

IMPROVING OUR PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Colossians 1:9-14

⁹So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.¹⁰Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

¹¹We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy,¹²always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,¹⁴who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

How important is prayer in the life and development of Christians? From its place in this letter it seems that prayer is a vital part of our being able to live. Last week we sought to improve our thanksgiving to God. Now let's study to improve our prayer life.

For what does Paul request for them (1:9-12)?

Knowing God's will is not some esoteric exercise that requires signs and fleeces or visions and dreams. His way is communicated clearly through Scripture and is understood by obedience.

What is it that makes wisdom and understanding "spiritual" (1:9; compare with 2:9 and 3:16)?

What we have received in the Gospel, the Good News, is a message of God's wisdom. It is spiritual truth. Paul has already taught on this in his first letter to the Corinthians. He contrasts the wisdom of the world with God's wisdom in having Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:6-9). These things had to be *revealed* for they could not be discovered by human reason (2:10-12). The Good News is not a cleverly devised human tale, but a divinely revealed truth through the working of the Holy Spirit available to those who are spiritual (2:13-16).

What do you think the emphasis of continual prayer for someone indicate (1:9)?

Why do you think we stop praying for people?

There is a link between living lives that please the Lord and our knowledge of Him.

What is the purpose of knowing God's will (1:10-12)?

How has your knowledge of God enabled you to endure?

What tremendous change has taken place in the life of believers (1:13)?

To look at this truth further examine what the Scriptures have to say about darkness in the following verses:

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Matthew 8:12

Acts 2:20

Matthew 6:23

John 3:19

2 Peter 2:17

Luke 11:35

Luke 1:78-79

Romans 13:12

2 Corinthians 4:6

2 Corinthians 6:14

Ephesians 5:8-9

1 John 1:6

Luke 2:32

John 1:4-5

1 Peter 2:9