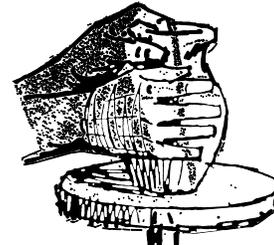


# His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His  
workmanship, created in  
Christ Jesus for good works."  
—Ephesians 2:10*



Vol. XXII

July 14, 2013

No. 28

Isaiah 64:8

## A Prayer from Prison for Others *by W. Edward Bedore and David B. Curtis*

The Lord of all, the God Who created everything, the One Who rules and reigns, Whose purposes are accomplished, commands me as His child to talk with Him about whatever is on my heart, to enjoy communion with Him. What a blessing to pray for others! What a joy to know that others are praying for us. The apostle Paul made it a regular part of his life to earnestly pray for fellow believers. **Maturity.** Paul had a passion for the spiritual development of the people of God. That was his great concern. We see this passion revealed in his prayers for the church, Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Phil 1:9-11; and Col 1:9-14. As Paul prayed for the believers, he prayed for their maturity. This was the very focus of his prayers. Notice Phil 1:9-11 and Eph 1:15-19. Paul was saying, "I want you to grow." He asked for greater knowledge, stronger love, and increased spiritual understanding. He was praying for the church's spiritual growth. In Eph 3:14-19, Paul prayed for each Christian's spiritual maturity—strength, power, and love. This was Paul's passion, the spiritual maturity of believers. Combining the prayers, we see that the apostle prayed that the

church would abound in wisdom, knowledge, power, endurance, long-suffering, joy, gratitude, and love.

Notice that Paul prayed for their **spiritual needs.** We don't find him praying often for physical needs. Certainly there were believers at these churches with physical needs, and he himself had dire physical needs. But Paul tied his prayers directly to the churches' spiritual needs. Nor did he pray for generic church success and blessing. He knew that blessing was a result of spiritual maturity. That was his passion and burden. Paul cut through all the superficial stuff and prayed for their real need—growth, which will bring blessing, see Jas 1:25. Blessings, spiritual and material, are connected to spiritual progress. As we grow in our relationship with God, we will be blessed. Today, the prayers of many Christians center primarily on health and wealth issues. By contrast, Paul's prayers focused mostly on spiritual needs.

**Persistent prayer.** Paul preceded his prayer for the church at Colossae with a preamble to state his motivation for praying for them, Col 1:3-8. He had heard of their faith and love,

and this prompted his unceasing prayers. He gave thanks to God for these believers and said that he prayed for them always—every day, v. 3. "*Since the day we heard...*" shows us Paul's sensitivity and quickness to go to the throne of grace for the body of Christ. It shows us how Paul's life was engrossed in concern for others and for the glory of God, and how he believed in the all sufficiency of God. Prayer was never far from his heart and on his lips, because God was his confidence, and people were his concern. He began to pray for them as soon as he heard of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior—and their faith was demonstrated by their love for all those who are "*in Christ,*" v. 4. Because of their faith in Christ Jesus, the church in Colossae had a hope laid up in heaven—not an uncertain hope like that promised by the world of man-centered religions, but a sure and eternal hope of living forever with God and Christ Jesus, Col 3:1-4. The security of this hope is found in nothing less than the person of the crucified, resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

*continued on p. 2*

**"...May you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; may you walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him fully, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."  
—Colossians 1:9-12**

This hope is always an integral part of the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, which Paul also referred to as "the revelation of the mystery" and the "dispensation of the grace of God," Rm 16:25; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Eph 3:1-4.

**The gospel results in fruit.** Paul declared that the gospel had not merely been proclaimed at Colossae, but to the entire world, and so it was not a message limited to any one nation, ethnic group, or geographical location, v.6; see also v. 23. It is also not limited in time—it applies to all of us today. Preaching the gospel of grace brings forth fruit unto God. Preaching the gospel of grace saves those who believe, Rm 10:12-17; 1 Cor 1:18-21. Preaching and teaching sound doctrine by rightly dividing the word of truth, 2 Tim 2:15, edifies (builds up) the body of Christ in love, Eph 4:1-16.

**Two major requests.** Ever since Paul had first heard of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for other believers, he had been praying regularly for the church at Colossae. Of course, Paul's divinely inspired and recorded prayer for this group of believers is an expression of God's desire for the entire body of Christ. This petition to God mentions two major and specific requests on behalf of believers. First, He asked God that they would "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," v. 9. This can only be accomplished through godly wisdom and enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote that wisdom from God is only found in Jesus Christ, 1 Cor 1:26-31,

and only by the Holy Spirit—His revelation of God by His inspired message—can spiritual enlightenment be possible, 1 Cor 2:6-16. Second, Paul asked God for "a walk worthy of the Lord," v. 10. This means a life that bears fruit unto the Lord through our labors (good works) done in faith on His behalf. The knowledge of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding enables us to walk worthy of the Lord so we can please the Lord in every situation of life and bear fruit for Him.

**I. "Filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."** Consider three key ideas: A. filled; B. knowledge of His will; C. all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

**A. Filled** has great meaning and significance. First, it looks at the effective culmination, the end product, and the design of acquiring the knowledge of God's will. The idea is *filled full and running over—a complete measure, satiated*. It is not God's desire that we just get by with as little as necessary. No one ever reaches this goal of completeness, but God is always fulfilling this need. Second, the heretics regularly used the word *fullness*. It was their claim that what they were offering as a substitute or addition to the gospel and to the believer's life in Christ would bring an added fullness of life. Don't believe it! Fullness of life only comes through an understanding of the completeness Christians have in Christ as we continue to grow and relate our lives to Him through the Word, Col 2:6-10. Third, the verb is the Greek *pleroo*,

which may carry two key ideas: 1) "To fill up a deficiency." Every believer has deficiencies in his or her knowledge of the Word and these deficiencies need to be removed through a careful and accurate handling of the Word, cf. 2 Tim 2:15. 2) "To fully possess, influence, control, take over." Christians have turned control of their lives over to God; they trust Him in all things.

**B. Knowledge of His will.** With the words *be filled* in verse 9, we are introduced to the content and purpose of Paul's prayer. This request points us to the great need in every believer's life and the means by which this need is met. It is important that all believers *be filled with the knowledge of God's will* (the need). The words in (or by) "all wisdom and spiritual understanding" point to the all-important means.

The Greek word for *knowledge* in this passage is *epignosis*, a compound of *gnosis-knowledge* and *epi-over, above, because of*. This is the intense form of the word *knowledge*—full discernment and recognition of God's will. This is knowledge which is the result of practical and personal experience. This knowledge is not merely academic or intellectual knowledge—our knowledge of God's will comes through practice and application in our lives. When we are fully and completely acquainted with God's will for our lives through study and experience, we are gaining this knowledge. It is the dynamic result that a proper understanding of the person

*continued on p. 3*



Psalm 133:1



**Fill your can-  
teen in 2013**

“May you be filled  
with all the full-  
ness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

**Colossians 1:9-12 Prayer**, from p. 2 and work of Christ should have on our spiritual walk. The knowledge of God's will should so pervade all our being that it controls all our thoughts, affections, purposes, and plans. The more of the mind of Christ we have, the more God can bring His control into our lives. In this epistle, Paul often used the theme of "fullness" or "completeness" to combat the claims of the false teachers. This can be seen in the different but similar terms (*fulfill, all*) used in 1:9, 19, 24-25; 2:2-3, 9-10; 4:12, 17. It seems that the false teachers boasted that they offered the fullness of truth and spiritual maturity, and the Colossian church felt that Epaphras had only instructed them in the first steps. The Colossians had been told that they needed more knowledge and deeper wisdom beyond what they had been taught regarding the person and work of Christ. So here Paul showed them they indeed needed more knowledge, but it was the true knowledge of God's will by means of all spiritual wisdom and understanding—not the knowledge given by "philosophy and vain deceit," 2:8, according to worldly and false teachers.

The word *Filled* points to what is God's purpose for every **believer**, i.e., to be filled with the knowledge of His will. To know God is eternal life, Jn

17:3. In order to know Him, we must have know-ledge of God's truth. The reality of God's will in each believer's life can be hindered by all kinds of distractions like indifference, laziness, carnality, materialism, and wrong priorities. It can also be hindered by false teachings that seek to add to or subtract from the fullness of salvation as revealed in Christ. This is what the Colossians were facing with false teachers.

**C. In all wisdom and spiritual understanding.** To possess a knowledge of God's will in *all wisdom* requires prayer, Jas 1:5. To possess a knowledge of God's will with *spiritual understanding* requires reading the word, Eph 3:3-5. Therefore, prayer and Bible study are essential elements for gaining all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and ultimately for pleasing God. *Wisdom* is the ability to respond correctly to the circumstances of life. It is derived from our personal know-ledge of God. *Understanding* is the Greek word *sunesis*, which literally means "a uniting, union, a bringing together." It looks at synthesis, the faculty of putting two and two together. This is what brings to our minds a scripture verse that applies to a given situation we are in. Under-standing is what allows us to see clearly to discern the good from the bad and the best over the good. Understanding and wisdom are the mental comprehension and grasp of God's truth and the applica-tion of that truth to the details of life.

These words—*knowledge, wisdom, understanding*—call to our attention the fact that we must use our minds to grasp the truths that God has revealed in His word through the Holy Spirit. The mind plays a key role in God's plan for growth. Spiritual intelligence is the beginning of a successful, fruitful life in Christ. God places no value on ignorance. To remain

*continued on p. 4*

## Discipleship Here At Home

**PRAY FOR healing, protection,  
help, and comfort here and away**

**Caleb Howell**—recovering from tonsillectomy and septum surgery Friday  
**Margie Szymanski, Dale's mother**—serious condition; **Dale, Lynda, Megan Aki** and girls drove home from Ohio Sat  
**Mark Campbell**—in hospital at Glenwood Springs; impaired cognition from seizures  
**Ruth Hice, Pat Campbell's mother**—invasive colon cancer; stable but weak in hospital since Wed for dehydration, dialysis, heart, BP; Pat is there in AR  
**Frances Selvidge, Jonathan Hadders's grandmother**—at Longmont Hospital last week, dehydration, pulmonary embolism (blood clot); moved to rehab center in Colorado Springs yesterday

**CHRONIC CONDITIONS**

**Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes**—asthma  
**Pearl Chapman**—leg pains; pancreatitis  
**Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain  
**Rod Green**—thyroid trouble  
**Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy  
**Jonathan Hadders**—RA  
**Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; needs help around his house  
**Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes;  
**Virginia**, now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP  
**Sandra Perry**—neuropathy from diabetes  
**Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia  
**Judy Sartin**—spinal stenosis; pain  
**Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

**Directory update** **Mark Reingrover**, 4615 Simms St, Wheatridge 80033

**Job concerns** **Andrew Tope, Lorenzo Gonzalez, and Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

**Traveling** The **Kory Tope** family is in OR. **Sarah McMurray** is visiting friends in Dominica, Caribbean.

**Kaysha Howell** is in NY.

**Expecting** **Amy Vander Kooi**—August

## **A Prayer from Prison, Colossians 1:9-12** *from p. 3*

ignorant of God's will when you can know and learn it is to play the fool, cf. Pr 1:20-22 with 1:29.

Why is being filled with such knowledge so important? Because God's people have always been destroyed by a lack of knowledge, Hos 4:6, and because knowledge is essential to our renewal in becoming like Christ, Col 3:8-10. Is this prayer being answered in our lives? Are we doing anything to assure that it is?

**II. "A Walk Worthy of the Lord."** Paul directed us to the intended result of being filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Without the knowledge of God's will, it is impossible to walk worthy of the Lord. The intended outcome of God's truth is a change in conduct. "Walk" is the Greek verb *peripateo*, which means "to walk, live, conduct one's life." *Peripateo* means a literal walk, but it is often used metaphorically to indicate behavior, conduct, or the way we live. The Christian's life is compared to walking. Throughout the Bible, we are exhorted to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, Rm 13:13; Eph 4:1; 1 Thes 2:12; Gen 17:1; Ex 18:20. Learning to walk worthy is a matter of Biblical instruction. It is neither natural nor innate. Without the Word, there is simply no way any of us will be able to walk as we should. To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord means to walk in a way that is fitting and consistent with Who the Lord is to us, and what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do for us, Phil 1:27. The idea is something like: let your walk bring honor to the grace of God in Christ. We must first understand God's will, His word, before we can walk worthy. Our walk is what the world sees. Our walk is our reputation—it takes a long time to build but a very short time to lose. We are to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord "fully pleasing Him." As we seek to live in Christ by His matchless grace, it is tremendously important to keep in mind the all-important goal of pleasing the Lord and bringing honor to Him.

In the last half of verses 10-12, Paul described five directions a worthy walk will take. These five actions illustrate a Christian's character:

1. **Pleasing** the Lord fully (in all respects),
2. **Being fruitful** in every good work,
3. **Increasing** in (or by) the knowledge of God,
4. **Being strengthened** with all might, and
5. **Giving thanks** to the Father.

All five participles bring specific attention to what it means to walk worthy of the Lord and describe the pattern of life for a Christian. In next week's bulletin, we will highlight these five actions of Christians.

Until then, examine this prayer. If you are wondering how to pray, Paul's prayers are reliable guides. They were brief and explicit, directed to the needs at hand. Paul came to the point immediately. His prayers stand as a rebuke to the way many Christians pray. They are not only brief and explicit, but they are spiritually strategic in nature. They center on the great spiritual issues facing individual believers and the body of Christ as a whole. What is the content of your prayers? Do you pray for the spiritual health of other believers? Do you pray for your own spiritual growth and maturity?

## *Westside church of Christ*

meets at  
13789 W. 8th Avenue  
Golden, Colorado 80401  
(303) 972-0087

### **Pastors**

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987  
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

### **Preacher**

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309)

## *Assembly Schedule*

### **Sunday**

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

### **Wednesday**

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

This morning: "When Choice Becomes God," by Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

### **Paul's Prison Epistles Series**

"Colossians 1:1-23," by Joel Walker

## **Vacation Bible School**

**July 15-18, 9:30-11:45 am**

**"Obeying truth and Putting on the Armor of God"**