

Receiving and Pursuing Paul's Resolutions

Colossians 1:9-18

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⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

1. Introduction

- In a sermon on “Enoch walked with God,” Dr. Campbell Morgan gave the following illustration:
 - A little child gave a most exquisite explanation of walking with God.
 - She went home from Sunday School, and the mother said, “Tell me what you learned at school.”

- And she said: “Don’t you know, Mother, one day they went for an extra long walk, and they walked on and on, until God said to Enoch,
- “You are a long way from home; you had better just come in and stay.”
- And he went.”
- So many think that walking with God is really a matter jus this simple.
 - Well, it IS simple, but it is NOT childlike...
 - Let’s think, this morning, about just how it is that we think over how we can pursue God this coming year...
- This is NOT to imply that the past year has been a failure or a false profession...
 - Rather, as with all believers, I think you’ll agree that there is room for us to examine ourselves and see just what it is that we can do to draw closer to the Lord and pursue Him even MORE energetically...
- Wars Since 3600 B.C.
 - According to the *Canadian Army Journal*, a former president of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences, aided by historians from England, Egypt, Germany, and India came up with some fantastic figures and findings:
 - Since 3600 B.C. the world has known only 292 years of peace. During this period there have been 14,531 wars, large and small, in which 3,640,000,000 people have been killed. The value of the destruction would pay for a golden belt around the world 156 kilometers (97.2 miles) in width and 10 meters (about 33 feet) thick.
 - Since 650 B.C. there have been 1,656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war. The remainder have ended in the economic collapse of the countries concerned.
- Sometimes I feel like my own Christian life is somewhat like this...
 - I struggle with the Lord, not in any detrimental sense, but because I fail to obey and pursue Him in the fashion that I ought...

- I suspect that you are much the same
- What can we do to do away with those “wars” that afflict us and cause us to displease the Lord?
 - The first thing is...

2. *To Be Filled with The Knowledge of His Will (Col 1:9)*

*⁹For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask **that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

- One of the interesting things that gives us bit of context for this passage is that knowledge and wisdom were offered by false teachers in Colossae.
 - Paul’s point here is that the one’s to whom he is speaking will listen to and take in ONLY that which comes from God!
 - “Spiritual” speaks of that which is given by God’s Holy Spirit.
 - It is imperative - for ourselves and for those for whom we Pray, that this is a part of our prayer.
 - There is much around us and strong temptation and reason for us to give in to and thus take in false knowledge

A. **We should note the petitions made here.**

- Paul’s prayer for the Colossians was continuous, (9 (cf. 3)).
 - The apostle intercedes for five things we ought to echo here:
 - Both for ourselves and for others:
1. *...for full knowledge of God’s will and spiritual perception,*
9;

...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding

2. ...that this knowledge might be translated **into**
- a **'worthy' form** of life (cf. Eph 4:1),
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4 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, (Ephesians 4:1)*

- **productive of good works** (cf. Eph 2:10);
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¹⁰ *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)*

3. ...that further knowledge might be granted, ¹⁰;
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¹⁰ *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God;** (Colossians 1:10)*

4. ...that spiritual power might be given, Col. 1:11a;
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¹¹ ***strengthened with all might**, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*

5. ...that Christian virtues such as patience and endurance might be exercised with joyfulness, 11b.
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¹¹ *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, **for all patience and longsuffering with joy;** (Colossians 1:11b)*

- Note that it is not JUST that they would ENJOY such qualities
 - BUT that these are the END that God desires...
 - It is in this way, in part, that we serve and demonstrate who and what we are as His children.
- We're going to think a bit about how we need to pursue these wonderful things that Paul commend to the Colossians.
 - They all start and are rooted in the "Knowledge of His Will" (1:9)

- This is, perhaps the most significant and important of the “resolutions” we can draw from what Paul said to the Colossians here.

B. To Be Filled with All Wisdom (Col 1:9)

*⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will **in all wisdom** and spiritual understanding;*

- For the service of the Lord, knowledge is not sufficient - we must ask the Lord to give us WISDOM as well.
 - Notice a couple of things here:
 1. The Wisdom spoken of is consistent with the knowledge of the Will of God
 2. This will is manifold and very complex at times... hence we must seek God that we be filled with the knowledge of His will in ALL wisdom, not just portions or applications of that knowledge.
 3. Both this knowledge and wisdom are linked to spiritual understanding.
 - “Understanding” speaks of insight, mainly into what lies under and can be seen as the cause of motivator of the matter at hand.
- And so we should pray for ourselves and each other, that we would be filled with:
 1. The knowledge of His will (
 2. That it would be a full knowledge;
 3. That it would be a knowledge that works out into actions;
 4. That it would be a knowledge that leads to further knowledge;
 5. That it would be a knowledge that leads to spiritual power and ability;
 6. And that this would be a knowledge that produces the various virtues of Christian living

Further, we should be sure and pray...

3. To Walk Worthy of The Lord (Col 1:10)

¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- This one of the more famous verses in this section of Colossians
- A couple matters ask for our attention at this point and should be made a part of our prayer lives for self and those around us:

A. It builds on the above section

(“...that you may...”)

B. It involves both enablement and compelling desire

(“...that you MAY walk...”)

- To “walk” was a Jewish metaphor for the way in which one can/does conduct oneself.
 - It corresponds to the Hebrew term *halak*.
 - The rabbis had an entire oral tradition, later written down (especially in the Mishnah and the Talmuds), called *Halakah*, that guided them in their behavior.

C. It Speaks of both a desire and an enablement to be worthy of the Lord

...that you may walk worthy of the Lord...

- As a former rabbi, Paul calls believers “to walk” not according to the oral traditions of Judaism but in a way that is **fully pleasing to** the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Although Christians are completely justified from the moment of initial saving faith, they are not fully sanctified, and they can do things that either please or displease God each day.
- And so...on of our prayer requests is that, given knowledge of our lives,
 - weakness, areas of failure, needed work, etc.

- We MUST prayer that God would enable us

4. To Walk Pleasing to The Lord (Col 1:10)

¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

A. Our Walk is Ongoing

B. Our Walk Takes Attention and Concentration

C. Our Walk Has Two Possible End Results - Pleasing or Unpleasing

- Further, we need to seek...

5. To Be Fruitful in All Good Works (Col 1:10b)

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

And, as well, we need to do what is necessary for us to...

6. To Increase in The Knowledge Of God (Col 1:11)

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

7. To Be Strengthened with All Might (Col 1:11)

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy

- Spiritual power was a key issue in the Greco-Roman world.
 - People sought power through connection with various gods and pagan rituals in order to protect them from evil spirits and to help them acquire wealth or influence.
 - The key thought in the exploration of false gods was more than just the fleshly enjoyment - It was this “power” that came from the experience
 - Sadly, the same is true in much of Christianity today.

- People are more interested in what they GET out of the interaction with God than pretty much anything else.
- Personal gain, health, wealth, and the like...
- But we are to seek to gain “might” in the spiritual way, in concert with God’s Holy Spirit - not human desires.
 - We ought to seek and ask God to impart this might to us and to those around us.
 - Life is full of things that require this might to overcome and walk through!
- Paul wants the Colossians to know that he prays regularly that God would impart his power to them, not for selfish aims but so that they can live for God in a worthy manner
 - In addition, we are to seek a kind of this power...

A. To Have His Glorious Power (Col 1:11)

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy

- This might is not a goal in and of itself.
 - This enduement of power that we seek is a certain, specific “kind” of power
- We must note that this “might” is ACCORDING TO His glorious power
 - It is not a power that is or becomes ours.
 - It is now and always must be HIS and NOT ours.
- “According to” is a preposition that speaks of the origin of a thing.
 - Our might arises from or out of God’s glorious power.
 - It is important this is both realized and continually kept in mind.
 - Further, it is wonderful that God willing to impart this “glorious power”, at least in part, to us that we might use it to His glory.
- The root meaning of “glorious” does not speak of some glowing, fearful thing.

- It is often translated with the sense of “thinking” or “purpose”.
- And so we can see here that we are being told that we need to pray that God will enable us to walk in this power, but to do so in a fashion that arises from out of a knowledge of HIS purposes, and not our own thoughts and intentions.
 - This is very significant for all believers.
 - We ought to seek the Lord to empower us, but to do so in such a fashion that we use it to serve HIS purpose and in accord with HIS thought and plan.
- There is a further end that we ought to be aware of and which we ought to be seeking to serve and accomplish...
 - God desires, among other things, a specific result to be achieved in OUR lives...
 - This result is at least two-fold

B. To Have All Patience (Col 1:11)

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy

- Patience is a common NT word and basically means “steadfast”
 - We might see it as the idea of “remaining the same” in spite of surrounding circumstances (trials, affliction, etc.)

C. To Have All Longsuffering (Col 1:11)

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy

- Longsuffering refers to the manner in which we ARE patient...
 - The NT understands that trials, waiting, etc. ARE difficult and even painful - But we MUST seek God’s help in our own lives and in the lives of those around us to undergo those trials in a manner that demonstrates How and what God can do and will do in the lives of those to whom gives “His glorious power”.

- Along with this power comes the ability to weather difficulty in a longsuffering fashion.
- We should note that there WILL be trials and some of those trials will be difficult and even unpleasant
 - We make these coming and persistent things a matter of prayer for us and for those around us.
- There is another thing for us to keep in mind
 - There is the end result that God intends for us to realize from this patience and longsuffering
 - God desires it to bring forth in us the enablement to have good and godly...

8. *To Have Joy (Col 1:11)*

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy

- The word “joy” is a very common one.
 - It is an active word
 - It speaks not just about happiness but of the matter of rejoicing.
 - Many (including me at times) are better at feeling sorry for themselves than they are at recognizing the hand of God in all matters in their lives, even in the difficult parts...
 - This isn’t helped by the many Prosperity Teachers who claim that we ought not even have difficulties and that the solution to them is simply naming it and claiming it!
 - If we don’t get what we’re claiming - is really our fault for not believing surely enough!
 - That doesn’t seem to be what God says in His word!
- All of this ought to lead us to one further “Resolution” for the New Year:

9. *To Be Thankful and Fully Recognizing the Reasons for that Thanksgiving (Colossians 1:12–14)*

¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

- That we OUGHT to give thanks is indisputable and well known and admitted by most believers.
 - However... There are many for whom Thanksgiving is more a matter of feeling than it is an active expression
- A. Active Thanksgiving**
 - All of the verbs in these couple of verse are in the active voice...
 - They are things that we DO, not just things that take place in our insides
- B. For Specific Spiritual Acts on God’s Part - Not Generalities**

¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

1. *We Are Qualified “Partakers”*
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2. *We Have an Inheritance Coming*
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3. *We That Inheritance Comes in “Light”*
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4. *We Have Been “Delivered” From the Power of Sin*
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5. *Likewise we have been Delivered From Darkness*
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- 6. *We Have been “Conveyed” into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love*
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- 7. *In that Son, We have Redemption by means of His Shed Blood*
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- 8. *In Definition of that Redemption - We have Forgiveness of Sins*
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10. Conclusion

- With Christmas now behind us, 'tis the season for hoping to live a better, more fulfilling life in the following year.
 - I'll save you the work of coming up with a list of resolutions for 2014. Here are 10 New Year's Resolutions Every Christian Should Make:
 1. Resolve to stay faithful to Jesus Christ. He is the one Truth, Way and Life. There's no reason to look elsewhere.
 2. Resolve to not let anything – a career, a significant other, social media, a house – become an object of worship.
 3. Resolve to watch your language and not speak any destructive talk, especially involving the name of God.
 4. Resolve to prevent burnout by putting aside work one day a week. Trust God to provide for your needs that day and just enjoy the time He's given you.
 5. Resolve to talk to your parents on a regular basis, and show them love and respect.
 6. Resolve to be angry less. Channel any feelings of rage, which Jesus said are as severe as murder, into worshiping God and serving others.
 7. Resolve to honor your commitment to your spouse. Whether in thought or in deed, stay pure and loyal in the union God made.
 8. Resolve to not take anything that's not yours, including stuff you can hold and put in your pocket, and plenty

that you can't, like music downloads, streaming movies and hours on your timecard.

9. Resolve to speak about others only with truth and love, not gossip.
10. Resolve to be content with what you have, and not worry about that others are amassing.