

God's Will For Your Life

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[0 : 00] If you would open up your Bibles to Colossians chapter 1, 9-14, it's on page 1168 of your pew Bible. And I'm going to read that for us right now, verses 9-14.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work, and in increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might for all endurance and patience, with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints of light.

He has delivered 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. May God bless the hearing of His Word. What is God's will for your life? I'm going to say something audacious. By the time you'll leave this building, you will know God's will for your life.

[1 : 25] It's outrageous. God wants you to know His will for your life. Now for many, when they hear of God's will for their lives, dread falls upon them.

They start getting stressed out and anxious because they think that they've lost God's will for their life.

They missed the God's will for my life train. And so instead of God's will freeing them, it panics them.

They dread God's will. That's not the way we're going to respond. Other people could care less about God's will. And so instead of dreading God's will, they dismiss it.

Some people even say, how can you even know God has a will for your life? Some people are just bored and lazy. They don't care. Instead of living in dread, they live for the moment with no regard for God or His will at all.

[2 : 33] They dismiss God's will. Other people distort God's will. Maybe you've heard of the prosperity gospel.

It's a terrible mistake. It's a distortion of God's will. It distorts God's will that a person of faith is to experience health and wealth in increasing measure.

And if that person of faith isn't experiencing health and wealth in increasing measure, well, something then is wrong with their faith. What the distortion of the prosperity gospel does is it puts man in the center of God's will.

Give! And God will return it tenfold. God becomes a means to your end. It's a terrible distortion. It leaves people worse than they began. Maybe you've heard the secular version of this. You be you. This morning, God's word makes an outrageous claim that you can know God's will for your life.

[3 : 54] And it's not dread. It's not dismissal. It's not distortion. It's delight. It's delight. What is God's will for your life?

Five words. To please Christ in everything. It's God's will for your life.

So here's how we're going to do this. I'm going to do a call, and you're going to do a response. I'm going to say, what is God's will for your life? And you're going to respond with five words. To please Christ in everything.

You guys ready? What's God's will for your life? Colossians 1, 9-14.

Paul continues a prayer that he started in verse 3-8. It was a prayer of thanksgiving. And now in verses 9-14, he pivots.

[4 : 56] And that prayer becomes a prayer of asking God to fill the Colossians to know His will. And so here's how we're going to proceed. We're going to look at the ask of God's will.

And then the aim of God's will. And then finally, the avenues in which we live out God's will. So let me ask you a question. What is God's will for your life? To be God's will for your life.

It's not going to only inform our prayer life, but in the way you live your life. The ask. Verse 9. And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you.

Asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So Paul pivots here. He's been thanking God for what God has done in the Colossians and around the world in verses 3-8.

And then in verse 9, he turns to asking God for God to do something. In these Colossians. It's a request.

[6 : 02] It's an ask. And let me just help you feel something. Whenever you see in Scripture the Apostle Paul praying, you want to take note.

Because whatever he's going to pray, whatever it is, it's going to be highly significant. It's going to fall into that category. He's going to pray what's best for these Colossians.

First thing I want you to notice is the frequency of his praying. It starts in verse 3. We always thank God when we pray for you.

Verse 9. And so from the day we heard of what God was doing in their lives, we have not ceased to pray for you. He's ceaselessly asking God to do something for these Colossians.

It should remind you of that passage in 1 Thessalonians 5.17 that says, pray without ceasing. Now, I don't think this is 24-7 praying.

[7 : 04] Like you don't sleep so you can pray. But what this is getting at is a frequent, persistent, and purposed praying. Most likely Paul employed two types of praying.

Spontaneous praying. Things are coming up. You're praying on the spot. And then scheduled praying where you have set aside moments during the day where you are praying for specific things. Both are a great way to be praying.

In fact, if you want to start with a scheduled time to pray, start every morning. Just pray through your day. What I just want to notice is he's frequently praying.

Praying for others. But what I really want you to see is the content of his asking. And the reason why is because it's so important.

So before I even get in, let me ask you. Survey the content of your recent prayers. What have you been praying? What have you been praying for yourself?

[8 : 19] What have you been praying for other people? And now let's look at what the Apostle Paul prays. He says in verse 9. Asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

We've got something to learn here. He asks God the Father. That's the implied person he's praying to. That comes from verse 3. Ask God the Father to fill these Christians in Colossae with the knowledge of his will.

Now he doesn't come out and say explicitly what his will is for our lives. That comes in actually in verse 10. But looking at this ask out of anything and everything he could ask for.

However, he asks God the Father to fill these Christians with the knowledge of his will. And so what that means is whatever his will is, it's not something you need to dread.

It's not something to dismiss. It's not something to distort. But it's something to delight in. Notice he asks for them to be filled. To be brought into in greater measure.

[9 : 40] A knowledge of his will. That word knowledge is an interesting word. I'm guessing you think knowledge. You might think like math facts that you stuff into your head. This kind of knowledge is not just head knowledge.

It's a very specific word in the original language that gets at this idea of knowledge that influences. It's a functional knowledge. It's an effectual knowledge.

It's a knowledge that when you become aware of it, you are compelled to act. So the idea here is when you become aware of what God's will is for your life, you must act.

You're compelled. Do you notice those words? In all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This knowledge of his will is sourced in God.

That adjective spiritual is best understood as of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides a wisdom and an understanding so that we may know God's will.

[10 : 55] The false teaching that was influencing the Colossian church was not a God-sourced knowledge. But a man-sourced knowledge.

In verse 8. See to it. Oh, chapter 2. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty conceit according to human tradition. Man-sourced. If you look at chapter 2, verses 21 and 22 and 23.

Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. Referring to these things that all perish as they are used. All these rules and regulations according to human precepts and teachings.

These have indeed an appearance. Verse 23 of wisdom in promoting self-made religion.

Human-sourced. What Paul is praying for these Christians is a knowledge of God's will that is not human-sourced, but is God-sourced, Bible-sourced.

Bible-sourced. That word spiritual is referring to the Holy Spirit. So let me just help you think for a second about the Holy Spirit's role in making known God's will to us.

[12:19] Just before Jesus went to the cross, in John 16, he was explaining to his disciples what the Holy Spirit would do upon his, Jesus' departure.

And in John 16, 14, Jesus gives this summary of what the Holy Spirit will do when he departs, when Jesus departs. He will glorify me.

Imagine a darkened stage and you are sitting in the darkness, in the quiet of a very large audience. In the darkness, you hear footsteps coming onto the stage and they have come to stand right in the middle of the stage.

And then in a moment, a spotlight turns on and there before you is the glorious, risen Jesus Christ.

[13:24] Now, the beam of that spotlight doesn't call your attention back to the spotlight. The beam of the spotlight brings your attention onto Jesus.

And so when Paul prays this prayer, asking the Father to pour out the Holy Spirit, to bring wisdom and understanding, to make known God's will, guess who's going to be center stage?

Jesus. In fact, Paul will talk about this knowledge of God's will as a mystery. He does so at the end of chapter 2 and into, at the end of chapter 1 and into chapter 2, but, but then he lets the secret out. In chapter 2, verse 2, we read that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, God's will, which is Christ.

In whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So when Paul asks God to fill these Christians with the knowledge of his will through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is going to be center stage and spotlighted.

[14:50] What I want you to see here is the Apostle Paul is praying a Trinitarian prayer. He's praying to the Father. For an outpouring of the Spirit that will exalt Christ.

So here are a few things that we can walk away with from this. This, this, this, this. Verse 9 is instructive to our own prayer life, that we should be continual in our prayer life.

Maybe praying spontaneously, praying scheduled prayers. But we should be praying mixed prayers. Prayers of thanksgiving as well as prayers of asking for things.

But when we ask for things, there's a priority of asking. That we get to pray Trinitarian prayers like Paul.

Asking the Father to pour out the Spirit so that Christ is exalted. You've ever found yourself in a situation where you're like, I don't know what to pray for that. You can pray this. Father, would you pour out the Spirit onto my brother, onto my sister, onto their marriage, into our church.

[16:00] That Christ would be spotlighted. Let me ask you a question. What is God's will for your life?

To please Christ in everything. So we move now from the ask of the prayer to the aim of the prayer. And that is in verse 10. Verse 9 is Paul asking for God to make known his will. And in verse 10 is the making of his will known.

In fact, verse 10, it's like a two-fold response. It's like a two-stage purpose rocket. We've got the first stage that culminates into the final stage.

Let me just point out the first stage. Paul prays this prayer. And then in verse 10, you read, So as for the purpose, the intended result, for them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

[17:14] Paul is praying to the Father to pour out the Spirit to reveal God's will, which is for these Christians and for these Christians to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Lord, of course, is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 1, verse 3. Jesus is being spotlighted. The word walk in your Bibles, whether it's Old Testament or New, oftentimes applied to God's people is referring to the way you live your life.

Have you ever bumped into someone and you've heard these words before? Yeah, he talks the talk, but doesn't walk the walk. Anybody hear that before? The walk the walk is a reference to the way someone's living their life.

It's how Paul's using it here. And when you hear someone say, Yeah, he talks the talk, but doesn't walk the walk. Usually that's a recipe for hypocrisy. Is it not?

Here, we have a recipe for consistency. So as to walk, live your life in a manner worthy of the Lord.

[18 : 31] That manner worthy of the Lord is talking about living a life consistent with who Jesus is and what Jesus' priorities are.

A life that is consistent with the very character of Christ. A life that's consistent with the very agenda of Christ. In Galatians 5.16, the apostle writes, Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

And then in chapter 5, verse 22, he starts laying out the fruit of the Spirit. There are nine. Love, joy, patience. Love, joy, peace.

Thanks, Wanda. Patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. Wanda, did I miss anything? But when you hear those laid out, think profile Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit profiles the person, the character of Jesus. But it's not just the character of Jesus that when we walk in a manner worthy of Christ, that we become more like Christ in our character.

[19 : 50] We take on what's important to Christ. His priorities become our own. And so when he says, go make disciples of the nations, we're like, of course. If this is high in your agenda, it's high in my agenda.

Have you ever seen a video of a potter at his wheel? A man sits down at a potter's wheel, puts a clump of wet clay on it, flips that thing on, and it starts to spin.

And as it's spinning, the potter applies pressure with his hands, and that clay starts to take form. It starts to be shaped according to the will of the potter.

God's will is to Christ shape your character and priorities. That's what it means to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

That's stage one. You want to know what stage two is? It's that last little clause. Fully pleasing to him.

[21 : 08] In Greek, it's just three words. Literally, in everything pleasing. In everything pleasing to the Lord. Christ central in everything.

The ultimate goal of Christians. God's will for our life. Ultimately, is to please Christ in everything. To be fully pleasing to him.

Every area of your life. Christ shaped. Christ central. The opposite is also true. If you're not walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, you will not please him.

You will grieve him. We're not to walk that way, Aerosmith. We're to walk this way. Aerosmith wasn't singing about Jesus.

But Paul is. To walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord is to walk in a manner pleasing to him.

[22 : 19] To delight him in every area of your life. Do you know what that means?

It means we need to adopt a different understanding of conversion. When you become a Christian, it's not like adding on the Jesus room to your mansion.

When you become a Christian, you give him the deed. He becomes central in everything. In our sin, we make this false assumption that the world orbits us.

But what the gospel does so well is that it helps us to realize all things orbit Christ. Conversion is being delivered from a me-centered world and view of everything into a Christ-centered world of everything.

In which you grow into and live out more and more. And you seek to please Christ in everything. Not yourself.

[23 : 35] This information about God's will for your life. This isn't something to dread.

It's not something to dismiss. It's not something to distort. It's something to delight in. To please Christ in everything. So let me ask you a question.

What is God's will for your life? To please Christ in everything. Are you seeing it? Now, you might be like asking the question, well, okay, like, like, where in my life?

How am I supposed to do that? Paul anticipates it. And in verses 10 through 14, he lays out avenues by which we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Four avenues. A fourfold way of pleasing Christ. So let me just draw these things out for you. He doesn't point to your finances.

[24 : 45] He doesn't point to your entertainment habits. He points to ways in which we seek to please Christ. Ways of living.

The first way of living is in verse 10. Where he says, bearing fruit in every good work. Think back to Galatians 5.22.

For the fruit of the Spirit is love. Starts with love. In Colossians, there seems to be an emphasis on love in the Colossian church.

Look up in chapter 1, verse 8. Epaphras made known to Paul the love the Colossians had in the Spirit. That is a Spirit-sourced love that they were loving each other with.

But they hadn't arrived. Because if you look at chapter 3, verse 14. Paul admonishes them. And above all, these put on love. He exhorts them. Which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

[25 : 54] Do you want to know a good fruit to bear? The fruit of love. The obeying of Jesus' new commandment. To love one another as he has loved us.

And when we become Christ-centered. And we're no longer seeking to please ourselves, but to please Christ.

Do you know what happens? We become others-aware. To love them and care for them. Just as Christ has loved you.

You're a recipient of that love. Now we seek to love others in a similar way. We have new people come into our sanctuary. We love them. There's a brother and sister in Christ who are going through a hard time.

And they're just having to process the same thing over and over again. Because they're kind of stuck. Love them. Love them with your ears. Listen to them.

[26 : 57] Help them. Someone needs a different kind of help. Help them move. Help them think through something.

Love them with God's word. Speaking the truth in love. It requires Christian love. Requires us to be others-focused.

And the way to get others-focused is to become Christ-centric. Now in case you've got a Catholic background. Or you're new to this Christianity thing.

When Paul talks about bearing fruit in every good work. You may hear that and misunderstand what he's actually saying.

What he's not saying is that you need to bear good fruits in order to be saved. He's not saying that. Christianity. Christianity. Christianity.

[27 : 56] The Christianity of the Bible. Does not teach that in order to be saved. You've got to do a lot of good things. It doesn't teach that.

What the gospel proclaims is that Jesus has done the good work for us. It's finished at the cross. Paid for our sins. And as a result of believing in that. Now we do good works. Good works don't save you. You've been saved for good works.

And to confuse the two. Will cause a lot of heartache. Because if you confuse the two. Instead of Christ being central to your salvation.

Your obedience is. It's not the gospel. But it is good news. To know that Christ's finished work. Is the good work that saves.

[28 : 54] And it saves us to do good works. Loving one another. So. The first avenue. To please Christ.

Is to bear fruit. Of good works. Namely. Loving one another. The second way. We see in verse 10. Increasing in the knowledge of God. Again. That word knowledge. Is this the same word that we saw in verse 9. It's. It's a word that just doesn't mean.

Packing your head with facts. But it's a knowledge. That affects the way that you live. It's. It's not just getting facts straight.

It's getting these facts. Into your life. The knowledge of God. That he's being talked about here.

[29 : 53] Shapes your life. It's. It's what the Bible talks about. As the fear of the Lord. It's. Maybe you're familiar with Jeremiah 9. Let me read it to you. I've got some hand motions with it.

Let not the wise man. Boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man. Boast in his might. Let not the rich man.

Boast. In his riches. But let him who boasts. Boast in this. That he knows. And understands me. That I am the God.

Of steadfast love. And justice. And righteousness. And in these things. I delight on the earth. Thus. Says. The Lord. When.

When. When you start. To. Start delighting. In that knowledge of God. You're like. Oh man. You are a God of steadfast love. Justice and righteousness. That starts to have an effect.

[30 : 58] Here's the effect. Man. God. You are awesome. It's like finding treasure. God. You're awesome. This kind of knowledge of God.

It. It creates the sense of worth. Of God. You start to value. God. You start to treasure. God. And the result. Is wanting to give.

Worth. Ship. To God. You want to give him praises. True knowledge of God. Always results. In doxology. The praise of God. The worship of God.

If it falls flat. Flat. That's not on God. The problem's. In you. So with increasing knowledge of God. Is increasing worship of God. To treasure him more and more. Do you have a worship problem? How about you increase.

[31 : 58] In your knowledge of who God is. There's. These two first ways. Are bearing fruit. In every good work. And increasing in the knowledge of God.

And that should ring a bell. Because he uses the same words. In verse six. To describe the gospel. Spreading in the world. Increasing. Bearing fruit. And now he prays it.

For these Colossians. That the gospel would bear. These good works. That the gospel would bear. An increasing knowledge of God. So that his fame.

Spreads across the world. In people worshiping him. Starting in Colossians. Starting in Kenosha. Worship.

So if avenue one. Is the good works of love. Avenue two. Is increased knowledge. Resulting in worship. Avenue three. Is a very interesting one.

[33 : 02] Paul prays. Paul talks about it like this. Verse 11. Being strengthened with all power. According to his glorious might. For all endurance and patience. With might.

Excuse me. With all endurance and patience. Paul is praying. He is. He is. He is. He is. He is. Asking God. The father.

To pour out the Holy Spirit. Upon the Colossians. So that Christ would be exalted. That they would bear. Good fruit. That they would increase. In the knowledge of God. And that they would be strengthened.

With God's glorious might. Not your own. Do you know why? Paul is praying. That this church. Would be strengthened. With God's might. It's not so that you could. Flex your spiritual muscles. It's for that last part.

[34 : 02] For all endurance and patience. Think about it. When we seek. To live lives. That please Christ. That are walking in a manner.

Worthy of him. In everything. It's going to be offensive. To people. Just think about. Our cultures. Shift on matters. Of sexuality.

And so when you seek. To please Christ. And what he has said. Clearly. In the gospels. Marriage is one. Chromosomal man. Married to one. Chromosomal woman. For life. Before God.

Done. And when you're like. Oh. That pleases you. I'm going to. I'm lining up. That's going to be offensive. To more and more people. And when it becomes offensive.

To people. You get ridiculed. People start showing you. Hostility. You will also.

[35 : 02] Be rejected. Because Christ is central. In your life. Because you're wanting to please him. Above all else. People see that. And they're like. Cancelled.

Cancelled. It won't be easy. Will it? So Paul prays. For this church. That they would be filled with the spirit.

That they would live for God's will. Christ. In everything. And with that. They would be increased. In the might of God.

To endure. Endure the heat. That comes. When we offend people. Simply because we're just trying to please our Lord. But it's just not limited.

To enduring what non-Christians think. There's this word patience in there. There's a good chance. As we live our life together as a church.

[36 : 02] That brothers and sisters will offend one another. We'll sin against each other. Or we'll perceive being sinned by another. And the call here.

Is to be strengthened. By God's very spirit. By his glorious might. That we would be able to long suffer. With each other.

To bear with one another in love. To choose to forgive. Over holding a grudge. It's by the strength of his might.

Not by the will of your spirit. God help us. Strengthen us. To live lives marked by unity. Do you see when we.

When we seek to please Christ. In all things. Grudges fall. So this fourth avenue.

[37 : 01] Is endurance. An enduring walk. That was the third way. The fourth way. The fourth avenue.

Is in verse 12. Giving thanks to the father. Who has qualified you to share. In the inheritance of the saints of light. So. We are to. Please Christ by loving.

We are to please. Christ by worshiping. We are to please. Christ by enduring. And being patient. And we are to please Christ. By giving. By giving thanks. To God.

Would you flip over. In Colossians. To Colossians chapter 3. Verses 15. 16. And 17. I'm going to show you something. And it is not coincidence. And let the peace of Christ.

Rule in your hearts. To which indeed. You were called in one body. And be thankful. 16. Let the word of Christ. Dwell in you richly. Teaching and admonishing.

[38 : 02] One another. And all wisdom. Singing psalms. And hymns. And spiritual songs. With thankfulness. In your hearts. To God. Verse 17. And whatever you do. In word or deed.

Do everything in the name. Of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God. The Father. Through him. Giving thanks to God. Through Christ. Pleases Christ. It is a way.

In which we walk. In a manner. Worthy of the Lord. And Paul doesn't leave you hanging. He doesn't say. Hey. Walk this way. Do it.

He says. Walk this way. Be thankful. And here's why. Look what he says. Who has qualified you. To share in the inheritance. Of the saints.

And light. What? God the Father qualified me. To share in the inheritance. What's that? It's your salvation. But how? How did God qualify us? Look verse 13. He qualified you.

[38 : 55] By his grace. When he. Delivered us. From the domain of darkness. And transferred us. To the kingdom. Of his beloved son. That was him. Qualifying you.

To share in salvation. To be brought into the kingdom. By his grace. Not by your works. By the finished work of Jesus. And he's saying. Let this.

Be a source of thanks. To God. He goes on to say. Speaking of. This kingdom of the beloved son. In whom we have redemption.

The forgiveness of sins. Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left. A crimson stain.

He washed us. White as snow. In him. We have redemption. The forgiveness of sin. Which means this.

[39 : 53] Christian you've always got something to be thankful for. Always. Always. God has forgiven you. The little sins. And the great sins. All of your sins. Paid in full.

By Jesus. That's. Colossians 2.13. It's all been nailed to the cross. And so. You've always got something to be thankful for. God thank you so much for forgiving me.

Those stupid things when I did as a teenager. And when I was in my 20s. And then when I was in my 30s. In my 40s. And starting in my 50s. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for bringing me into your kingdom. I don't want to be anywhere else. But pleasing you in your kingdom. That's joy filled gratitude. That's Jesus centered gratitude.

This is the four full way to please Christ. Love. Worship. Endure. Give thanks. Hey I got a question for you. What is God's will for your life?

[40 : 55] We've seen the ask. That God would fill. These Christians with the knowledge of his will. We've seen the aim of that will. To please Christ in everything.

And now we've seen the four full way. Love. Worship. Endurance. Giving thanks. This passage just doesn't inform our prayer life. It instructs us.

How to live our lives for Christ. You don't need to dread it. Don't dismiss it.

Oh please don't distort this. It's delight. In pleasing our Lord Jesus. So in closing. I got a question for you.

And then I'm going to pray. One more time. What is Christ? What is God's love? What is Christ's will? What is God's will for your life? To please Christ. In everything.

[41 : 55] Pray with me. Father in heaven. We are in way over our heads. So would you pour out your spirit upon us.

In greater measure. That we would please Christ in everything. By your spirit make us more loving. By your spirit make us more worshipful. By your spirit help us to endure. And by your spirit. May we give thanks.

To you again and again. And all of God's people said. Amen.