



Vídeo 2: English

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Storyboard



BIC1503
Exposition
Col. 1.9-11a



Graphics Files

Audio Files:
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WELCOME
to this exposition of Colossians 1:9-11a. After developing the historical meaning of this text in the previous exegesis of it, we now need to explore possible relevancy of this passage to our modern world. As scripture, this pasage speaks not just to those who first heard this letter read to them in Colosae. But it has something to say to succeeding generations of Christians across the centuries. Determining this message is the task before us.

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The strategy for making this determination will include the following actions:

- 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.

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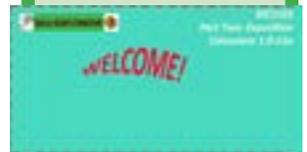
These actions aim not to make a universal determination to fit every modern situation. Such is impossible. Rather, the plan is to develop a hypothetical modern setting and to attempt to connect this passage to it. Thus, in this study we set forth an example of a good way for you to bridge the gap between the 'then' and 'now' aspects of the text. You then can develop your own application of the text to your unique ministry situation.

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One hermeneutical assumption behind this methodology is the principle of the analogy of scripture. That means this: The closer the modern setting is to the ancient setting of the text, the easier the application is. The less the two settings match, the more subjective is the proposed application. So the goal is to find a modern setting that matches the ancient setting as closely as possible. Of course, a total match is not possible, but we should be able to find modern settings that have some affinity with the ancient setting. Behind this is the passionate desire to hear God speaking to us through the words of the scripture text. Proper application of the text provides God with a clearer channel

Narrative

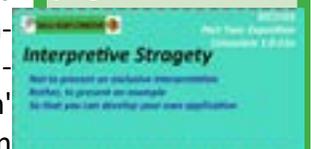
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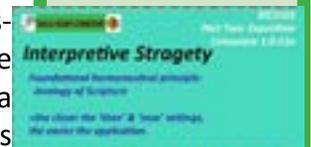
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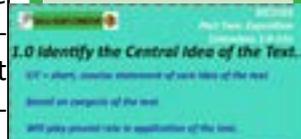
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through which to speak to us. Let's see what we can find.

1.0 Identify the Central Idea of the Text.

The CIT seeks to summarize in a short, concise sentence the core spiritual principle concluded from the exegesis of the passage. This will be the first of several summary statements that will be developed in this study. But this initial CIT will be foundational to all the other statements. It focuses on summarizing from the Part One study what the central idea of the text most likely was to those who first heard this text read to them.

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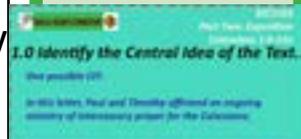
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Here is one possibility. It comes out of our previous exegesis of Colossians 1:9-11a.

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

In the exegesis of this text, we noted in verse nine the main clause of the long sentence in verses nine through twenty as "we do not cease praying for you and asking" (οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι). Then the core content of that request to God is stated in the subordinate hina clause (vv. 9b-20) as "that you may be filled with the understanding of His will (ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). The pivotal role of God's will shapes not only the content of the apostolic Gospel but reaches back to Paul's calling to be an apostle setting forth this message (v. 1).

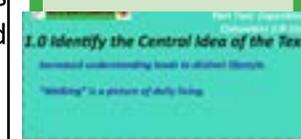
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Increasing understanding of God's will has as its central goal to enable one "to walk worthy of the Lord" (περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου). This ancient Jewish metaphor for living out one's life day by day is affirmed as the purpose behind being filled with an understanding of God's will.

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Note how this idea of a worthy walk is defined in verses 10b through 20. Here we focus only on verses ten and eleven. The rest will come in subsequent studies. First comes the vertical perspective. Such a walking will make God very happy with us (εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν). Implicit here is the image of God as our Heavenly Father, which is present in the contents of this letter. God desires to be proud of His children whose living reflects His character. He loves, so they love. His actions are holy, and

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so are theirs.

Second, four participle phrases define the horizontal (interpersonal) aspects in verses 10b-20. These are as follows: (1) "in every good work **bearing fruit**" (ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῶ καρποφοροῦντες, verse 10); (2) "and **growing** in the understanding of God" (καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ, verse 10); (3) "with full power **being empowered** according to the strength of His glory for full endurance and long-suffering" (ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν); and (4) "with joy **giving thanks** to the Father... (Μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ, verses 11b-20).

These four qualities define a life lived out in pleasing God. Each trait is qualified by prepositional phrase modifiers. The fourth participle on giving thanks is powerfully expanded in verses 11b-20 way beyond the first three participles. Perhaps, this stresses how important thanksgiving should be to the Christian.

2.0 Develop an exegetical outline of the text.

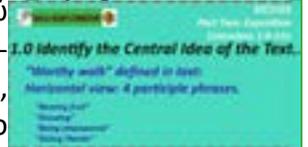
The above CIT statement captures this as the intercessory prayer ministry of Paul and Timothy for the Colossians. Out of this can an exegetical outline of the passage be developed. But the content of this very long Greek sentence in verses nine through twenty contains too much rich material for either a single sermon or teaching situation. The natural threefold thematic division of the sentence makes managing all the ideas more reasonable. Verses nine through the first part of verse eleven reflect the first subsection of the sentence. This will be our focus for this study.

The following outline can be developed under the heading "How should I pray for others?"

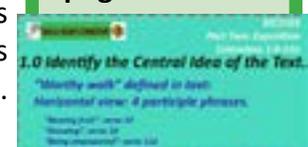
- I. Paul and Timothy lifted the Colossians to God by asking Him to act on behalf of the Colossians. (verse 9a)**
 - A. Their intercession was central to their prayers.
 - B. Their intercession was consistently ongoing.

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

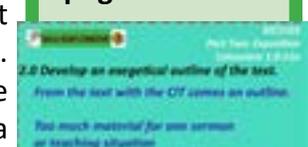
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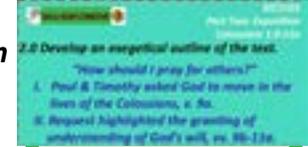
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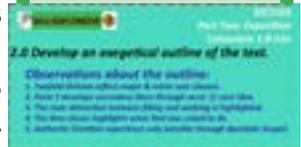
- A. The heart of their intercession was a divine filling.
- B. This filling was to produce a distinctive lifestyle.

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Now some observations about this outline:

1. The twofold division reflects first the main clause emphasis in the original Greek sentence, and second the secondary ideas built off the main clause.
2. The secondary ideas in point two found in verses 9b-20 are developed down through verse eleven around the core concept of divine filling.
3. The clear connection between "filling" and "walking" is highlighted.
4. The content of the hina clause highlights what Paul and Timothy asked God to do for the Colossians.
5. By contextual implication, the clear assumption is that such a Christian experience is only possible inside the Apostolic Gospel that Epaphras had learned from Paul and had preached to the Colossians.

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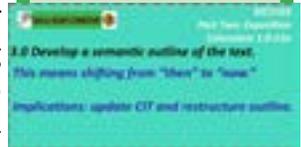


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3.0 Develop a semantic outline of the text.

At this point, the focus shifts from looking back at the text, the "then" meaning, to looking forward to applying the text to our world, the "now" meaning. This implies two actions: updating the CIT statement and restructuring the exegetical outline. The adoption of a relevant modern setting as the point of application must be made also.

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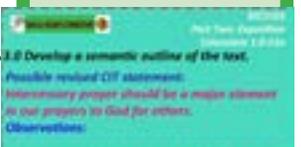
Here is a possible modified CIT statement, which is then followed by a semantic outline.

Intercessory prayer should be a major element in our prayers to God for others.

Some observations about this modified CIT statement:

1. Paul and Timothy serve as models for all Christians.
2. Intercessory prayer is not a duty just for spiritual leaders.
3. Intercessory prayer helps bring believers together.
4. Intercessory prayer in its basics is outlined in this text.

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Now for an outline based on this statement of text relevancy.

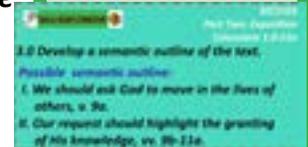
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I. We should lift other believers up to God asking Him to move in their lives. (verse 9 a)

- 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.

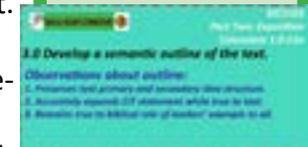


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Some observations about this outline include the following:

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1. It preserves the twofold emphasis in the text on primary and secondary ideas. Point one stresses the main point of the text. Point two develops the key secondary ideas in the text.
2. It accurately expands the idea of the above modified CIT statement while remaining true to the scripture text.
3. Although the applicational thrust moves from spiritual leaders to believers generally, it remains true to the idea of example across the scripture. That is, spiritual leaders are to set examples for all believers to follow.



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4.0 Develop a sermon brief of this text.

What is a sermon brief? In essence, it is a document containing all the preparatory work leading to the development of a full sermon manuscript text.¹ It contains a modified CIT statement and a sermon outline containing in a summary manner the three standardized elements of amplification: Explanation, Illustration, and Application. Below is one example that assumes the role of a sermon preached to the congregation during a Sunday morning worship service.

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1) The Sermon CIT:

This comes out of the first two CIT statements discussed above, but focuses on a specific setting for its delivery. Several decisions have been made about the orientation of the sermon. Its central theme is on the key importance of intercessory prayer to a healthy spiritual life. Rather than to just inform, the sermon is intended to inspire the audience to adopt a pattern of interces-

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

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sory prayer in their own lives. Here is the CIT statement for the sermon.

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

Some observations about the sermon CIT:
This CIT develops naturally out of the previous two CIT statements. It seeks to emphasize the importance of 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 a brief outline of a message based on the above CIT statement. It should lay the foundation for the subsequent complete manuscript of the sermon to be preached in the assumed setting.

INTRODUCTION

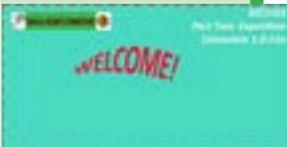
How often do you ask God to do something? As His children, we are given the privilege of petitioning our Heavenly Father. I suspect that you ask for something most of the time in your prayers. We really like that fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:11): τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον, "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 today what You know I need."

When one examines the issue of intercessory prayer across the New Testament, it becomes clear that overwhelmingly we are to ask God to bless others, rather than ourselves. This certainly is the emphasis in the Letter to the Colossians. Intercessory prayer is an important ministry to benefit others around us. Note the core clause of this long sentence in verses nine through twenty at the beginning: "We do not cease praying for you and asking" (οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, verse 9b). Then in the secondary ideas of this sentence we observe a model for how to conduct such praying. Hopefully, this inspires each of us to engage in this ministry as followers of Christ.

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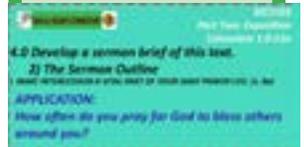




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Also, very noticeable from the first section of verses nine through eleven of this long Greek sentence is how seriously Paul and Timothy undertook this ministry. Although it mostly gets hidden in the translation of this Greek text, there is a very powerful emphasis on this activity in the language of the text. This was no glib promise of "I will pray for you" by these two Christian leaders. They deeply felt the potential of such a prayer ministry for strengthening the Christians at Colossae. That's how we must engage in intercessory prayer. It is not an excuse to do nothing in ministering to others. It is no waste of our time in a busy daily schedule. Rather, it is an important channel of divine presence that changes lives.

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Hear and see the original words of Paul and Timothy to the Colossians.

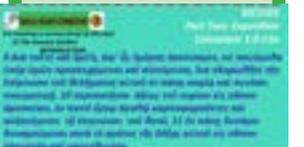
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9 Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, 10 περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ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

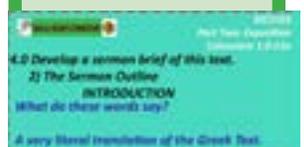
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What do these words say? Here is a very literal translation into English:

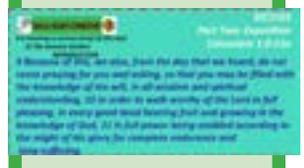
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9 Because of this, we also, from the day that we heard, do not cease praying for you and asking, so that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 in order to walk worthy of the Lord in full pleasing, 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

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and long-suffering.

When we understand these words clearly, I believe that we will eagerly seek to incorporate an intercessory prayer ministry into our Christian life. I want to stress two foundational points from this text. Intercessory prayer needs to be a vital part of our Christian life. And also the portrait of just what it is comes out of these verses. These points build on the primary and secondary ideas found in the original language text.

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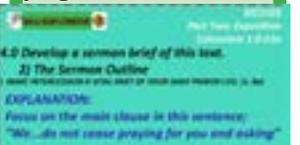
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I. MAKE INTERCESSION A VITAL PART OF YOUR DAILY PRAYER LIFE. (v. 9a)

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EXPLANATION:

First, we will look at the main clause of this sentence for insights into the importance of intercessory prayer: "We do not cease praying for you and asking" (ἡμεῖς...οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι). Several insights emerge. The stating of the subject of the verb with "We" at the beginning of the sentence is very emphatic. Then the use of the intensive function of the Greek middle voice, rather than the more usual active voice, adds more emphasis on the verbal action of not stopping. Additionally, the use of the Greek present tense form of both the verb ("do no cease") and the two participles ("praying and asking") strongly stresses continuous action. That commitment was made on the very day that Epaphras reported to Paul: "from the day that we heard." Together these features make the promise a very serious commitment by Paul and Timothy to the Colossians.



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ILLUSTRATION:

God does answer our prayers. But sometimes not as we expect. My maternal grandmother prayed earnestly for years that God would call one of her sons into a Pentecostal Christian ministry. But God's answer to that petition from Granny Brannon was to call me, a grandson, into a Baptist Christian ministry. As she shared with me, she wasn't really happy with God's answer. But she was thankful for His answering her prayer.

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APPLICATION:

So the issue becomes a personal, individual matter. How often do you pray for God to bless others around you? When Paul and Timothy first learned of the existence of these believers at Colossae, they made a serious commitment to pray daily for these Christians. This commitment should become our commitment as well!

II. DEVELOP YOUR INTERCESSION AROUND THE MODEL OF PAUL AND TIMOTHY. (vv. 9b-11a)

EXPLANATION:

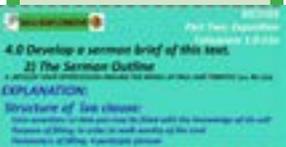
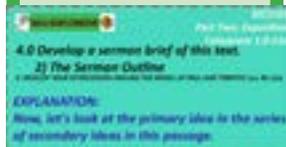
Now, let's look at the primary idea in the series of secondary ideas in this passage. This is the unusually long hina clause found in verse 9 and continuing through verse twenty. The Greek subordinate conjunction ἵνα, sets this idea up as the adverbial modifier of the second Greek participle αἰτούμενοι. Its role is to both define the goal of the asking, as well as its content. That is, why are Paul and Timothy asking, and what is it that they are asking? From this we learn what intercessory prayer is. To be sure, this is not the complete picture found in the Bible. But it sets forth a foundational understanding that is very important to know.

Notice how this hina clause is structured. Its core is "that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will" (πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). Fundamentally, to pray for others is to request God to fill them with understanding of His will. This comes in the context of expanded wisdom and spiritual understanding (ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ). But the purpose of this divine filling is "to walk worthy of the Lord" (περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου). This expanded wisdom enables us to see that ultimately God is concerned with how we live our daily lives. And this walk is distinctive. Worthy of the Lord signals that it reflects the character and behavior of our Heavenly Father. This is what pleases Him (εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν). The parameters of this walk are defined by four Greek participles that also modify the infinitive "to walk." They are "bearing fruit," "growing," "being empowered" and "giving thanks." Each participle has its own modifiers, especially the fourth one with the contents of verses twelve through twenty attached to it.

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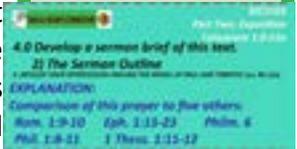
A comparison of this intercessory prayer in Colossians to the five other intercessory prayers in other letters of Paul will uncover a somewhat similar core but customized details that suit the needs of each group that the letters were sent to. Let me summarize them. In Romans 1:9-10, Paul's intercession asks God to allow him to travel to Rome in order to get acquainted with its members. In Ephesians 1:15-23, his request is for God to grant increased wisdom and revelation in their knowledge of God. In Philemon 6, he asks God to energize Philemon's faith. Then in Philippians 1:8-11, the request is for God to cause their love to abound increasingly in knowledge and insight. And in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Paul asks God to make them worthy of His calling and to fulfill every resolve to do good by His power. One very noticeable pattern is that the apostle's intercessory prayers focus on God expanding the recipients' spiritual understanding and the actions growing out of that understanding. Here is something important for us. Our concern for others in praying for them should focus on the expansion of their spiritual understanding that would lead to proper actions in their lives. The spiritual dynamic flows from God into the recipient's life and then outward in the service of the Gospel to others. This stands as fundamental and basic to intercessory prayer from the example of Paul. For the Colossians, this stood as a fundamental contrast to the self-centered gospel message coming from the false teachers in the city. In their message, the following of religious rules and regulations would create an inwardly flowing dynamic that made the individual the center of attention both from others and from God. For Paul, this was a dead end that would produce eternally disastrous consequences for anyone buying into such a message.

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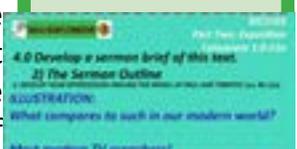
ILLUSTRATION:

What compares to such in our modern world? I would suggest the phony messages being broadcast over TV by most of the TV preachers of our day. Even when they talk of self-sacrifice, it mostly has the false twist of spiritual bragging. 'I sacrifice more than you do!' It falls prey to the basic Pentecostal mentality of praising my praise of God, rather than God Himself. We see this, especially in contemporary Christian music coming out of these sources.

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APPLICATION:

How do you know what to pray for in intercession? Go to the scriptures and discover the model for such praying there. Learn from Paul and Timothy's example in their promise to the Colossians. This pattern of praying has its origins in the Apostolic Gospel commissioned by God to the apostles. It is no man-made tradition. It is authentic and will lead to a spiritually healthy Christianity.

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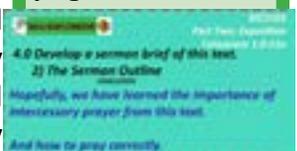


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CONCLUSION

From Colossians 1:9-11a, we have gained insight into one of the very important things that Christians should be involved in. And that is to regularly pray for others in a ministry of intercessory prayer. From the promise made to the Colossians in our text, Paul and Timothy underscore just how very important such a ministry is for a vibrant Christianity. And also how to do it properly for maximum spiritual benefit. Such compassionate concern flows out of knowledge of the particular needs of others. It centers on asking God to expand the spiritual understanding of those we pray for. This provides the basis for appropriate Christian action on their part.

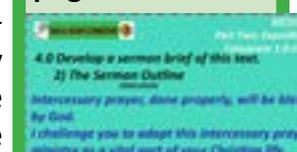
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When a church is made up of such praying Christians, that will be such an attractive place that lots and lots of people will want to be a part of it. The atmosphere in its worship will have heavenly tones dominating. Its ministry to others will unquestionably have the stamp of God's presence visually apparent. I challenge you to commit to a ministry of intercessory prayer. Help make our church all that it can be in the grace of our God.

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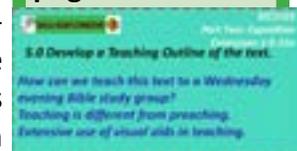


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5.0 Develop a Teaching Outline of the text.

How can we teach this passage to a Wednesday evening Bible study group in the church? Here the focus shifts more to informing than inspiring. We go further into the details of the scripture text in order to help our audience better understand what it is saying. Inspiration remains an objective, but not as central as in the sermon. In the contemporary American teaching setting, the creation of visual aids plays an important role in communicating information about a topic. Given that assumed setting for an audience, we will use a set of Power PointPresentation slides for this presentation. A downloadable copy of these slides is available at the BIC1503 homepage on cranfordville.com.

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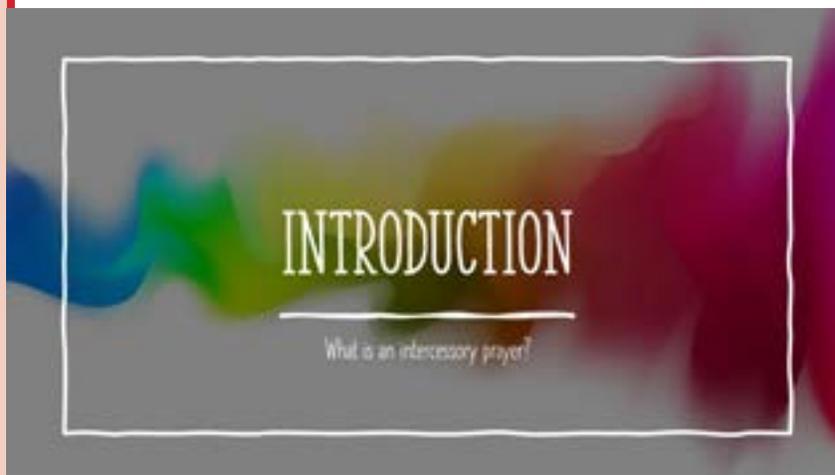


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Slide One: INTRODUCTION



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What is intercessory prayer? That's the question for our study tonight. My assumption is that at least most of you engage in praying on a somewhat regular basis. The Bible illustrates and even names a variety of different kinds of prayers:

1 Tim. 2:1-2,, **δεήσεις προσευχάς έντεύξεις εύχαριστίας,**

'supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings'

Phil. 4:6,, έν παντί τῆ προσευχῆ καὶ τῆ δεήσει μετὰ εύχαριστίας τὰ **αἰτήματα** ὑμῶν γνωριζέσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν,

"in every **prayer** and **supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your **requests** be made known to God." .

Tonight our focus is on intercessory prayer by the believer. What is that? Please share what you understand about it. [seek discussion from the group.]

We need a working definition of intercessory prayer. On Wikipedia.org, you will find this definition:

"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."

To be sure, this is about as broad a definition as is possible. It seeks to cover virtually all religions in which prayer exists. As a Protestant Christian in which the Bible plays a central role in such matters, I would especially take issue with the accuracy of the second part of this definition. Nowhere does either the Old or New Testaments advocate praying to saints in heaven. Intercessory prayer by believers means biblically that we ask God to move in the life of others according to His will. That seems simple enough. But there's a lot more involved when one begins

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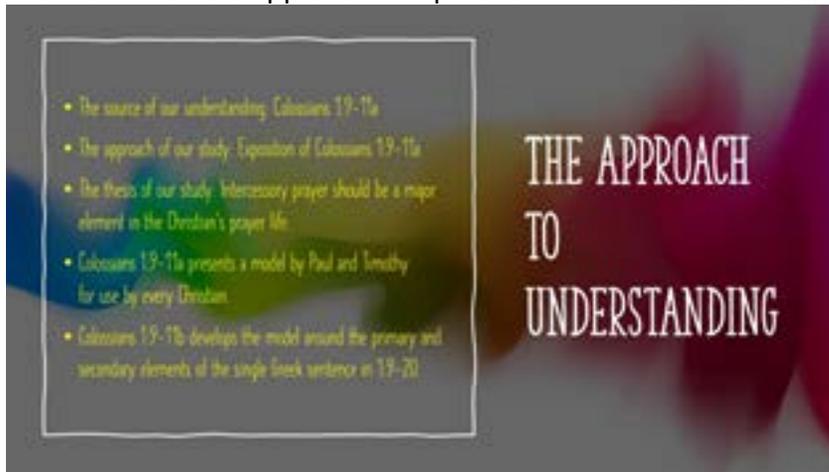
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digging into scripture.

Slide Two: THE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING

How can we best approach a topic such as this? Let me sketch



out our study of Colossians 1:9-11a. We will treat the following:
Source of our understanding: the original text of Colossians.
The approach of our study: a detailed analysis of the text.
The thesis of our study: 1:9-20 is a key passage for this topic.
The Role of Colossians 1:9-11a: 1st sub-section of the sentence.
The layout of Colossians 1:9-11a is seen best through a diagram.
Tackling a topic such as intercessory prayer in the hopes of correct understanding necessitates a carefully laid out methodology. This particular topic is sufficiently broad that a single study would never do it justice. Thus our focus will be on one passage found in Colossians 1:9-20. In this single sentence in the original Greek text, Paul and Timothy present a foundational expression of their promise for intercessory prayer for the Christians at Colossae in the mid-first century world. And yet such a long sentence has more material in it than can be covered in a single class period. So we will look at the first of the three natural sub-sections of this sentence in verses nine through eleven.



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Slide Three:

I. INTERCESSORY PRAYER AS CENTRAL

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First, note this very long sentence in the original Koine Greek letter dictated to Timothy by Paul. It actually is the second sentence in the letter. The first sentence is 1:3-8 and is followed by this one in 1:9-20. With ancient Greek and Latin as foundational languages to almost every modern Western language, there is some grammar overlap between the two sets of languages. One clear overlap is the use of grammar clauses to set forth primary and secondary ideas in a sentence expression.

In Colossians 1:9-20, the main clause that serves as the foundation for the entire sentence is "We...do not cease praying for you and asking" (ἡμεῖς.. οὐ παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι) in verse nine. Although mostly hidden by modern translations, this stated promise by Paul and Timothy to the Colossians is expressed in extremely emphatic terms in the original Greek text.

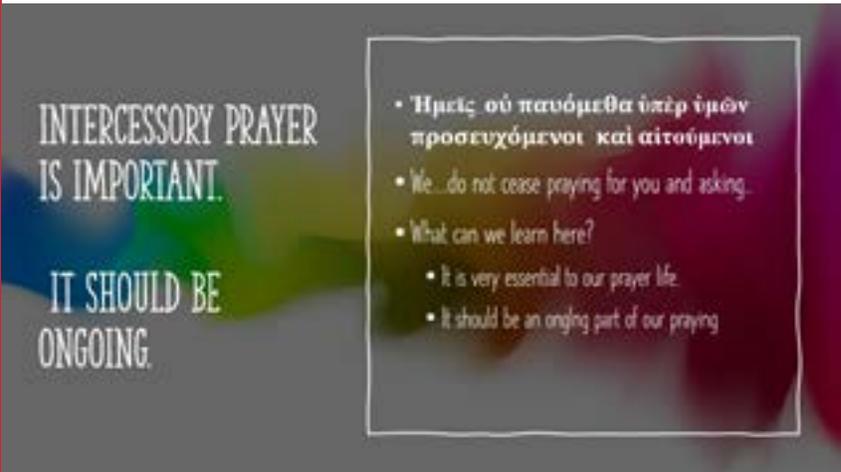
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Slide Four:

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.
- 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

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such praying being the hearing of the Colossians' love for Paul ("this" goes back to verse 8).
5) The adjunctive role of the connector και, "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)

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Slide Five:

II. Content of Intercessory Prayer

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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 how the Christian life should work in intercession.

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Six intercessory prayers are found in Paul's letters with an amplified core assertion. In Romans 1:9-10, Paul's intercession asks God to allow him to travel to Rome in order to get acquainted

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with its members. In Ephesians 1:15-23, his request is for God to grant increased wisdom and revelation in their knowledge of God. In Philemon 6, he asks God to energize Philemon's faith. Then in Philippians 1:8-11, the request is for God to cause their love to abound increasingly in knowledge and insight. And in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, Paul asks God to make them worthy of His calling and to fulfill every resolve to do good by His power. One very noticeable pattern is that the apostle's intercessory prayers focus on God expanding the recipients' spiritual understanding and the actions growing out of that understanding. Here is something important for us. Our concern for others in praying for them should focus on the expansion of their spiritual understanding that would lead to proper actions in their lives.

Slide Six:

Core Request for Divine Filling



The core request in Colossians 1:9 is ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “so that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Note the use of “knowledge” again in this prayer. This increase in “knowledge” is to occur within ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῆ, “in full wisdom and spiritual understanding.” This does not mean that God makes us smarter than other people. To the contrary, it asserts that we increasingly see the world around us along with others from God's perspective. It is **His knowledge** that fills us. Then as His children, we reach out to that world the same way that our Heavenly Father reaches out to it.

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Slide Seven:

The Goal of Intercessory Prayer

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When we ask God to fill others with His knowledge, what purpose lies behind such a request? The text asserts that such a filling has the object of enabling them to walk worthy of the Lord (περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου, verse 10). The metaphor of walking was a common ancient Jewish picture of living one's daily life. "As the Lord wants is an adverbial phrase 'worthily of the Lord,' that is, in a manner that is required by their status as the Lord's people (see 'to walk ... worthily of God' in 1 Thess 2:12). JB has 'the kind of life which the Lord expects of you'; Phps 'your lives ... may bring credit to your master's name'; SpCL 'that you conduct yourselves as people should who belong to the Lord'; GeCL 'so to live as to bring honor to the Lord.'" [A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Colossians].

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Slide Eight:

The Boundaries of this Walk

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What constitutes a “worthy walk”? Four participle phrase modifiers set forth the parameters of such a lifestyle:

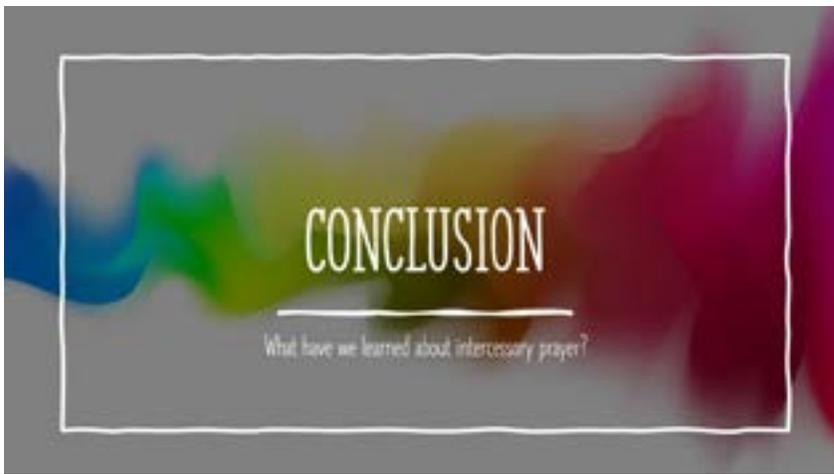
- καρποφοροῦντες, “bearing fruit,” (v. 10)
- αὐξανόμενοι, “growing,” (v. 10)
- δυναμούμενοι, “being enabled,” (v. 11)
- εὐχαριστοῦντες, “giving thanks,” (vv. 12-20)

Notice the horizontal / vertical dimensions of these two sets of participle phrases. Bearing fruit and growing stress what is observable to people around us. Being enabled and giving thanks focuses on our upward reach toward God. These traits enable us to make God very happy with us, εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, (v. 10)

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Slide Nine:

CONCLUSION



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What have we learned about intercessory prayer? My hope is that at least the following insights have been picked up from this study:

Intercessory prayer should be a major aspect of our prayer life. It is to be ongoing, rather than spasmodic or flippant. It should center on asking God to move powerfully in the lives of the people we pray for. That divine action should be the expanding of God's knowledge in the lives of those we pray for. Such increased knowledge will then lead to a lifestyle that brings honor to God.



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SUMMARY CONCLUSION

Colossians 1:9-11a pushes us deeper into the amazingly rich thought world of the letter. This passage begins the transition from the first two texts in 1;1-2 and 1:3-8, which have something of an introductory function at the letter. Now with this very long second sentence of 1:9-20, we are moving beyond anticipated topics which have been signaled in the beginning of the letter. Increasingly, the elaboration of those topics and even the introduction of new ones lies before us. My prayer is that we can delve into those expanded discussions and gain much greater insights into this Apostolic Gospel, both preached at Colossae and set forth as the basis of our entire Christian experience of salvation.

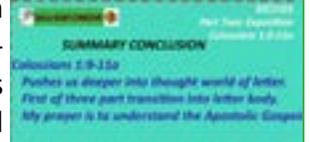
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