

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:10 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: That You May Live A Life Worthy Of The Lord

INTRODUCTION: For those of us who have been a true believer for many years, when we pray for ourselves and for other believers, what exactly are we petitioning God to do in our life or their life? Do we actually and accurately pray for what God wants to accomplish in our life or their life? Or, do we in effect wander from praying for what God wants, and instead pray for what we think should happen in our life or their life? Exactly what should we pray for - that aligns precisely with what God wants? Let's study further what Paul and Timothy were praying for the believers in Colosse, so that we can apply those principles in our prayers and in our own life.

READ: Colossians 1:10, with vv.3-4,9 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - From the authority directly given to him by God, Paul is writing authoritatively to the believers in Colosse, as well as to all believers today. (v.1)
 - - It is the will of God that believers read, study, learn, and fully implement in their lives the teachings in the Book of Colossians. (vv.1-2)
 - - God intends that faith in Jesus as the Christ is to be accompanied by having 'love for all the saints' and other spiritual dynamics, which are to be produced through the gospel. (vv.4-6)
 - - And furthermore, God intends for the gospel to "bear fruit" in the lives of people "all over the world", like it was doing in the lives of the Colossian believers. (v.6)
 - - We believers are to possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", so that we can correctly determine and comprehensively live in accordance to God's will. (v.9)
 - - But due to our corrupted perspective, we believers need increasing enlightenment from God through gaining spiritual knowledge from His Word, in order to improve our ability to determine and live in accordance to God's will. (from v.9; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)
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[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and formulate the dynamics of the interconnection between the theological principles in verse 10 with those in verse 9.]

SECTION POINT: Possessing knowledge of God's will is necessary in order to "live a life worthy of the Lord" - that "pleases him in every way", and "bears fruit in every good work".

"live a life worthy of the Lord":

- - Flowing from verse 9, Paul and Timothy are continuing to pray that the Colossian believers would be "filled with the knowledge of [God's] will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (v.9) "in order that [they] may live a life worthy of the Lord" (v.10).

- - The true Christian life is necessarily based on a fairly complex theological system that requires substantial time and effort to learn and apply in one's life.
- - The true Christian life is impossible to guess or arrive at through humanly reasoning.
- - We humans live according to our own actual belief system.
- - So, in order to "live a life worthy of the Lord", we each have to progressively learn exactly what that worthy life is, fully commit to it, and then adopt it as our new belief system in replacement of our previous belief system.
- - And "living a life worthy of the Lord" is at a level or standard higher than we can possibly attain through natural human wisdom and understanding, thus requiring an acquisition of that spiritual knowledge that comes from the Lord, which He conveys through the "hearing" of "the word of truth", the Scriptures. (v.5)
- - "Living a life worthy of the Lord" must be honoring to, in alignment with, and "worthy of" the various virtues that the Lord possesses in His character, which include for examples: righteousness, goodness, love, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, forbearance, self-sacrifice, and etc. (vv.13,14,20; Galatians 5:22-23)
- - Certainly, living this kind of godly life will necessarily involve daily denying oneself of pursuing desires in life that are not in alignment with what is "worthy of the Lord". (Luke 9:23,25)

"please him":

- - God is our Judge, rewarding and punishing us humans according to His standard. (James 4:12)
- - God wants to immensely bless us believers but He will do that only to the extent we please Him. (James 2:12-13)
- - God also wants a close intimate personal relationship with each of us believers but He will not allow that in fullness when we displease Him. (Mark 12:30)
- - So, for our benefit in the present and in the eternal future, pleasing God is the ultimate goal that in "spiritual wisdom and understanding" we each need to make as our surpassing highest priority in this life. (Colossians 1:9)
- - To state in simple terms how to accomplish this goal in a practical manner, "living a life worthy of the Lord" essentially requires abstaining from aspects of life that are not pleasing to God, and instead engaging in aspects of life that are pleasing to God. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

"in every way":

- - As might be expected though, "living a life worthy of the Lord" further requires applying this abstaining-from / engaging-in approach to all aspects of one's life - comprehensively, as instructed in 1 Peter 1:15-16, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16. for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."" (a quote from Leviticus 11:44,45)
- - From His nature and character, God pays attention to all details of our life, "every way" and every thing we think, we believe, we say, we do, and we fail to do. (James 1:5-8; 2:17; 3:6,9-10,13-15; 4:17)
- - God reads our mind; our thinking and beliefs are just as important as our words and actions. (Philippians 4:8)
- - God is looking for and seeking in us comprehensive purity, like He has and is. (Mark 12:30-31; Romans 3:10-18,21; 1 Timothy 5:22)

- - So, God is recording us at a comprehensive level - in every way. (Romans 14:10,12; Matthew 12:36-37)
- - Because of His character quality or attribute of extreme and perfect holiness, God is motivated to hold us humans accountable, and that we be holy and pleasing to Him "in every way". (1 Peter 1:14-17)

"bearing fruit in every good work":

- - "Living a life worthy of the Lord" also necessitates expending one's time, efforts, and resources to engage in activities that work toward producing results for God's Kingdom.
- - Believers are to have a new allegiance - a new active devotion to tangibly promoting and building God's Kingdom.
- - And contrary to what a majority of believers think, God is very serious about this mandate to "bear fruit" for the Kingdom, because He declares in James 2:17 "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead".
- - God considers our faith to be dead, or seriously incomplete and deficient if our faith is not working together with our good deeds to "bear fruit" for His Kingdom. (James 2:22)
- - Furthermore, by implication, our faith is deficient if we are not bearing fruit in "every" good work - meaning in the opportunities that arise for each of us within our own range of means and capacity.
- - Therefore, God instructs and expects us to respond when opportunities arise that are within our own range of means and capacity, even if and perhaps especially if self-sacrifice is involved - like Jesus did even to the extreme extent of enduring a torturous death on a cross. (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- - Now of course, not every opportunity to do good works is God's will for us to engage in, because God's will usually has or should generate a spiritual component at the core of each opportunity of good works that He wants acted on. (e.g. - John 5:1-15 - Jesus healed only one man without healing any of the other remaining "great number of disabled people" who were lying at the pool of Bethesda (v.3); the enemy loves to sidetrack believers into engaging in activities that contain or produce little or no spiritual benefit or result.)
- - On a practical level, then, each of us believers should be watching for or creating opportunities of good works to engage in, that will contain or produce a spiritual component, and that is God's will for you to do at that time and in the manner that He desires.

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, distinguish, and formulate the dynamics of the relationship between "growing in the knowledge of God" in verse 10 with being "filled with the knowledge of his will" in verse 9.]

SECTION POINT: "Growing in the knowledge of God" is crucial for gaining a knowledge of His will, so that we can "live a life worthy of the Lord".

"growing in the knowledge of God":

- - If we believers are to know God's will so that we can "live a life worthy of the Lord", "please him in every way", and "bear fruit" for His Kingdom, then we must possess a "knowledge of God". (vv.10,9)
- - Obviously, the more we know about God, the more we can live according to His will.

- - So, "growing in the knowledge of God" is a necessity and priority for living according to His will.
 - - The challenge, though, is that knowledge about God and about the will of God for our life are quite complex, extensive, and somewhat veiled, thereby requiring enlightenment from God, spiritual discernment, substantial training in the Scriptures, ongoing praying, spiritual transformation, and etc. (Ephesians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Romans 12:1-2)
 - - There is so much to learn that this process of maturing spiritually literally takes a lifetime to learn most of it - and then there is still more to learn yet after that!
 - - So, "growing in the knowledge of God" is an ongoing lifetime endeavor, to be pursued continuously, consistently, willingly, submissively, humbly, properly, comprehensively, meditatively, and etc.
 - - By God's design, there are no genuine or acceptable shortcuts to "growing in the knowledge of God". (Psalms 1:2)
 - - For believers, then, God desires that each of us develops, implements, and maintains disciplines in our life that pursue the accumulating of and growing toward possessing an ever-increasing fuller knowledge of God. (Strong's #1922)
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BIG IDEA: To live a life of spiritual maturity, that pleases God and bears fruit for His Kingdom, we believers must be continuously growing in our knowledge of God so that we can determine and live according to His will.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you think you are "filled with the knowledge of God's will"?
 - - Do you think you have a sufficient "knowledge of God's will" so that you are "living a life worthy of the Lord"?
 - - Do you think your thoughts, and your motives, and your words, and your actions are "pleasing to God in every way"?
 - - Do you think you are "bearing fruit in every good work", accomplishing this mandate in the manner, frequency, quality, and quantity that entirely conforms to God's will for you?
 - - By your actions or lack of actions, what is your priority for you personally in "growing in the knowledge of God" - learning from the Scriptures? Your priority is daily? Weekly? Sporadically? Sleep through it? No extra time or energy to do that? Avoid it whenever you can? Drifted away from that years ago? Replace it with mystical revelations that presumably are from God?
 - - How well are you doing in "living a life that is worthy of the Lord"?
 - - From these self-analyzing questions, do you think you need to implement some changes to your life and to how you pray for yourself and other believers? Are you committed to implementing these changes - and immediately?
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Is it possible to not properly "bear fruit in every good work"? Explain.

Answer: YES, for examples, if we bear fruit in a good work but have inappropriate motives (James 4:3), no love (1 Corinthians 13:3), arguing or fighting (James 4:1-2), "bitter envy" or "selfish ambition" (James 3:13-15), and etc.

- - Can common sense, rather than a knowledge of God's will, be sufficient to "bear fruit in every good work"? Explain your answer.]

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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File name: Colossians1_10-SermonOrLesson.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

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