

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"Pointers for Prayer"

Colossians 1:9

Update

1. Four persons are listed in the introduction to this letter: Paul, Timothy, Colossians, and God (vv. 1, 2).
2. The apostle Paul is indicated as being thankful (v. 3), prayerful (v. 3), and grateful (v. 4). His gratefulness was for the Colossians faith in Christ (v. 4), love unto all saints (v. 4), and hope laid away in heaven (v. 5).
3. The Colossians had "heard before" the Gospel. There was the truth of it (v. 5), the message of it (v. 6), the fruit of it (v. 6) and the growth of it (v. 6).
4. Epaphras is noted as a teacher (v. 7), servant (v. 7; 4:12), minister (v. 7), messenger (v. 8), prisoner (Philemon 23), intercessor (4:12), and burdened man (4:13).

How Epaphras Prayed (4:12, 13).

1) He prayed AGONIZINGLY

The verb is present participle denoting the consistent practice of earnestness in prayer. The thought included in the term is a struggle or contest at games. Epaphras really worked at his praying cf. Ro. 15:30.

2) He prayed CONSTANTLY

This IS included in the adverb of time. It is found frequently in Paul's writings and connotes "always, at all times" cf. Ro. 1:9.

3) He prayed EFFECTIVELY

This noun is of prayer to God. It is the kind of prayer which gains results! Prayer to men is worthless; to God is effective.

4) He prayed DESIGNEDLY

Three specific intentions are listed:

a. That the Colossians stand. What more can be said? The watchword of the moderns is compromise, consensus, and the like. The Word of God appeals for a stand (cf. Eph. 6:11, 13, 14). For such, Epaphras prayed to God in behalf of the Colossians.

b. That the Colossians be mature. This is the obvious significance of the word "perfect." No one can claim perfection, but one can come to maturity, completeness, genuine development in the Lord.

c. That the Colossians be fully assured. The use of the perfect tense participle adds incredible strength to this verb. It means "to bring in full measure," hence to "persuade or satisfy fully." To be fully bent is the issue.

5) He prayed ZEALOUSLY

Various words are employed to express this intense effort on the part of Epaphras. He really

gave himself with intense desire and his full strength. Do not minimize the burden of a true servant of God!

How Paul Prayed (1:9).

The focus of the prayer of Epaphras was the spiritual maturity of the Colossians. The focus of Paul's prayer was the will of God for the Colossians. Questions: what is the focus of your prayers?

1) He prayed CAUSALLY

This is clearly indicated by the phrase "for this cause." Having learned from Epaphras about the Colossians faith, love, hope, -- Paul prayed. It's people like the Colossians who do need prayer!

2) He prayed JOINTLY

The "we also" is a reference to Paul and Timothy (cf. 1:1). In addition to the interest of Epaphras, Paul and his son in the faith Timothy were active in prayer for the Colossians. Blessed is that one who has people (many) praying for him/her.

3) He prayed INSTANTLY

From the very day Paul heard of Epaphras, he prayed. Now that's real concern. Too often one hears of prayer requests or needs, but they are soon forgotten. Not so with Paul and the Colossians.

4) He prayed CONTINUALLY

For some this may be a hyperbole, but to those who believe Scripture, it is the truth. Paul must have had long daily prayers (cf. Eph. 1:16). The abbreviated prayers of modern believers is out of harmony with Pauline praying. He just did not stop praying. The middle voice of the verb shows personal interest.

5) He prayed PETITIONALLY

Two verbs are used to express the action here. The one "pray" is a general term of prayer to God (cf. 4:12) while the other "desire" is a specific request. The second verb means to ask. James writes that prayer is asking rightly (James 4:2, 3). This is what Paul demonstrates.

6) He prayed PURPOSELY

Three specific items are listed regarding the will of God.

a. Its quality: filling. This must be a work of God as the aorist passive voice indicates. Oh, to be soaked with the will of God. All else follows this basic petition.

b. Its content: knowledge. The original term means super or full knowledge. Ordinary information is not enough.

c. Its operation: wisdom and spiritual understanding. The former is applied knowledge while the latter is a spiritual practicality to specific circumstances. "All" is singular, hence, every kind of wisdom and spiritual understanding is in view.

CONCLUSION

Some churches look for better methods while God is looking for better men. We don't need more committees or Madison Avenue novel methods, but we do need men who are mighty in prayer like Epaphras and Paul. To talk with men about God is great, but to talk to God about men is even greater! Amen.