

Pray Without Ceasing Part 2

By Mary Kane

Please read Colossians 1: 1-11.

Please record the three things from verses 9-11 that Paul specifically prayed for the believers in Colosse.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In our last study, we covered the first request very thoroughly. Today, we shall focus on prayer request number 2, "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

When you think about walking with someone, what comes to mind?

My husband and I love to take walks together. When we walk together, we are traveling together with a destination in mind. As we hike through our neighborhood, we discuss the events of the day, what's occurring in the lives of our children and what is happening in our lives in particular. We exchange ideas and information; in short we share our lives. Our purpose in walking is two-fold; we want to keep our bodies and our relationship healthy. The Greek word for *walk* is *peripateo*; it means to tread, to advance by foot, to walk about, and to walk. More significantly, it means to live, to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self, to associate with, and to pass one's life" (BLB).

Which part of this definition was most meaningful to you and why?

I want to follow Jesus, don't you? Psalm 23 says that He will lead me beside the still waters and down the paths of righteousness. And while I'm walking those paths of righteousness with Jesus, I can discuss with Him what's been happening in my life and in the lives of my husband and children. Not only do I want to follow Jesus, I want to "conduct" myself like Jesus.

Think of a certain situation you're dealing with right now. What would it look like if you conducted yourself like Jesus in this situation?

Let's look back at our verse again. Please fill in the blank:

"... that you may walk _____ of the Lord."

That sounds like a very tall order. How can an unworthy sinner like me walk worthy of the Lord? Let's see what we can find out from tracing the word *worthy* back to its origin. The word *worthy* in the original Greek is *axios* which means suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of, as becometh, after a godly sort, having the weight of another thing of like value. In this case *worthy* does not mean that we have by our own works and power earned a special standing with the Lord. Basically, *axios* means that we conduct ourselves in a manner that would bring honor and glory to the name of the Most High.

How can you bring honor and glory to God at...

... your work place?

... at the grocery store?

... in your own family?

There is a connection then between the knowledge and wisdom that was hopefully gained by the Colossians in verse 9 and the manner in which they conducted themselves in verse 10. Paul did not pray for the Colossians to become more knowledgeable about God just for knowledge's sake. When God gives us a greater revelation about Himself it is to be used to transform us. "Our knowledge of the will of God must be always practical: we must know it, in order to do it. 2. Our knowledge is then a blessing indeed when it is in wisdom, when we know how to apply our general knowledge to our particular occasions, and to suit it to all emergencies" (BLB Matthew Henry). In other words, God never imparts wisdom to us for wisdom's sake. When He gifts us with greater knowledge, it is to be used to conform us more closely to the image of Christ. Knowledge is meant to change us. And as we become more and more like Jesus, our lives will be more and more pleasing to the Father.

Keeping in mind what we have learned about what it means to "walk worthy" of the Lord, why do you think Paul constantly made this request for the Colossians?

Please fill in the next phrase of verse 10:

**"...that you may walk worthy of the Lord, _____
_____,"**

The word *fully* used in this portion of scripture means "all, each, every, whole, all things, everything." Look back at the phrase you wrote above. What word is "fully" modifying?—Pleasing! How does it feel to know that you can be "fully pleasing" to the Lord? I don't think I have ever been thoroughly pleasing to anyone. It is exciting to think that I can be thoroughly pleasing to the Lord! But, what does it mean to be "*pleasing* to the Lord?" How I love the meaning behind this beautiful Greek word! Get ready to be blessed! The original Greek word for *pleasing* used in this verse is *areskeia*, which is a derivative of *aresko* which means to "to please, to strive to please, please, to accommodate one's self to the opinions, desires and interests of others" (BLB).

Ever since my boys were little, I have loved to watch them play. Quite frankly, however, I do not take the same pleasure in watching the

neighbor children play. There is something special about watching my own flesh and blood playing together. When my husband is able to, he joins in the fun with our sons out in the yard. I like to stand at the back window and proudly watch them and laugh at their antics while they play and compete with each other. Even though they are now eighteen and twenty, I still love watching them roughhouse together. I also love to watch my boys compete in sporting events at school. Although the whole team is on the court, my eyes are usually centered on my own sons following them play by play. Isn't it wonderful to know that God focuses on you in the same way, that God is content with you, that He has a special place in His heart just for you and that His and that you are the "apple of His eye"?

There is another benefit to fully pleasing God other than just His pleasure in us. Please look at verses 10 and 11 to discover how we can profit from striving to please the Lord.

Paul prayed for the Colossians to walk worthy of the Lord and be pleasing to the Lord so they would be (10-11, I'll get you started)...

1: Bearing fruit...

2: Increasing in...

3: Being strengthened...

We can know then that we are pleasing to God when we are persistently working for the Gospel, continually increasing our knowledge of God through sound teaching and Bible study, and we are consistently striving to bear hardship with a joyous heart. If God, in His infinite wisdom, prompted Paul to record these three prayer requests in Scripture, then I want them in my life and in the lives of my husband and children. All three of the above items are essential elements for living an abundant life in Christ. Please pause a moment and ask God to accomplish these things in your life and in the lives of those whom you love.

What “good work” is God leading you to be involved with at this time of life?

Are there any steps you need to take to get involved in this “good work?”

What are some practical things you can do to increase your knowledge about God?

What do you need to do now to accomplish this?

In what area do you need to ask God to strengthen you with His mighty, glorious power so you can bear up patiently with joy?

Please allow me the privilege of praying for us now.

Dearest Holy Father,

Please help us to bear much fruit in Christ Jesus. Clearly show us how to use our time and talents most effectively to serve those in need. Some of us need to continue faithfully serving where we are. Others need a little encouragement to take a step and commit to serve for the first time; help them Father to move as You direct. Father, someone else needs a lot of encouragement to start a new ministry that You have laid on his or her heart; help them to move *only* according to Your will and perfect timing.

I also ask that You enlarge our hearts so that we would intensely desire to know You more. Help us to ruthlessly guard our quiet time

above all other priorities. Help mothers and fathers of little ones to be wise and give themselves a little grace in this area. Please show us what is getting in the way of you knowing God more fully ... TV ... talking on the phone ... shopping ...Facebook. God, show us how to spend more time in Your Holy presence. We will be blessed beyond measure for anything we sacrifice in order to spend more time with You.

Thank you that You have provided us with Your magnificent power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, to help us joyfully endure trying times, knowing that you have a purpose in our suffering. In Jesus' Holy Name, Amen.

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