

# The Marks of the Mature Christian (Part One)

## Examining Paul's Pastoral Prayer in Colossians 1:9-14

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**Introduction:** Marked for life...

Colossians 1:9-14 "For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Overview of the Series: The Marks of the Mature Christian

- #1 A Full Life...that is filled with the life-changing knowledge and wisdom to follow God's perfect will for my life
- #2 An Exemplary Life...that walks and talks so much like Jesus that others want to imitate me.
- #3 A Pleasing Life...that delights God by doing anything He calls me to do when He calls me to do it.
- #4 A Fruitful Life...that never stops working and serving the King of Kings.
- #5 A Growing Life...that increases daily in the knowledge of God.
- #6 A Powerful Life...that demonstrates God's strength and not my own.
- #7 A Steadfast Life...that endures life's circumstances without giving up.
- #8 A Patient Life...that refuses to let people's shortcomings get in the way of my Christ-likeness.
- #9 A Thankful Life...that continuously expresses praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for me.

### Now in Part One

#### Distinguishing Mark #1 A Full Life

...a life that is filled with the life-changing knowledge and wisdom to follow God's perfect will for my life.

**Colossians 1:9 "For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"**

Knowledge = Greek: Epignosis: epi (upon) + gnosis (knowledge) = knowledge upon knowledge  
Biblical epignosis is the kind of knowledge that leads to a dramatic change in attitude and action

Titus 1:1 "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge (epignosis) of the truth which is according to godliness . . ."

#### The Goals of a Leader

- To be a bond-servant of God • To be a slave with a purpose • To be a faith-builder • To be an epignosis-builder
- Effective servant leaders are those who know they were called by God to be faith-builders and knowledge-builders

Ephesians 4:13 "...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (Greek: epignosis) of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

Colossians 1:28-29 "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

Colossians 1:9 "...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will ..."

#### God's General Plan for Every Believer

1. It is God's will that we be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:16-18)
2. It is God's will that we be pure (1 Thess. 4:3-7)
3. It is God's will that we be submissive to authority (1 Pet. 2:13-15)
4. It is God's will that we be willing to suffer (1 Pet. 3:17)
5. It is God's will that we be thankful for our circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18)
6. It is God's will that we know His will (Eph. 5:17)

Colossians 1:9 “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding . . .”

**1. A Spirit-led wisdom (Greek: sophia)**

— that enables us to gather the principles from the Word of God and the godly counsel of others.

**2. A Spirit-led understanding (Greek: sunesis)**

— that allows us to specifically apply those principles to all of life’s situations.

**How do we get specific wisdom and understanding?**

- We must know the God of wisdom — personally (Prov. 1:7; 9:10)
- We must pray for His wisdom — regularly (James 1:5-8)
- We must search for His wisdom — heartily (Job 28; Prov. 2:1-11)

“The unexamined life is not worth living” (Socrates)

**Distinguishing Mark #2      An Exemplary Life**

**...that walks and talks so much like Jesus that others want to imitate me.**

**Colossians 1:9-10 “. . . so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”**

- Greek philosophy: knowledge = wisdom    • Biblical theology: knowledge + action = wisdom

"The end of all knowledge is conduct." (Lightfoot)

- Ephesians 4:1 “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...”
- Philippians 1:27 “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...”
- Colossians 2:6 “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him...”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12 “...walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

**We will know we are walking worthy when we...**

- walk in humility (Eph. 4:1-3)
- walk in purity (Rom. 13:13, KJV)
- walk in contentment (1 Cor. 7:17)
- walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7)
- walk in good works (Eph. 2:10)
- walk differently from the world (Eph. 4:17-32)
- walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
- walk in the light (Eph. 5:8)
- walk in wisdom (Eph. 5:15)
- walk in truth (3 Jn. 3-4)

Such a walk is quite contagious — a faith worth imitating .

1 Corinthians 4:16 “Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

**Concluding Challenge:**

Praying through Colossians 1:9-14



## DIGGING DEEPER

1. There are times when God's will seems mysterious to us. Perhaps this is because God's infinite nature is incomprehensible to finite creatures. (Read Isaiah 55:8-9 & Romans 11:33). Or maybe it's because God wants us to walk by faith. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:7 & Hebrews 11:6). If God explained everything to us, we wouldn't need faith.

On the other hand, there are times when God's will is crystal clear. The Bible teaches that we *can* and *should* know the will of God. (See Ephesians 5:17 & Romans 12:1-2).

Read the following verses and identify some of the different ways God reveals His will to us:

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- James 1:5
- Jeremiah 33:3
- Romans 8:26-27
- Proverbs 15:22 & 19:20
- Psalm 37:4 & Philippians 2:13
- Philippians 4:6-7

## TAKING IT HOME

1. Oswald Sanders once said: "God is more willing to guide us than we are to be led." Similarly, Chuck Swindoll stated: "I'm now convinced that the real issue is not so much 'What does the Lord want me to do?' As it is, 'Am I willing to do it, once He makes it clear?'"
  - Is there an area of your life where you are afraid to know the will of God?
  - Is there a situation in your life where you want God to reveal His will to you?
  - What did you learn this week that might help you to better understand the will of God?
2. Pastor Jim challenged us to pray Paul's *power prayer* for the members of our family, for our church, and for fellow Christians in other parts of the world.
  - How would you describe the health of your prayer life right now?
  - What could you do this week to spend more time in prayer?