

Colossians: The Church is Under Attack

How do you and I know the _____? In Col. 1:1, Paul said that he was an apostle by the will of God. God desires for us to know His will. The Father isn't playing hide-and-seek with us. Is there an area of your life that you desperately need to know God's will? What's necessary to know God's preferred future?

- His _____
- His _____
- His _____
- His _____
- His _____
- His _____

Paul thanked God for the church (saints) at Colossae. God was at work in that fellowship. What did Paul hear about the church?

- Their _____ in Christ Jesus (Col. 1:4).
- Their _____ for all the saints (Col. 1:4).
- Their _____ in the Gospel (Col. 1:6).
- Their _____ to spread the truth (Col. 1:6).
- Their _____ to learn from God's servant, Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8).

Colossians is one of Paul's _____ epistles (along with Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians). "The primary purpose of Colossians was to correct false teachings that were troubling the church." One of the most valuable spiritual actions Paul did for the church was to _____ for them. What a treasure for us that we have Paul's prayer recorded in Scripture! What did Paul pray? How do you and I pray for the Lord's church?

- To possess _____ of God's will (Col. 1:9).
- To walk in a manner _____ of the Lord (Col. 1:10).
- To bear _____ in every good work (Col. 1:10).
- To increase in _____ knowledge (Col. 1:10).
- To labor for Christ with God's _____ (Col. 1:11).
- To serve _____ with endurance, patience, and joy (Col. 1:11).
- To give thanks to God for His _____ (Col. 1:12-14).

Paul wanted the saints at Colossae to know Jesus as _____ and _____. What did Paul say about Jesus? "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*" (Col. 1:15). "*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...all things were created through him and for him*" (Col. 1:16). "*He is the head of the body, the church*" (Col. 1:18). "*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross*" (Col. 1:19-20).

A person's trust in Christ for salvation is the _____. In Col. 2:6-7, Paul said, "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." Walking close to Christ leads to growth, protection, and fruitfulness. Why are many people in today's culture skeptical of the church? Why are many churches declining and dying? It's a sad reality that many church members aren't walking with the Lord.

Paul expressed his _____ strongly about the Gospel, salvation, and church growth. In Col. 2:13-15, he stated, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." As for the church, how does a church grow? Paul said a church "grows with a growth that is from God" (Col. 2:19). As a church, we've seen God at work. However, let me add a word of caution. **God isn't finished, and we've not arrived.**

- _____ need to be made.
- _____ need to be reached.
- _____ need to bear fruit.
- _____ need to love God's people and lead.
- _____ need to be revitalized, planted, and replanted.

Paul called the saints at Colossae to focus on what's _____, not what's _____. In Col. 3:1-4, Paul said, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Focusing on the eternal affects what we _____ and how we _____. Paul expected God's people to relate to one another with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, longsuffering, forgiveness, and love (Col. 3:12-14). If church members related to one another as Paul described, what would be different in churches? Attendance. Involvement. Unity. Business Meetings. Fellowship. Growth. Witness.

Paul confessed his need for _____. He asked the saints to pray for him and to engage people that needed the Gospel (Col. 4:2-6). _____ outreach is still necessary and urgent. God has saved and left us here to reach other people. Paul mentioned the names of many godly servants who served the Lord Jesus with him. I love the ministry of Epaphras. We don't know much about him. However, his ministry is needed in today's church. In Col. 4:12, Paul said, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God." Will you and I struggle in prayer for in the church?

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How do you and I know the **will of God**? In Col. 1:1, Paul said that he was an apostle by the will of God. God desires for us to know His will. The Father isn't playing hide-and-seek with us. Is there an area of your life that you desperately need to know God's will? What's necessary to know God's preferred future?

- His **Word**
- His **Spirit**
- His **Accessibility**
- His **People**
- His **Activity**
- His **Peace**

Paul thanked God for the church (saints) at Colossae. God was at work in that fellowship. What did Paul hear about the church?

- Their **faith** in Christ Jesus (Col. 1:4).
- Their **love** for all the saints (Col. 1:4).
- Their **trust** in the Gospel (Col. 1:6).
- Their **obedience** to spread the truth (Col. 1:6).
- Their **willingness** to learn from God's servant, Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8).

Colossians is one of Paul's **prison** epistles (along with Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians). "The primary purpose of Colossians was to correct false teachings that were troubling the church." One of the most valuable spiritual actions Paul did for the church was to **pray** for them. What a treasure for us that we have Paul's prayer recorded in Scripture! What did Paul pray? How do you and I pray for the Lord's church?

- To possess **knowledge** of God's will (Col. 1:9).
- To walk in a manner **worthy** of the Lord (Col. 1:10).
- To bear **fruit** in every good work (Col. 1:10).
- To increase in **spiritual** knowledge (Col. 1:10).
- To labor for Christ with God's **power** (Col. 1:11).
- To serve **Jesus** with endurance, patience, and joy (Col. 1:11).
- To give thanks to God for His **salvation** (Col. 1:12-14).

Paul wanted the saints at Colossae to know Jesus as **Savior** and **Lord**. What did Paul say about Jesus? "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*" (Col. 1:15). "*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...all things were created through him and for him*" (Col. 1:16). "*He is the head of the body, the church*" (Col. 1:18). "*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross*" (Col. 1:19-20).

A person's trust in Christ for salvation is the **first step**. In Col. 2:6-7, Paul said, *"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."* Walking close to Christ leads to growth, protection, and fruitfulness. Why are many people in today's culture skeptical of the church? Why are many churches declining and dying? It's a sad reality that many church members aren't walking with the Lord.

Paul expressed his **convictions** strongly about the Gospel, salvation, and church growth. In Col. 2:13-15, he stated, *"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."* As for the church, how does a church grow? Paul said a church *"grows with a growth that is from God"* (Col. 2:19). As a church, we've seen God at work. However, let me add a word of caution. **God isn't finished, and we've not arrived.**

- **Disciples** need to be made.
- **Non-believers** need to be reached.
- **Church members** need to bear fruit.
- **Leaders** need to love God's people and lead.
- **Churches** need to be revitalized, planted, and replanted.

Paul called the saints at Colossae to focus on what's **eternal**, not what's **temporal**. In Col. 3:1-4, Paul said, *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."* Focusing on the eternal affects what we **believe** and how we **behave**. Paul expected God's people to relate to one another with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, longsuffering, forgiveness, and love (Col. 3:12-14). If church members related to one another as Paul described, what would be different in churches? Attendance. Involvement. Unity. Business Meetings. Fellowship. Growth. Witness.

Paul confessed his need for **prayer**. He asked the saints to pray for him and to engage people that needed the Gospel (Col. 4:2-6). **Evangelistic** outreach is still necessary and urgent. God has saved and left us here to reach other people. Paul mentioned the names of many godly servants who served the Lord Jesus with him. I love the ministry of Epaphras. We don't know much about him. However, his ministry is needed in today's church. In Col. 4:12, Paul said, *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God."* Will you and I struggle in prayer for in the church?