

The Desire of God for His People.

by David A. DePra

[Back to the Goodnews](#)

For this cause we also, since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. (Col. 1:9-11)

In this passage, Paul shares what he prayed for the Body of Christ. He expresses his desire for the Body of Christ – which is reflected in his continual prayer. But because this is the inspired Word of God -- meaning that God inspired Paul to record it -- we can be sure that Paul is not only praying according to the will of God, but he is reflecting God's desire for the Body of Christ. Thus, if you want to know the will of God, spiritually speaking, all you need to do is read these inspired prayers that are according to that will.

This prayer is almost exactly the same prayer that Paul recorded in his epistle to the Ephesians:

I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know... (Eph. 1:15-18)

So, we see that Paul prayed that God would give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself. And then tells us WHY he prayed this: That the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened – so that we would KNOW. Know what? Know all of the eternal purpose of God. But that knowledge is based upon first seeing God Himself through Christ. This is the key to all discernment and spiritual understanding.

The ONLY way in which the eyes of our understanding can be enlightened is by coming into an inward realization of Jesus Christ. This alone is true SEEING. It alone is the way in which the eyes of our understanding can be enlightened – we have to see the LIGHT HIMSELF.

Human beings have brains, and some brains are very brilliant. Some people have great IQs. Some people have a great deal of human perception. All of that is possible within the natural man of a human being – of one who is merely born in Adam. Indeed, a lot of what is possible from out of natural man can be practiced in the church – can be mistaken for true spiritual wisdom.

But Paul is saying that you and I need a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Truth and Jesus Christ is the Light.

Nothing and no one is able to open our eyes to God and to His eternal purposes -- let alone to any temporal purpose He might be working in our lives.

This is really a wake-up call; it ought to bring us face to face with some vital questions. For instance, if these prayers reflect the heart and purpose of God -- so important that God recorded them as part of his inspired inerrant word -- then is it our prayer? If not, then why not? Should we not be governed by the Truth expressed in the prayers of Paul as the heart of God?

I would submit that most of us hardly ever discuss these Truths. They certainly do not occupy a central place in our Christian teaching and practice. Indeed, many of us have been completely BLIND to what Paul is praying and teaching. Why? We are blind to the outcome of knowing Jesus Christ because we are blind to Christ Himself. We are blind to the Truth of Christ in us -- and therefore blind to the revelation that comes from knowing Him.

That may be shocking to many of us. But it is the Truth.

The Inward Realization of the Person of Christ

Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 are not the only places in the Word of God that tells us what we ought to pray and be occupied with as the God's purpose. Take Galatians 4:19, for example:

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)

Paul says he travails as a woman about to give birth -- that we might come into an inward realization and expression of Jesus Christ -- which is what the word FORMED means in the Greek language. That's Paul's great travail. Is it OUR travail? Does this great Truth and purpose of God of Christ within -- of our coming to realize Him -- does this great reality occupy our churches, prayers, teaching, sermons, Sunday school classes, seminary education, and preaching? No, it does not. In fact -- and this is NOT a criticism -- it is simply a fact -- that most of us have little frame of reference as to what Paul is talking about. Most of us, even if we are able to give intellectual asset to what Paul is teaching, have not actually experienced Christ in this way. We have NOT received a spiritual of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. We do NOT know Him. Thus, our minds are NOT renewed according to Christ -- and so we are blind of so much else.

Paul is talking about the very essence and reality of Christianity: Christ in the believer -- and God's desire that we actually experience and realize the Christ who dwells in us. This is God's purpose for each believer -- it is why Paul prayed and travailed. So we need to ask again: Is this what governs our personal lives and the life of the church? If not, then WHY NOT?

I'm just asking the question because we need to ask it. We need to come to terms with these things. Why do we think that in most cases today churches have very little life about them? Why is Christianity, as a whole, not only on television, but in the local churches -- completely void of the foundational Christian reality of CHRIST IN US?

One of the problems here is that people will look at what they believe and what their church teaches and accept THAT as the reality of Christ. Many of us know nothing beyond our religion about Christ. This is a great blindness.

Others may say, "Well, my church is alive." Well, I hope it is, but what I hope what you mean by that isn't emotionalism. And I hope what you mean by that isn't mere doctrine ABOUT Christ – dead religion supported by real Bible verses. No, a church is alive ONLY if Christ is alive in his people. He is THE LIFE.

But there is more. If a church is alive -- because Christ is in His people -- where the life of Christ is moving in a church through those people -- then you're also going to have LIGHT. The people will KNOW HIM. Minds will be renewed according to Christ. People will be emancipated from sin, from self, and from religion. They will begin to experience the Living Christ. And if this is the case, then our purpose for living will be that which is declared in the the prayers and teaching of Paul. We will travail over what God travails over. We will desire what God Himself desires.

All is In Christ

Paul prayed that believers might be, "Filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Now, anybody that studied New Testament Greek and looked up some of these words will tell you that the word, "knowledge," as in the phrase, "knowledge of God," isn't just talking about an intellectual knowledge. Neither does it refer to emotional feelings. Rather, "the knowledge of God," speaks of an experiential knowledge. So Paul is praying that we would increase in our experiencing of Jesus Christ -- an experiencing of God that will renew our minds according to the Truth – and result in a life and a walk that is governed by Christ.

That phrase, in verse 9, "Filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," is absolutely astounding as to the impacts. It means to see things as God sees them – but to do so with His heart attitude. This will obviously require much change and adjustment IN US – in our relationship with God Himself. But that is nevertheless the goal. God wants us to be FILLED with the experiential knowledge of His will. This is only possible through a personal realization of Christ Himself.

We have to continually repeat this Truth: We cannot know the will of God as a THING apart from knowing Jesus Christ. We cannot have the attitude of God as a THING apart from knowing Jesus Christ. And we cannot know Jesus Christ unless we are brought into an openness and surrender to Him – under the work of the Cross. It is vital that we understand that all that God has to give is already given in His Son. Thus, if we want to experience the will of God, and the heart of God, and if we want to know His purposes, we MUST experience the Christ who dwells in us.

In HIM dwells all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col. 2:3)

Christ, Our Life and Light

Christ, Our Life (Col. 3:4)

Paul gives us one great impact that our experiencing of Jesus Christ ought to have upon us:

That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

Note that: The impact of being filled with the knowledge of God; of being filled with the knowledge of His will, is that we might, "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

Again we see that the inward realization of Jesus Christ is not merely intellectual knowledge, emotional knowledge, or doctrinal knowledge. No. It is a spiritual knowledge that is experienced in Christ. This will renew our minds and result in His life being manifested in and through the believer.

Have we realized Christ to the point where we actually know Him AS our life? The Bible makes it clear that God does not merely give us a THING called, "eternal life" -- because Jesus died. No. God gives us Christ Himself -- Christ IS our life. If we have been crucified with Him, then we have been raised with Him in resurrection union. We are, "joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17) This is nothing more than CHRIST IN US. The life that needs to emerge is one that is, "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

If, as it says in Col. 3:4, Christ IS our life, then our walk cannot be divorced from Christ. Indeed, it ought to be OF HIM through us. Believers are supposed to walk IN CHRIST – which means that our life ought to be an expression of HIM.

Can we see that the only way Christ can actually BE our life – and that our walk can reflect Him, is if we are set free from OUR life. We cannot be governed by our natural man. We cannot be lord of ourselves. All of that must progressively come under the Cross – we must decrease so that He can increase.

Jesus plainly stated this Truth to His disciples:

If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

If we lose OUR lives to Christ we will find HIM AS OUR LIFE – for He is the only life that is of God. But along with Christ as our life there will come a growing realization of Christ as our LIGHT. John the apostle wrote:

In Him was LIFE, and that LIFE was the LIGHT of men. (John 1:4)

Not to make a religious formula out of it – because that would get us nowhere – but this Truth can be stated quite simply:

Lose our life = Christ as our Life = in His life is light.

This is just another way of seeing that Christ is THE LIFE and that Christ is THE LIGHT. He is a Person – in Whom is all.

The whole point is that as we lose ourselves to Christ and discover Him, we are going to have our minds renewed according to Him – resulting in progressively being, “filled with the knowledge of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” – and this will enable us to, “walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing.”

This agrees completely with the passage from Ephesians 1 wherein Paul prayed that we might be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ – which would enlighten our eyes and enable us to know.

Can we see that Christ Who IS the life of the believer is the source of all? That God has freely given all that He has to give IN His Son? (Rom. 8:32) And that ALL discernment for the believer is the outcome of knowing the Person of Jesus Christ – in an experiential way? Yes. Christ is our life and our light. The two cannot be separated because Christ is a Person. As Jesus Himself said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3)

Increasing in the Knowledge of God

Being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

What exactly does it mean to, “be fruitful in every good work?” Obviously, what we do MUST rightly represent Christ. But whether what we do seems big or small, Christ must be brought in; Christ must be manifested. This need not appear to be miraculous or spiritual. It simply needs to be of Christ. The FRUIT will follow.

FRUIT is always the manifestation of Christ. Christ is the Vine and believers are the branches. The branches cannot bear fruit of themselves, but must live from out of the Vine. The fruit produced will be of HIS LIFE through the branches. Our works, indeed, our presence, needs to express Christ.

To, “increase in the knowledge of God,” is not a matter of studying the Bible in order to learn doctrine, Bible facts, or church history. None of that is bad, of course, but to increase in the knowledge of God is a matter of growing to realize Jesus Christ.

Increasing in the knowledge of God will renew our minds. But this will have a great impact. That which is contrary to Christ will be exposed. We will need to repent and be adjusted. This will, as Paul writes, result in the believer, “being fruitful in every good work.”

So we see that there is a progressive growth. We increase in experiencing Him; knowing Him. This makes our works fruitful because they will honor Him. In turn, those works, if done by faith in Truth, will open us for a greater knowledge of Him.

Sure. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with Him, and the Blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin." (I John 1:7)

The Same Truth

Many of the same Truths found in Colossians 1 are found in Ephesians 1:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray for you, that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. (Col. 1:9-11)

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. (Eph. 1:16-19)

You will also notice that BOTH of these passages describe what Paul prayed for the church – meaning that this is the desire of God for His people. So we ask again: Are these prayers our prayers? Is this our desire for ourselves and for others?

Christ, the Power of God

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness.

If we come into a greater knowledge of Christ – which is always experiential knowledge – our minds will be renewed. As we have seen from Ephesians 1, the inward revelation of Jesus will result in the eyes of our understanding being enlightened so that we might KNOW. (Eph. 1:17-18) And one thing we will know is, "the greatness of His power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power." (Eph. 1:19).

TRUTH always strengthens because Truth reveals Christ and increases our faith. Sometimes we ask God for more faith – we say, as did the disciples, "increase our faith." We might think that God needs to simply wave His hand and somehow infuse in us greater faith. No. Faith does not work that way. If we desire an increase of faith we ought to pray for an increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ – the One in Whom our faith must rest. Then we will strong IN THE LORD and in the power of HIS might. (Eph. 6:10) We will be, "strengthened with all might, according to HIS glorious power." (Col. 1:11)

Take note that the Bible never teaches that God will give us a THING called, "power," or make us strong. No. What God does is reveal that we are utterly weak – so that we might rest in Christ AS our strength. Christ is the power of God.

The LORD [is] my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD [is] the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27:1)

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead. (II Cor. 1:8-9)

[Back to the Goodnews](#)