of the community of believers depends in part on your intercession for it. Make a commitment now to lift up your fellow believers to God for His blessings on their lives.

Observations about this sermon:

(1) The sermon takes the scripture seriously as the benchmark for determining how to be a good Christian.

(2) The focus of the sermon on intercessory prayer emphasizes just how important it is to the spiritual health of both the members and the community as a whole.

(3) The sermon seeks to link the ideas in the scripture text genuinely to specific needs in the targeted audience.

(4) Hopefully those hearing this message will be motivated to incorporate intercessory prayer more deeply into their prayer life.

5.0 Develop a Teaching Outline of the Text.

How can we teach this text to a Wednesday evening Bible study gathering? Essentially, the difference between a sermon and a teaching centers on the dom-

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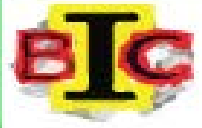
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inate orientation of the message. Is its primary orientation to inform its audience? If so it is teaching. Or, is its primary orientation to inspire an audience to do something? If so, it is preaching. To be sure, some overlapping between the two approaches does exist. And this particularly true in a religious setting. But in our contemporary western world, enough difference exists between them to justify slightly different approaches to presenting the text.

Particularly in modern American society, teaching a sacred text to a group usually implies a Bible study group meeting at church or in private homes. Characteristically, a lot more interaction between the leader and members of the group takes place. Often printed handouts of the material are given to the members. Increasingly, digital presentations such as a PowerPoint presentation serve as the main organizing structure of the teaching activity. Our teaching presentation of Colossians 1:9-11a will be structured around a series of PowerPoint slides. Some comments about each slide will follow each thumbnail graphic of the slide. These can be expanded from [the exegesis of Colossians 1:9-11a](#) in the Part One study.

Slide One:

INTRODUCTION

What is an intercessory prayer?



My assumption is that all of you in the group engage in prayer on a fairly regular basis.

The Bible illustrates and even names a variety of different kinds prayers.

1 Tim. 2:1-2,

δεήσεις προσευχάς έντεύξεις εύχαριστίας, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings

Phil. 4:6,

έν παντί τῆ **προσευχή** καί τῆ **δεήσει** μετά **εύχαριστίας** τὰ **αἰτήματα** ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν., in every **prayer** and **supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your **requests** be made known to God.

Our topic tonight is Intercessory Prayer. What is that?

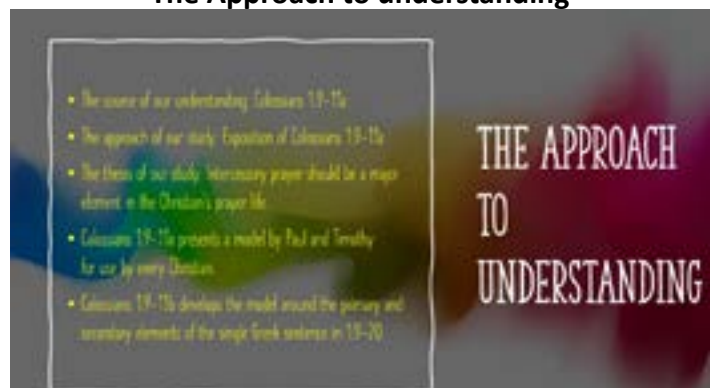
Propose a working definition:

Intercessory Prayer is:

[Wikipedia.org](#): "Intercession or intercessory prayer is the act of praying to a deity on behalf of others, or asking a saint in heaven to pray on behalf of oneself or for others."

Slide Two:

The Approach to understanding



We will treat the following:

Source of our understanding

The approach of our study

The thesis of our study

The Role of Colossians 1:9-11a

The layout of Colossians 1:9-11a

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Slide Three:

I. Intercessory Prayer as central in praying. v. 9a

A single Greek sentence runs from verse nine through verse twenty.

Point 1 of the outlines zeros in on the main clause in verse 9a.

ἡμεῖς... οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι...

“we...do not cease praying for you and asking...”

Slide Four:

What can we learn from this?

What can we learn from this?

- 1) Emphatic subject ἡμεῖς, “we,” highlights the importance of intercessory praying.
- 2) Present tense verb and participles stress the ongoing nature of intercessory praying.

ing nature of intercessory praying.

3) Adverbial relative clause ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, “from the day that we heard,” marks the starting point of intercession for the Colossians by Paul and Timothy.

4) The prepositional phrase Διὰ τοῦτο signals the reason for such praying being the hearing of the Colossians’ love for Paul (“this” goes back to verse 8).

5) The adjunctive role of the connector καὶ, “also,” affirms the intercessory praying as either a response to the Colossians’ praying for Paul (verse 8), or, as intercessory prayer in addition to thanksgiving for the Colossians (verses 3-8).

Slide Five:

II. Content of Intercessory Prayer

The long ἵνα, “so that,” clause defines the content of Paul’s intercessory praying for the Colossians. (verses 9b - 20)

It contains a primary assertion with extensive amplification.

Together these provide a clear picture of intercession about how the Christian live should work.

Six intercessory prayers are found in Paul’s letters with an amplified core assertion.

Rom. 1:10, δεόμενος εἶ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, “asking if

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in some way I may finally be blessed in God’s will to come to you.”

Ephesians 1:17, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς...δώῃ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως ἐν **ἐπιγνώσει** αὐτοῦ, “that God... may give you a spirit of wisdom and disclosure in **knowledge** of Him.”

Philemon 6, ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργῆς γένηται ἐν **ἐπιγνώσει** παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστόν, “so that the sharing of your faith may become energized in the **knowledge** of every good thing for Christ in us.

Philippians 1:9, Καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν **ἐπιγνώσει** καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει, and this I am praying, that your love may yet abound more and more in **knowledge** and full insight.

2 Thessalonians 1:11, Εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει, To this end we also pray always for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and will fulfill every good resolve and deed of faith by His power.

In each, the prayer request is for God to take action to enhance the Christian experience of the targeted readers. An increase in knowledge is dominantly included.

Slide Six:

Core Request for Divine Filling



The core request in Colossians 1:9 is ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will. Note is use of “knowledge” again in this prayer.

This increase in “knowledge” is to occur within ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, “in full wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

Slide Seven:

Goal of Request: worthy walk



The objective of this filling is worthy living.

περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου

“in order to walk worthy of the Lord”

“walk” is a metaphor for daily living.

Slide Eight:

Boundaries of this walk: 4 participles



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What constitutes a “worthy walk”?

Four participle phrase modifiers set forth the parameters of such a lifestyle:

καρποφοροῦντες, “bearing fruit,” (v. 10)

αὐξανόμενοι, “growing,” (v. 10)

δυναμούμενοι, “being enabled,” (v. 11)

εὐχαριστοῦντες, “giving thanks,” (vv. 12-20)

These traits enable us to make God very happy with us, εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, (v. 10)

Slide Nine:

CONCLUSION



What have we learned about intercessory prayer?

It’s important

It’s to be ongoing

It centers on God taking action in the lives of those we pray for.

That action revolves around increased understanding that shapes how we live day by day.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

Hopefully this study of Colossians 1:9-11 has expanded your understanding of the role of intercessory prayer in your life. The example of Paul and Timothy here is certainly worth incorporating into our own prayer life. Though they did not know the Colossian believers per-

sonally, they came to deeply care about them, largely through the reporting by Epaphras. Out of his sharing about what God had been doing in the Lycus River valley through the preaching of the Apostolic Gospel, they recognized a genuine moving of God there. The thriving Christian communities were making good progress in their Christian experience. Paul and Timothy deeply desired that this progress continue. The presence of some false teachers there represented a danger to this progress.

Thus these two leaders decided to write a letter of affirmation of these believers. Not only would it strengthen the bonds with these folks. But also it would seek to amplify the understanding of Christianity that has the Apostolic Gospel as its foundation. The goal was to keep the Colossian believers committed to that Gospel and to ward off the influences of these false teachers.

Often our world today is somewhat like their world in the middle of the first Christian century. Especially now in the post-modern era with the internet and the unchecked platform to advocate every imaginable screwball idea about religion, we need this divine filling with understanding urgently that Paul and Timothy prayed for the Colossians to acquire.

May God fill you with an expanding knowledge of His will for your life.