

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

B. Nurture In Paul's Prayer For His Readers To Have A Fulfilling Christian Life (Colossians 1:9-14)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Apostle Paul wrote the "Prison Epistles" of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon, the fact that he was in prison troubled believers, Philippians 1:12-13; Colossians 2:1-2; 4:7-8 and Philemon 22; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1672, "Introduction to the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians."
- B. Thus, one of his Prison Epistle **prayer petitions** was for Paul's readers to enjoy a fulfilling Christian life, and that prayer in Colossians 1:9-14 provides practical insight into how a believer can know such a life as follows:

II. Nurture In Paul's Prayer For His Readers To Have A Fulfilling Christian Life, Colossians 1:9-14.

- A. Paul continually desired and prayed for the Colossian believers to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, Colossians 1:9. Spiritual wisdom (*Sophia*) was "practical know-how which comes from God (James 1:5; 3:15)" and understanding (*synesei*) was "clear analysis and decision-making in applying this knowledge to various problems," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 670-671.
- B. The goal of attaining such wisdom and understanding was a life that was lived worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way, Col. 1:10a. The word, "worthy" (*axios*) literally means "of equal weight," suggesting "(b)elievers are to equal the Lord's standards, to be as holy as He is holy (cf. 1 Peter 1:15)," Ibid., p. 671.
- C. The **RESULTS** of such a God-pleasing Christian life are expressed in Colossians 1:10b-14 in the form of four participles (Ibid.), which **results** create great blessing in the Christian experience (as follows):
1. Such a God-pleasing Christian life **bears fruit in every good work** (Colossians 1:10b), that is, to gain spiritual success with resulting blessing in every single endeavor one addresses in his life and ministry!
 2. Such a God-pleasing Christian life leads to an **increase in the knowledge of God**, Colossians 1:10c. The believer thus comes to a greater knowledge of God Himself, Ibid.
 3. Such a God-pleasing Christian life leads to one's being **strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might** (Colossians 1:11a), and this empowering has blessed additional benefits as follows:
 - a. Such strengthening produces **endurance** (*hypomone*, "not easily succumbing under suffering," Ibid.) in all kinds of trials or difficulties of everyday living.
 - b. It also produces **patience** (*makrothymia*, "restraint which does not hastily retaliate," Ibid.), Col. 1:11b,c, which quality comes into play when the believer is unjustly mistreated.
 - c. These qualities enable the believer to retain a positive outlook versus losing heart under the duress of trials, and they equip him to avoid outbursts of wrath of revenge when he is unjustly treated, Ibid.
 4. Such a God-pleasing Christian life in turn produces **joy**, a joy that is expressed in one's **giving thanks** unto God the Father from Whom the blessings flow, Col. 1:11d, 12a; Ibid. This thanksgiving rises from noting the blessed life one experiences in a walk worthy of the Lord detailed in Colossians 1:10b-11c, which changed life testifies to wonderful positional truths behind them as detailed in Colossians 1:12b-14:
 - a. Believers walking lives worthy of the Lord are thankful for how this changed life signifies they were made **fit** to be **partakers** of the **inheritance** of the **saints** in the **realm** of **God's light**, Colossians 1:12b.
 - b. This reality also means such believers have been wonderfully **delivered** from the **opposite** realm, that of the realm of the **power** of **darkness** to be **translated** into the **kingdom** of **God's beloved Son**, Col. 1:13.
 - c. This translation has occurred based upon the fact that believers have **redemption** through the **blood** of **Christ**, that is, through His death, meaning they also have the **forgiveness** of **sins**, Colossians 1:14.

Lesson: Paul prayed that his believing readers might enjoy a fulfilled Christian life (1) through obtaining practical know-how from God and (2) the understanding of how to apply that know-how to life's various problems (3) that they might live a life equal to the Lord's own standards of practical righteousness. In doing so, (4) they would be richly blessed (a) in being productive in every good work they addressed, (b) in increasing in the knowledge of God and (c) in being strengthened with all power according to God's might (+) to endure suffering (+) and to be restrained when wronged, and (d) in being able to give thanks for this quality of life in joy, (+) knowing it signifies they are partakers of the saints in God's light, (+) they have been translated out of Satan's kingdom in to the Kingdom of God's dear son, and that they also have (+) redemption and (+) forgiveness of sins in Christ.

Application: May we pray for such wisdom and understanding to live worthy of God with all its resulting blessings.